

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE MICROPOLITICS IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. *The purpose of the research paper is to disclose the manifestation of micropolitics in curriculum development. The objectives of the research are: 1) to analyze scientific literature by presenting the main concepts; 2) to discuss how they help to develop a curriculum. The novelty is that the research is based on the poststructuralism theory, where micropolitics is not only a resistance, but also a novelty, in this case self-education. The research method is hermeneutic review of literature. It is important to understand the meaning and importance of individual texts, which, in turn, can be seen as parts of the whole body. The analysis of scientific literature revealed that the main concepts are the following: rhizome, assemblages, the strata, and micropolitics. Self-education should be implemented through rhizomatic learning, observation of self-education, creation of new learning territories and a favourable micro environment.*

Keywords: *micropolitics, curriculum, self-education.*

Introduction

The significance of this research lies within the fact that the micropolitics in curriculum development is analyzed on the basis of poststructuralist philosophical background, where micropolitics is defined not by the smallness of its elements, but by the nature of its “mass” – the quantum flow, where opposition is macropolitics. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). There are no doubts about manifestation of the micropolitics in curriculum development: “*Micro-politics is a conceptual frame and this conceptual frame can be utilized to decipher the nuances of curriculum development process that involves political interactions. It offers a mean to explore the process of curriculum development, particularly its decision making aspect, from the perspective of human interactions against the backdrop of conflicting views, interests and egos*” (Rai & Rai, 2016, p. 50). In this case, informal curriculum – self education will be discussed. It should be noted that education (*in german Erziehung*) means to educate oneself, while cultivation or formation (*in german Bildung*) is referred to as self cultivation (Gadamer, 2001). The essence of curriculum content is what subjects need to be taught, how much time will be spent on learning things, how knowledge is organized (Resh & Benavot, 2009). Consequently, it is not just what students

should learn, but how they should learn, it is an official statement of what students are expected to know and be able to do (Levin, 2007). Micropolitics is not only as a resistance force, but as a curriculum novelty (Bjork & Browne-Ferrigno, 2016; Caruso, 2013), while the content of the curriculum is aimed at promoting educational innovation, upholding the vision of education through the transfer of knowledge, skills and values to students. Innovative educational content may include new things, combinations of old subjects, or common learning goals (Karkkainen, 2012). The micropolitics is seen as resistance in a learning organization, while creating a new curriculum, which could be understood as innovation or perspective, in this case – self-education, based on development of self-learning competencies. Consequently, the innovation of curriculum, development of essential competences promotes student growth and progress. In addition, self-education is defined as an independent learning based on the knowledge of a person from various sources and his practical experience (The Law of Lithuanian Education, 2011). In order to achieve good results, a flexible and open educational system should be created that combines both general education and self-education into a common educational space.

The problem and its relevance. The curriculum content is constantly changing and updated. Thus, it is a systematic and continuous process. In turn, the development of student competences becomes significant. Moreover, while implementing new curriculum, teacher training and qualification development changes too. The content of the curriculum is related to the macropolitics, which is the official objectives and curriculum itself, as well as the micropolitics – teaching and learning and assessment in the organization (Alexander, 2009; Resh & Benavot, 2009). Thus, the following problem related questions are raised: 1) what are the main concepts of the micropolitics of a school in scientific literature? 2) how they help to develop curriculum at school?

The object of research – the manifestation of the micropolitics in curriculum development.

The aim of research – to disclose the micropolitics in curriculum development.

The objectives of research: 1) to analyze scientific literature by identifying the main concepts; 2) to discuss how they help to develop curriculum.

Theory. The analysis is based on poststructuralism philosophical background. At ontological level, micropolitics can be defined as a molecular structure that enhances its powers and attitudes in the organization (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). Epistemological level is transactional (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It is based on power of knowledge, where the main feature is that it coincides with a broad educational process of competences (Lyotard, 1993).

