
COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AT THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES OF UKRAINE: RISE, SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES



Olena Lokshyna, Dr. Sc., Prof.

Head, Comparative Education Department,

Institute of Pedagogy,

National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine,

Kyiv, Ukraine

luve2001@hotmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5097-9171>

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Abstract. *The author analyses the development of comparative education at the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine. The development is characterized by movement to its professionalization (Wiseman & Matherly, 2009), establishment of an entire system covering functioning specialized units, conducting multi-scope and multi-level research, conferences / seminars, publishing journals, postgraduate training. The research directions at the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine are characterised, i.e. education phenomena of continuing relevance at all educational levels – school, vocational, higher, adult education. Among the positives of the comparative education at the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine the author distinguishes the use of the methodology based on the approaches developed by the world-known comparative education scholars, possessing professional skills (foreign languages, ICT skills) by the comparative educators of the Academy; practical orientation of the comparative education research. The following challenges of the comparative education development are named: lack of a comparative education strategy in the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine; lack of a comparative education centre/association to coordinate the activities within Academy; insufficient attention to the further development of comparative education methodology; insufficient communication at the horizontal level within the Academy; insufficient communication with the relevant units/bodies/centres abroad; insufficient financial support for comparative education scholars of National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine to visit foreign countries for research.*

Key words: *comparative education; National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine; methodology; Comparative Education Department, Institute of Pedagogy; Department of Foreign Systems of Pedagogical and Adult Education; Institute of Pedagogical and Adult Education; Comparative Studies Department for Information and Education Innovations; Institute of Informational Technologies and Learning Tools; Laboratory of Foreign Systems of Vocational Education and Training; Institute of Vocational Education and Training; achievements; challenges.*

INTRODUCTION. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The national education reforming has actualized the study of educational achievements of foreign countries, which obviously intensifies the development of comparative education (CE) in Ukraine. In the Soviet era, the aim of CE was to criticize the “bourgeois” pedagogy; its methodology was based on the analysis of educational phenomena abroad for opposition. During the years of independence of Ukraine, there was a dynamic development of CE methodological foundations. Primarily, the criticism of the “bourgeois” education was over. Gradually the linear character studies turned into a multidimensional one. Today the subject of the research of the Ukrainian comparative educators is no longer limited to an education system of a foreign country, the regional and world level comparisons are used. The scholars study a wide range of educational phenomena instead of analysing the organisation of education abroad. The practice of using a time comparison element to enhance the geographic one; application of simultaneous comparison on a par with consecutive one, strengthening the practical focus of comparative studies are obviously the achievements of the methodology of CE in the independent Ukraine.

The development of a methodology of CE takes place in parallel with its infrastructure development. It is about creating research centres, launch of the specialized scientific journals, publication of textbooks / manuals. The teaching of the CE in universities also plays an important role for the development of CE in Ukraine.

All this makes it possible to speak about the professionalization of CE in Ukraine. The National Academy of Educational Sciences (NAES) of Ukraine can be treated as the catalyst of such professionalization having specialised units its structure, skilled scholars that conduct research on topical issues of education. Obviously, the comparative research is an important trend of the NAES activity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Issues of organization of education, educational reforms, quality assurance, curricula modelling, modern languages teaching, internationalization of higher education, the Bologna process, teacher training in comparative aspect abroad, etc., are being explored by a large number of scholars, in particular, by N. Avsheniuk, I. Biletska, T. Bodnarchuk, I. Borysenko, V. Butova, Z. Chernyakova, I. Chystyakova, A. Dzhurylo, O. Glushko, N. Nikolska, O. Maksymenko, O. Matvienko, O. Milyutina, N. Mukan, O. Ovcharuk, O. Permyakova, O. Pershukova, M. Tymenko, O. Shparyk, I. Shymkiv, N. Soroko, M. Tadeyeva, A. Vasylyuk, A. Vykhursch, O. Yarova, L. Zablotska, N. Zaitseva, etc.

An issue of methodology of CE is discussed by such scholars as M. Chepil, N. Fedchyshyn, Y. Khrykov, N. Lavrychenko, O. Lokshyna, M. Leschenko, O. Ohienko, L. Pukhovska, A. Sbruieva, S. Sysoieva, I. Sokolova, O. Zabolotna and others.

