

Pedagogic research or research in education?...

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Abstract

Our study raises the problem of the report between the pedagogic research and research in education. The pedagogic research defines a special type of scientific research, based on the epistemological sources of the pedagogic/education sciences. The formula „research in education” extends the area of research beyond any rigors imposed by the existence of an „epistemic object”, resumed at the level of pedagogy. The pedagogic research valorizes pedagogy as socio-human science specialized in the study of education, instruction, curricula projection of education and of instruction at the scale of educational system and process.

Key words: *pedagogic research, research in education, instruction, curriculum*

The pedagogic research defines a special type of *scientific research* accomplished in the field of education, at the level of the educational system and process. It promotes a *research model* taken from the field of *socio-humanist sciences* and adapted at the specific of the pedagogic sciences or educational sciences. Consequently, the model of pedagogic research is constructed from the *perspective*:

a) *disciplinary* – according to the research methodology specific to *pedagogy* as socio-humanist science, specialized in the study of education,

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conceptually acknowledged by the *fundamental pedagogic sciences: the general theory of education, general theory of instruction, general theory of curriculum*;

b) *intradisciplinary* – by the construction of „*subtheories*”, with multiple methodological and practical implications, subordinated to the fundamental pedagogic sciences (see: *theory of moral education, theories of learning /as instruction models, theory of evaluation* etc.);

c) *interdisciplinary* – at the level of the interdependence between *pedagogy* – psychology; *pedagogy* – sociology; *pedagogy* – philosophy; *pedagogy* – economy; *pedagogy* – political sciences; *pedagogy* – sciences of communication etc. (see: *psychology of education, sociology of education, philosophy of education, economy of education, politics of education, pedagogic communication* etc.);

d) *pluridisciplinary / multidisciplinary* – at the level of the interdependence between *pedagogy* and several socio-humanist sciences (see the management of education, sociology of curriculum etc.);

e) *transdisciplinary* – by the *transversal* approach of the education problematic by the contribution of several socio-humanist sciences, engaged *beyond* their epistemological particularities (see *the sciences of education* constructed reported to „*the new educations*” or by some *transversal themes* like *permanent education, emotional intelligence, multiple intelligences* etc.).

In the system of the *education sciences (pedagogic sciences)*, the pedagogic research represents the specific study object of a *fundamental pedagogic sciences (or fundamental sciences of education) – General theory of pedagogic research*. It develops continuously on an evolution line firmly traced at the intersection between *the fundamental research* and the *applied research*, between *normative research* and *operational research*, between *philosophic research* and *action-research*, between *retrospective research* and *prospective research* (see Gilbert De Landsheere, 1992, pp.254-259).

The analysis of the pedagogic research at level of *social activity* and of *fundamental concept, epistemologically stabilized*, implies the solving of the

following problems: a) the delimitation of the *reference frame*; b) the definition of the *concept*; c) the identification of *models of pedagogic research*; d) classification of the *types of pedagogic research*; e) presentation of a *methodology of pedagogic research* (see Sorin Cristea, *Cercetarea pedagogică*, in *DidacticaPro...Revistă de teorie și practică educațională*, Chișinău, Republica Moldova, No.2 / 2014, pp.56-60).

The reference frame of the activity of pedagogic research is delimited at the level of the education system and process, in a context determined from historical and social perspective. It is positioned at the level of the multiple relations that the educational system has with *the global social system* and with its main *subsystems: economic, politic, cultural, communitary, natural*. The analysis of these relations represents the *object of the fundamental pedagogic research*. Such a fundamental research is necessary for the epistemological establishing of *the general functions of education* (with *objective character*) and of the *educational finalities* (especially of those *macrostructural*), with *subjective* character, defined and valorized in the *general theory of education*. Their direct and indirect effects, visible and invisible at the level of education and instruction practice, must be observed, controlled and valorized in the context of the experimental, operational, empiric research, developed *quantitatively*, but also *qualitatively*.

The historical assertion of the pedagogic research takes place in the context of the socio-humanist sciences evolution. It is close to the *models of social or psychosocial research*, projected and developed by the socio-humanist sciences, detached from *philosophy*, based mainly on *historical and hermeneutical* investigation: sociology, psychology, anthropology, economy, management, political sciences, sciences of communication etc. In this perspective the *pedagogic research* also has a *practical purpose* – „to show how the activity can be projected so that to produce valid inferences about the social life” (n.n. psychosocial or sociouhumanist) in the area of education and instruction (Gary King, Robert Keohane, Sidney Verba, p.17).