The methodology of research

Sample. EBSCO, Research Gate, Taylor Francis, Sage publication databases were searched for the keywords “*micropolitics*”, “*curriculum development*”, “*micropolitics in curriculum development*”. The criteria, applied for the literature sources, were the following: 1) The sources should not be older than 15 years; 2) The sources should be scientific (based on research evidence and published as article, monograph, PhD dissertation or research report); 2) The keywords “*micropolitics*”, “*curriculum*” were to be mentioned; 3) Links of the literature sources were available; 4) It helped to clarify the micropolitics in curriculum development. *Method. Hermeneutic review of literature.* Hermeneutics provides an account of how understanding of a subject is formed, for example, a body of literature relevant to a particular problem. It is interpreted in the context that it is written in, and then influenced by the understanding of other relevant literature of the whole. In other words, the way one comes to understand a specific literature is based upon earlier understanding of other literature (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014). Hermeneutic review of literature was performed to reveal the manifestation of the micropolitics. Literature search started with review of articles in EBSCO, Research Gate, Taylor Francis, Sage publication databases. Citations from previous articles, editorials, and research articles were identified and interpreted in the context of the knowledge derived from all identified relevant articles. Upon reviewing 110 scientific sources, 85 sources were rejected, meanwhile, 25 the most relevant and significant works were selected.

The Rhizome, the Assemblages, the Strata and Curriculum

Micropolitics could be understood through rhizome, assemblages, strata. These words are concepts, however, the concepts are lines or, number systems attached to particular dimension of the multiplicities (strata, molecular chains, lines of flight or rupture, circles of convergence) (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004).

The Rhizome and Curriculum. Rhizome is defined as a formation without any common centre, which can connect anywhere with any other point. Rhizome has no beginning or end, they are made up of “*lines of flight*” and assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004), where „*lines of flight*” are movements assemblages are multiplicities. “*A rhizomatic conception allows affective investments and existential narratives to enter the learning environment obliquely and powerfully, in irregular ways, opportunities not provided for by the official curriculum, connecting the classroom with the lived realities of the social actors in the school*” (Roy, 2003, p. 91). It should be noted that the concept of rhizome, related with formation of a new curriculum can be found in various (Garbauskaitė-Jakimovska, 2018; Duoblienė, 2013; Chan, 2010; Cormier, 2008) scientific

works. While speaking about rhizomatic access, the participation of students in creating a new curriculum becomes a reality; the curriculum is as a continuous, dynamic learning process, which takes into account the students' desires and their experiences (Chan, 2010). The school community shapes the curriculum in real time, and responds to the changing environmental conditions (Cormier, 2008). Thus, learning in a self-study way has neither the beginning nor the ending. It can start from anywhere and connect to any other point. In the rhizome, a new curriculum (s) is formed, where the "*lines of flight*" consist of innovations and perspectives. Consequently, while developing a curriculum, the views, values and experiences of each member of the community should be considered. Furthermore, a collective space is an important element of curriculum-related work that is, framing the curriculum in relation to the institutional logics of the local school. Turning from a coercive situation, allowing upholding creativity and tactics at school (Duoblienė, 2013), and attention on the processes, where students and teachers are involved, how they change and how they understand their *nomadic trips* and their how they substantiate them (Garbauskaitė-Jakimovska, 2018) is important. Hence, it might be stated that rhizomatic learning becomes increasingly significant (Cormier, 2008), especially in distance learning (Mackness & Bell, 2015).

The Assemblages and Curriculum. The assemblage is defined as overlapping of multiplicities. There are only multiplicities, which are forming a single assemblage: packs in masses and masses in packs (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). Viewing teaching as assemblage means considering the various components of the classroom - the students, the teacher, the content, the classroom, and so on - as working collectively to shape teaching practices (Storm, 2015). A teacher employs strategies and tries to create ways and innovations in curriculum through teaching and learning (Duoblienė, 2017). It is an experiential exercise at school, involving teaching, learning and assessment processes through critical thinking. The knowledge requirements are an essential part of the curriculum structure. Knowledge structures reveal that as a transversal and integrated dimension of the knowledge requirements, the abilities can be seen as a hierarchical knowledge structure in the curriculum (Alvunger, 2018). The curriculum, which is an expression of the state, must remain a creative element, consisting of the assemblages, where creativity, innovation and harmony consist of many elements (Duoblienė, 2017). Learning happens when new assemblages are created (Semetsky et al., 2012). Hence, a curriculum must be based on experiential learning and freedom of choice in a learning process. Moreover, creating new assemblages through learning desires allows us to develop a curriculum in all directions, where there is an opportunity for self-expression.

The Strata and Curriculum. The strata is a territory, which could be deterritorialization or territorialisation. Deterritorialization is as new territory with *lines of flight*, where all lines like bridges to a new direction. Lines of flight are movements of deterritorialization. According to the author, there is a domination of the desired machines. In order to improve the quality of education, “*there exists machines of desire, inside each other and connecting them from the outside, and so many of them become*” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 23). This desiring-machine might turn into experimentation and deterritorialization. In education, it is like *nomadic* travel, where the main task is to be creative and to expand curriculum. A teacher and a student are curriculum developers. It should be noted that a school has elements of smooth space, owing to a reduction of hierarchy, that is, strata, and the possibility of constantly creating new curriculum, that is, the possibilities of making new connections (Roy, 2003). Meeting a community and finding new territories on rhizomatic mapping will help to create a new learning school.