The consolidated vision of the methodological landmarks of CE in Ukraine is presented in the reading-book “Comparative Education: Methodological Benchmarks of the Ukrainian Comparative Educators” (2015) by M. Krasovitsky, N. Lavrychenko, O. Lokshyna, O. Ohienko, O. Ovcharuk, L. Pukhovska, A. Sbruieva, G. Shchuka, I. Sokolova, I. Stashevska, H. Stepenko, S. Sysoieva, I. Taranenko, S. Tsura, O. Zabolotna. The compiler of the reading-book is O. Lokshyna (Lokshyna (ed.), 2015). The reading-book is intended to convey the views of the Ukrainian comparative educators (with

reference to the works of world prominent CE scholars) on the methodology of CE, its principles, approaches, methods of scientific research for grasping educational phenomena abroad.

The development of CE in the NAES is discussed, in particular, in the article “Comparative Education at the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine: Steps of Growth”. The heads of the CE units of NAES – O. Lokshyna, N. Avshenyuk, O. Ovcharuk, O. Borodienko – analyse the history of these units, their current achievements and prospects (Lokshyna, Avsheniuk, Ovcharuk, 2016).

O. Lokshyna, A. Dzhurylo, I. Mariuts and O. Shparyk in “Comparative Education under Conditions of Globalization: Achievements and Prospects” (collection of articles dedicated to the 25-th anniversary of NAES of Ukraine, 2017) characterise input of globalization on the CE methodology in Europe, USA, East Asian region (China, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea). Besides, the scholars outline contribution of the Department of Comparative Education of the Institute of Pedagogy of the NAES of Ukraine to CE area development in Ukraine (Lokshyna, Dzhurylo, Mariuts & Shparyk, 2017).

At the same time, under new realities (globalization influences, the European vector of Ukraine’s development, cardinal transformations of education in Ukraine, etc.) the comprehension of the CE role and, in particular, the tasks of the CE within the leading Ukrainian academic institution in the educational sector – the NAES of Ukraine – requires more attention.

METHODOLOGY

The conducted research is a qualitative one. The applied method is the analysis, i.e. literature analysis (studies of the Ukrainian and foreign comparative educators), documentary analysis (official documents of the NAES). Besides, the interpretative method was used to understand the phenomenon of the CE in the NAES, its achievement and trends of development. The method of generalisation has provided an opportunity to present the holistic picture of the CE in the NAES of Ukraine. The chronological pattern was used to present the idea of the research.

MAIN RESULTS

The establishment of a laboratory of scientific and pedagogical information at the Institute of Pedagogy (Kyiv) in 1971 can be considered as a prerequisite for CE emerging within the NAES of Ukraine. The mission of the laboratory was to inform the scholars of the Institute about the state of education in foreign countries through the prism of criticism, which was the norm in the USSR. However, under such conditions the scholars of the laboratory – N. Abashkina, L. Bulai, B. Melnychenko, H. Stepenko, I. Taranenko, G. Yehorov – managed to open the “Iron Curtain” in the education sector. In fact, they opened “the window” into the world presenting peculiarities of the foreign education. Among numerous publications issued at that time, special mention should go to a series of *Foreign Education Chronicle*, *Concise Short Encyclopedic Dictionary of Foreign Education Terms*. The book *Systems of Public Education in Foreign Countries at Present: the socialist, capitalist and developing countries* (1990) was reasonably required under conditions of lack of information about education abroad (Melnychenko, 1990).

Gradually totalitarian pressure weakened, and in the times of the Gorbachev reorganization, the laboratory staff was more free to talk about the achievements of education abroad, to introduce the concepts of the previously little-known (or forbidden) in the USSR scholars (M. Montessori, R. Steiner, P. Freire, etc.), etc.

After the collapse of the USSR and the declaration of Ukraine's independence in 1991, the need to change both the mission of the laboratory of scientific and pedagogical information, as well as the methodological approaches to the study of the education phenomena abroad became apparent. The transformation of the laboratory of scientific and pedagogical information into the laboratory of CE in 1991 marked the beginning of the development of CE in the NAES of Ukraine (NAES was formally formed on the basis of the Institute of Pedagogy and the Institute of Psychology in 1992).