The pedagogic research is influenced, especially, by the investigations made in psychology and sociology, valorized in education, in instruction, in the context of the field *modernization* at the beginning of the XX century. In this sense, it is evoked the contribution of „Alfred Binet, in *experimental pedagogy* and of Emile Durkheim, in *sociology of education*” (*Dictionnaire encyclopedique de l’education et de la formation, deuxieme edition, 1998, p.886*). These two directions, developed until *postmodernity*, have extended continuously the action field of the pedagogic research, approached from different perspectives *interdisciplinary, pluridisciplinary / multidisciplinary* (with numerous economical, managerial, political accents etc.), *transdisciplinary* (with numerous cultural openings – global and local, international and national, intercultural and multicultural etc.).

Presently there is the tendency of replacing the term of *pedagogic research* with the formula „*research in education*”. One cause is the fact that the pedagogy’s epistemological nucleus is not yet well consolidated and normatively sustained. But this situation makes the fundamental pedagogical research even more necessary. This is why the tendency of replacing the notion of *pedagogical research* with the formula „*research in education*” is debatable. It must be contested from the perspective of the importance of the fundamental pedagogic research which has as a purpose the reduction of the pedagogy study object at the level of „epistemic object”. The formula of „*research in education*” perturbs this process of epistemological essentialization of the research object. It sustains two structural deficiencies, obvious by the fact that:

a) it extends the research area beyond any rigor imposed by the existence of an „epistemic object”, essentialized, abstracted, conceptualized and axiomatized, specific to pedagogy;

b) it induces the opinion, epistemologically and deontologically wrong, according to which it induces *research in education* (same as the one in *medicine*) represents „investigations fields with no direct connection with a

specific scientific discipline” (Gary King, Robert Keohane, Sidney Verba, 2000, p.17).

The signaled epistemological and deontological deficiencies explain the repeated, cyclic failures of „research in education”, registered also in postmodernism even under the title of major themes like *the reform of education* or *the curricular projection*. The cause is constituted the prior orientation, premeditated politically, economically, ideologically, towards numerous *subsystem problems* (scattered, with a high consumption of resources, socially unjustified) with no report to the *fundamental problems, of system*. The case of the *alternative manuals* or of the *digital manuals*, projected before the clarification of the fundamental problems of the *curricula reform* (the construction of the new *finalities*, of the new *structure* of the educational system, of the new educational *plan* and of the new curriculum – inside the new *organization structure of the educational system*) is the most visible example. The negative pedagogic effect felt at social scale is significant. It may also be interpreted as a „case study” for the exemplification of the failure in *research in education*, in the conditions of a / certain politics of / in education.

The approach of the research in education from an extended, unspecific perspective of the field, (pedagogy as science) is the consequence of a negative inference signaled by analysis between a) „*the sciences of authentic education*” (which have at their base *pedagogy*) and „*the pseudo-sciences of education*”, which have at their bases other sciences, representing only applications to education (Jose Luis Garcia Garrido, trad, 1995). In the limits of this negative inference may be artificially sustained a *pedagogic pseudo-research*, promoted under the title of „research in education” with a very extended reference area, but always attenuated in lack of a substantial effort of *epistemic reduction*, necessary in terms of *essentialization, conceptualization, modelation* etc.

As a specific *field of activity* and *social / psychosocial knowledge*, the *pedagogic research* has direct, continuous, substantial, stabile and opened connection with:

1) *Pedagogy as a socio-humanist science* specialized, through its *object, methodology and normativity*, in the study of education, instruction, projection of education and instruction;

2) The *fundamental pedagogic concepts* epistemologically established at the level of *three fundamental pedagogic sciences* developed on the fond of the *curricula* paradigm, asserted historically, and of the *axiomatic* build in this sense:

a) *the general theory of education / fundamentals of pedagogy: education, functions and basic structure, finalities of education, contents and general forms, education/learning system;*

b) *the general theory of instruction / general didactics: instruction / education process, normativity – projection principles, didactic principles / of accomplishing, organization forms, objectives, content, methodology; teaching, learning, evaluation;*

c) *the general theory of curriculum: curriculum as paradigm of pedagogy – as pedagogic project engaged at all the levels of the educational system and process; curricula fundamentals: general – etymological, historical, philosophical, sociologic, psychological, political – and specific pedagogical: – finalities of education, of system and of process; types of curricula; curricula as product and as process of elaboration / organization of the pedagogic resources – planning of the reference activity – accomplishing-development of the activity planned in opened context.*

The researches made in the name of education, without the epistemic and social report to the fundamental pedagogic concepts, stabilized by the *fundamental pedagogic sciences (fundamental sciences of education)*, do not have the relevance and the consistency specific to the field. No matter of the origins, size and the magnitude of the invested resources, it generates confusions in theoretical plan and inefficient solutions at the level of the education and instruction practice. It is also the case of some *interdisciplinary, pluridisciplinary or transdisciplinary researches* which ignor the specific of

pedagogy, promoting and sustaining tendencies of *economicization of education, politization of education, psychologization of education, sociologization of education* etc.

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