Micropolitics and Curriculum Development

The sequence shows that rhizome, the assemblages, the strata depict the micropolitics. Micropolitics is not an issue of the it smallness elements, it is an issue of quantum flux, where opposite is molar segment-macropolitics (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). It can be utilized to depict the nuances of curriculum development process that involves political interactions (Rai & Rai, 2016). "*Micropolitical landscape illustrates the symbiotic and complex relationships between students and teachers involving organization of school, teacher philosophy, and power dynamics in the school*" (Conway, Rawlings, & Hibbard, 2018, p. 89). It is obvious that the process of curriculum development continues in the classroom. In particular, the teacher's role as the one of curriculum developer includes implementation of the designed curriculum in the classroom. Thus, teachers are seen not only as active curriculum implementers, but also as primary elements giving feedback about the current curriculum to improve it. They start by establishing instructional problems and end by proposing certain solutions (Konokman et al., 2017). In order to develop curriculum, teachers ought to have digital, learning, thinking competences, initiative and operating autonomously, self-directed, are able to planning and managing for result (Oudeweetering & Voogt, 2018). The foreign authors (Isriyah & Lasan, 2018; Ozola, 2017; Jayanaik, 2016; Kimer et al., 2016; Chan, 2010) point out that the curriculum discloses the choice of the student's freedom in the learning process, enlightens awareness and internal motivation to participate in the learning process, and upholds a creative learning environment (Ozola, 2017; Jayanaik, 2016). There are no doubts that teaching programs are designed to help students

to develop fully and to hear their “voice” (Jayanaik, 2016; Chan, 2010). Moreover, they develop social skills and reveal talents. Understanding the learning process by taking into account each individual student forms new experiences, which, in turn, help to improve the quality of education (Isriyah & Lasan, 2018). Teachers, considering the wishes of students, are able to adjust the curriculum with new teaching aspects. Educational practice clearly outlines further guidelines for learning and feedback (Kimer et al., 2016). Consequently, the participation of students in curriculum development creates social skills, improves students’ and teachers’ competences, promotes mutual communication and cooperation for achieving good results of each student.

Micropolitics and self-education. The emergence of micropolitics is determined by the changed role of a student and a teacher. Despite the fact that teachers try to construct new policies, it is increasingly difficult as they must obey to norms and rules. The resistance is possible through formation of assemblages, or introduction a curriculum novelty. The self-education, as a part of self –directed learning, is considered as one of them.