A. W. Wiseman and C. Matherly in the article "The Professionalization of Comparative and International Education: promises and problems" (2009) write that the question of professionalization in the field of comparative and international education fundamentally depends on: (1) the establishment of a legitimate knowledge base through university (i.e. graduate) training, and (2) the development of specific professional networks and behaviour guidelines through the establishment of a professional association dedicated to the unique concerns of the field (Wiseman & Matherly, 2009: p. 336).

Developing this idea with a projection on the realities of NAES, we can speak about CE professionalization here. The following contributed to this:

- Establishing professional standards – concepts of the CE as well as the recommendations for CE researchers are developed and widely disseminated among the CE community;
- Establishing a professional network – specialized units in NAES are functioning that conduct research in the area of CE (conditionally we can consider these units as a professional network), professional journals are publishing;
- Establishing knowledge base – trainings (CE courses) for PhD students are conducted.

Two concepts of the CE methodology of the authorship of I. Taranenko, G. Stepenko and of M. Krasovytsky (all of them were the scholars of the laboratory of CE of the Institute of Pedagogy of NAES) were elaborated in the 1990-s and became a key reference point for the development of the methodology of CE. Although the concepts were published only in 2015 (Lokshyna (ed.), 2015), their discussion and presentation in the laboratory at that time contributed to the formation of a coherent system of views on conducting comparative research based on methodological guidelines of leading foreign CE scholars. Later, when a part of the staff of the laboratory of CE of the Institute of Pedagogy transferred to the newly created CE units of other institutes of the NAES (or led these units), these methodological views became the basis of the activities of the new units. The mentioned provided the formation of a unified methodological platform of comparative-education research within NAES.

Long after, *Recommendations on Writing Dissertations in the Area of Comparative Education* were developed by well-known Ukrainian CE scholars (N. Lavrychenko (researcher of NAES), O. Lokshyna (researcher of NAES), A. Sbrueieva (defended her doctoral thesis in NAES), O. Zabolotna (having the research advisor from NAES)) and approved by the comparative educators at the International Scientific and Practical Conference "Development of Education for the Knowledge Society: Language, Multiculturalism, Personality" held at Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, May 27-28, 2010.

Although the Recommendations were not approved at official level, the document can be considered as the first professional standard in the field (Lokshyna & Polikhun (eds.), 2012; Lokshyna (ed.), 2013; Lokshyna (ed.), 2014; Lokshyna (ed.), 2015).

Today the importance of CE has been proclaimed as one of the priorities of scientific research of NAES. In the Strategy of Development of the National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine for 2016-2022 (2016) CE is defined as one of the substantive priorities of the development of applied scientific research. Comparative research within the framework of NAES activities is intended to increase its academic potential, and to ensure the effective functioning and prospective development of the national education (Stratehiia rozvytku Natsionalnoi ..., 2016).

The implementation of CE research is carried out based on the relevant units operating in the institutes of the NAES. They are the following:

- Department of Comparative Education at the Institute of Pedagogy (established in 1991 on the bases of Laboratory of Scientific and pedagogical information established in 1971);

- Department of Foreign Systems of Pedagogical and Adult Education at the Institute of Pedagogical and Adult Education (established in 1993);

- Comparative Studies Department for Information and Education Innovations at the Institute of Informational Technologies and Learning Tools (established in 2001);

- Laboratory of Foreign Systems of Vocational Education and Training of the Institute of Vocational Education and Training (established in 2015).

The scholars of the abovementioned units study phenomena of continuing relevance at all educational levels – school, vocational education and training, higher, teacher training and adult education. In particular, the following studies are being conducting:

- *“Trends in school education in the EU countries, in the USA and China”* (2018-2020) by the Department of Comparative Education of the Institute of Pedagogy;

- *“Development of vocational education and training systems in the countries of EU”* (2016-2019) by the Laboratory of Foreign Systems of Vocational Education and Training of the Institute of Vocational Education and Training;

- *“Trends in adult education development in the developed countries”* (2017-2019) by Department of Foreign Systems of Pedagogical and Adult Education of the Institute of Pedagogical and Adult Education;

- *“Development of ICT competence of teachers under sky technologies oriented instruction environment”* (2017-2019) by the Comparative Studies Department for Information and Education Innovations of the Institute of Informational Technologies and Learning Tools.

Usually, the outcomes of such studies are monographs, textbooks, scientific articles. Under increasing accountability (the studies are financed from the state budget), there is an emphasis on their effectiveness, practical orientation, approbation of results in the high impact journals, ratings of citations.

NAES of Ukraine actively cooperates with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine – it is very important to synchronize the trend of the national education development with the European and world standards under conditions of its deep transformations. Within this framework, knowledge of the comparative education scholars of NAES about education innovations abroad is of significant importance. The new laws adopted by the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine – the Law of Ukraine “On Higher Education” (2014) and “On Education” (2017) take into account the widely

used approaches to education structuring and development (cycles inside levels of education, academic integrity, competence-based education, internal & external quality insurance systems, etc.).

NAES of Ukraine is a flagship in the dissemination of achievements of education abroad in comparison with the developments of education in Ukraine. Two professional journals are published:

– *Comparative Education Studies*¹ (published jointly by Department of Comparative Education of Institute of Pedagogy with Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University) and

– *Comparative Professional Education*² (published jointly by Department of Foreign Systems of Pedagogical and Adult Education of the Institute of Pedagogical and Adult Education with the Centre of Comparative Professional Education based at Khmelnytsky National University).

In this area, there is also a movement to synchronize the format of journals with world standards and approaches. Gradually, the journals go to the international level (publishing the articles in English), covering by widely known services: Google Scholar, EBSCO, ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre), CiteFactor (Academic Scientific Journals), Directory of Research Journals Indexing, Universal Impact Factor, etc.

Scientific conferences and seminars is another instrument that proved their effectiveness for the further development of the comparative education methodology and for the development of a comparative educator's network. The scientific seminars "*Comparative Education*" (since 2017 – the conference "*Comparative and International Education*") (organised by the Comparative Education Department of the Institute of Pedagogy) and "*Development of Comparative Professional Education in the Context of Globalization and Integration Processes*" (organised by the Department of Foreign Systems of Pedagogical and Adult Education of the Institute of Pedagogical and Adult Education) are held annually.

The "*Comparative Education*" seminar (first conducted in 2010 upon an initiative of the Comparative Education Department of the Institute of Pedagogy) gradually was transformed from as a chamber meeting of comparative educators of NAES into an event of a national scale. It can be regarded as the NAES professional platform for discussion of the achievements and challenges of comparative and international education. The participants of the seminar – comparative educators from all over Ukraine – receive a portfolio of comparative ideas and become so-called focal points in their regional branches (regional universities). Starting from 2016 the seminar was transformed into the "*Comparative and International Education*" conference (with participation of educators from Romania, Belarus and other countries) testifying its movement to the international level.

CE course is a new direction of CE development in NAES. Starting from 2016 CE course is an integral part of postgraduate training at all Institutes of the NAES covering the following topics: history of the CE development, methodology of CE research, reforms and innovations in preschool, secondary, vocational, higher, adult education abroad, etc.)

1 <http://pps.udpu.edu.ua/>

2 <https://content.sciendo.com/view/journals/rpp/rpp-overview.xml>

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, CE in NAES is actively developing, enriched with new directions. This development moves from:

- existence of a single unit (Institute of Pedagogy) – to the functioning of four units, that conduct multi-scope and multi-level research;

- purely conducting CE research to a broad spectrum of activities (holding conferences / seminars, publishing journals, postgraduate training).

The CE research conducted within NAES is of a professional level:

- Scholars of the NAES apply the CE methodology (based on the world approaches);

- Scholars of the NAES have necessary professional skills (possess foreign languages, have ICT skills);

- CE research within the NAES is characterized by practical orientation, which is ensured through direct cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine on Science and Education.

However, development always faces challenges. In the case of CE in NAES, the following ones are the most serious:

- Lack of a CE strategy in NAES;

- Lack of a centre/association for coordination of CE activities within NAES;

- Insufficient synchronization of CE studies with the quick change demands of the Ukrainian society;

- Insufficient attention to the further development of the CE methodology (a sub-study within “*Trends in school education in the EU countries, in the USA and China*” (2018-2020) conducted by O. Lokshyna (Department of Comparative Education of the Institute of Pedagogy) is the only CE methodology study within NAES at the moment;

- Insufficient communication at the horizontal level (between the CE units within NAES) for further development of CE methodology;

- Lack of communication of the NAES CE with the relevant CE units abroad;

- Insufficient financial support for CE scholars of NAES to visit foreign countries to carry out research.

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