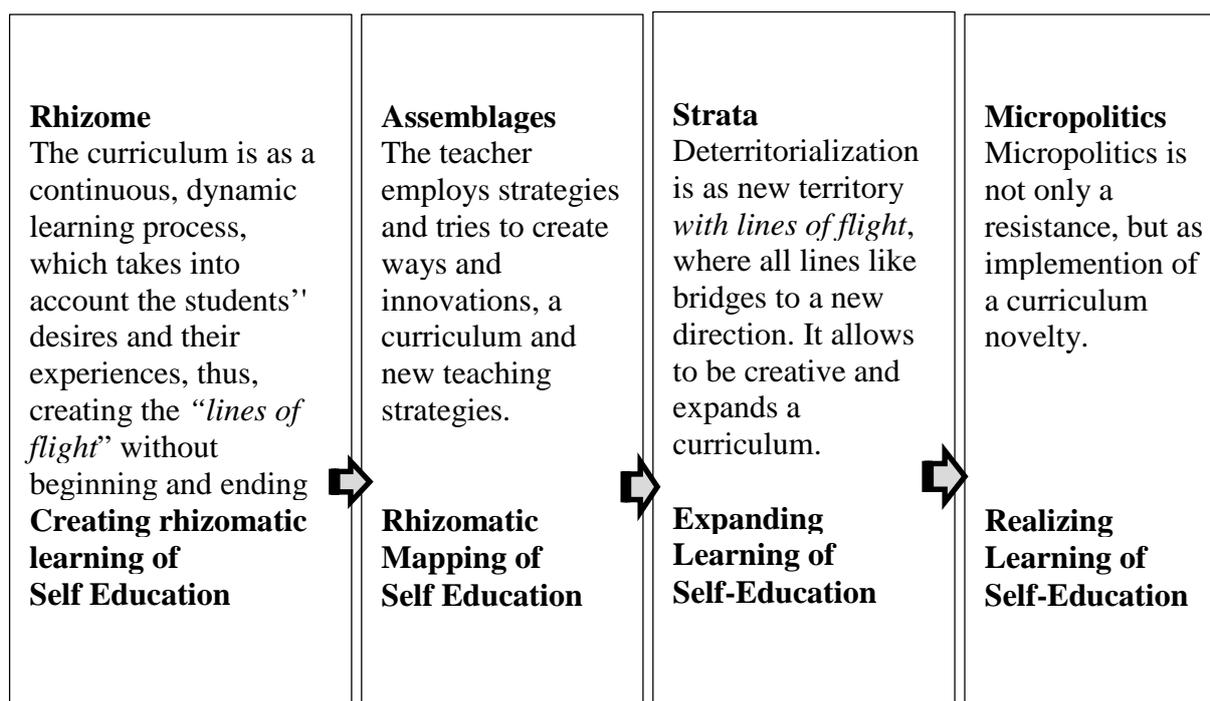


Figure 1 *Micropolitics and self – education*

The sequence in Figure 1 shows Deleuze, Guattari (2004) concepts in education. The teacher and students create a rhizomatic learning of education, which converts into rhizomatic mapping of self-education. They create new territories of self -education, it means that they are searching for various learning methods, so they create a new curriculum. The self-education could be understood

as a learning method and a learning manner. The competencies acquired through self-education can be recognized as a part of formal education (The Law of Lithuanian Education, 2011). It is widely accepted that the self-education is the knowledge acquisition initiated by the individuals themselves in respect of the classes' subject, volume and sources of perception, establishing the classes duration, as well as the choice of form of satisfying the cognitive needs and interests (Amirkhanova et al., 2015).

The self-education uphold rhizomatic learning, creating the "*lines of flight*", which have no beginning and no ending. A student creates his rhizomatic map and a teacher becomes an adviser. Teacher leaders continue to emerge in the leadership roles. They possess to be politically effective in the micropolitical environment of the school (Brosky, 2011). A student communicates with his teacher as a partner. A teacher has more rights and decisions to be made, while observing student's self-learning and evaluating his achievements. Moreover, a teacher develops the learning plans in a wider manner. Thus, a school climate is improved, and the learning itself becomes horizontal. It is based on innovative teaching (learning) and assessment.

Findings and Discussion

This research of scientific literature discussed the micropolitics in curriculum development by invoking Deleuze & Guattari (2004) conceptual point of view. In order to implement self-education in lessons, a favourable micropolitics of a school is necessary. Development of rhizomatic learning allows for more possibilities for both students and teachers. Meanwhile, observing curriculum at assemblage area allows to create new ways. The main figures at school are teachers and students. There are no doubts that knowledge enriches teacher's competences luggage. Teachers must acquire various professional competences (Oudeweetering & Voogt, 2018; Konokman et al., 2017; Kimer et al., 2016), therefore, they are considered to be the creators of the learning process. Importantly, teachers employ strategies trying to create ways and innovations that will help them to deal with the content burdens and time constraints (Alvunger, 2018). The relevant studies (Conway, Rawlings, & Hibbard, 2018; Jayanaik, 2016) demonstrate the significance of the horizontal knowledge, which is embedded in a curriculum task, inserted and added in a new context. The existence of multiple innovative pedagogic, democratic practices and creativity (Jayanaik, 2016) enables to draw the *lines of flight*. It allows to understand micropolitics better and enables to make appropriate decisions.

Conclusions

The analysis of scientific literature disclosed that the main concepts are rhizome, assemblages, the strata, and micropolitics. All these concepts are related to curriculum. Through *rhizomatic learning*, a new curriculum content is formed, where the *lines of flight* are made up of innovations and perspectives. Learning happens when is freedom and *new assemblages* are created. In the strata a teacher and a student are curriculum developers. Micropolitics is not only a resistance, but as implementation of a curriculum novelty.

Micropolitics manifests in curriculum development. Self-education should be implemented through rhizomatic learning, observation of self-education, creation of new learning territories and a favourable micro environment.

Micropolitics might be considered as a force of the school community to implement a curriculum novelty. The rhizomatic learning of *self-education* is one of them. It upholds creativity, enriches the competencies of both teachers and students.

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