

EDUCATION OF POLISH NATIONAL MINORITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS – LAW, MODELS OF ORGANIZATION AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Malgorzata Stopikowska

Gdansk University, Gdansk, Poland

E-mail: malgorzata.stopikowska@univ.gda.pl

Abstract

The article deals with the issue of the educational system of Polish national minority in the Republic of Belarus. In spite of the fact that citizens of Polish origin have always been very numerous there, they had been deprived of national education for almost 50 years (1949-1988). The situation changed in the period of “perestroika”, when members of the Polish minority were allowed to introduce lessons of the Polish language into schools. However, only the collapse of the USSR and the establishment of the independent Republic of Belarus caused a radical change in the status quo. According to the Byelorussian legislation, Poles have been able to open Polish schools and/or courses. As a result Polish national education underwent a period of rapid development which lasted until 2005. The article presents the domestic law of the republic and bilateral agreements (between Poland and the Republic of Belarus), enabling the Polish minority to develop their own system of education. It also shows several examples of organizational models of teaching the Polish language that function within the framework of the state educational system and beyond. The paper gives an overview of the extent and tendencies in the development of the Polish national education in Belarus.

Key words: *Byelorussia, national minorities, school, teaching of the Polish language.*

Introduction

Language is a kind of key to a culture, reflecting the experience, the heritage, the history and traditions of particular nations. Language skills are essential in getting to know the legacy of past generations and present-day science and culture of every nation. The same applies to ‘Polonia’ and Polish national minorities spread all over the world. They stress the need for developing native language skills amongst the young generation to allow the young to be acquainted with the culture and traditions of their ancestors (Gajda, 1995; Miodunka, 1992). The problem of ethnic education is an important issue for the Polish minority in contemporary Byelorussia. The dilemma is even more crucial as the Polish national minority is numerous enough there and, what is more, no Polish educational or cultural institution existed there for almost all the period of communists’ reign in Byelorussia.

The largest Polish population lives in north-western Byelorussia, in Grodno district. Numerous inhabitants of Polish origin also live in other regions, like Minsk, Brest. According to the official consecutive censuses, the number of Polish population in the Byelorussian Socialist Soviet Republic was calculated at almost 539.000 in 1959. However, in 1989 – it dropped to only about

417.500. In 1959, nearly half of Poles living there used their mother language in everyday life, but in 1979 – only 7.75 % of them did. However, in 1989 r. 55.7 % people – that is over 13% of the Polish community in Byelorussia could communicate in Polish. The first national Byelorussian census, which carried out in 1999, showed the following data: 396.000 Poles, and only 16.5% of them claimed the Polish language as their mother tongue. Nowadays, unofficial estimates show there are 1 million citizens of Polish origin in Belarus (Eberhardt, 1994, p. 109, 160; Winnicki, 2003, p. 54; Biaspamiatnych, 2003, p. 112-113).

Research problems and methodological hints

The presented text demonstrates the extent of development of Polish ethnic education in the Republic of Byelorussia. It points to the legal foundations that allowed the Polish-language educational institutions to develop and indicates the educational experiences of Polish national minority in organizing schools, classes and courses of the Polish language and culture. As a summary, graphs are (included herewith) showing general tendency of this growth. To get all the necessary material I made a several research trips in 2003-2008, visiting schools and others educational institutions run by the Polish minority in Byelorussia. Especially searches carried out in the archives of the biggest Polish organizations in Byelorussia were really instructive and fruitful.

Legal Basis for the Functioning of Polish Education in the Republic of Byelorussia

At the beginning of the restoration of Polish education in Byelorussia, action in favor of the Polish-language education was undertaken spontaneously by schoolchildren's parents during the times called "perestroika". However, only the actual political changes allowed for setting the real general system satisfying the needs of educational national minorities. The proclamation of independence by the Republic of Belorussia in 1991, the constitution and other Belorussian legislation, as well as bilateral agreements between the Republic of Poland and Byelorussia created a favorable climate for awakening the national awareness of Poles living there.

The Belorussian state declared its readiness to respect international law and the rights of ethnic minorities, including the right to form organizations freely and to preserve cultural heritage of national minorities (The Constitution, art. 15, 35-36), and as well as the right to ethnic education (ibidem, art. 50). The principles for establishing, registration and activity of the associations of socio-cultural or ethnic character are defined in The Act on Associations of 4.10.1994. However, The Act on National Minorities in the Republic of Byelorussia of 11.11.1992 specifies the range of rights of national minorities, obliging the Byelorussian authorities to create favorable conditions for development and functioning of educational and cultural institutions, respecting ethnical needs of schoolchildren. The Act on Education in the Republic of Belorussia of 29.10.1991 allows for setting up schools and kindergartens, and/or classes at schools and groups at kindergartens, with the national language of a minority as the lecture-language (art. 6). Based on these rules, two the most important and biggest Polish associations were set up. They have been organizing educational and cultural life of Polish national minority in Byelorussia: Związek Polaków na Białorusi (the Association of Poles in Byelorussia, established formally in 1991) and Polska Macierz Szkolna (Polish Educational Society, registered officially in 1995).

Building new, sovereign Byelorussia on the foundations of respect for international law, regulations and the rights of national minorities gave a great spur for establishing of official co-operation between the Byelorussian and the Polish states. *The Treaty on Good Neighborhood and Friendly Co-Operation* signed 23.06.1992 has been the basic document constituting mutual relations. The range of co-operation on both sides is specified in *The Agreement on Co-Operation in the Field of Culture, Science and Education* between the Polish and the Byelorussian Governments, signed in 27.11.1995 and *The Agreement on Co-Operation between the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Byelorussia in 1997-1999* (with the possibility of prolongation). The above mentioned documents have had a significant meaning for mutual contacts and the co-operation between the Belorussian and the Poland Ministries

of Education. Furthermore, they enabled the setting up and increase in the number of institutions responsible for the growth in the national identity of the Polish minority in Byelorussia.

Establishing and holding regular sessions of the common consultative Committee on Matters of Education of the Polish Minority in Belorussia and the Education for Belorussian Minority in Poland (with the presence of representatives of Polish organizations from Byelorussia as observers) were the first fruits of the signed bilateral agreements. At their sessions both sides worked on the educational programs and textbooks for national minorities. Appropriate offices organized language and methodology courses for teachers; they employed educationalists from Poland in Byelorussian schools (from Belorussia in schools in Poland). Simultaneously, there were scientific and cultural exchange, holiday actions for children and the youth. Also, sides co-operated in recruitment of candidates for studies in neighbor countries (Poles from Belorussia aspire for studies at universities in Poland, the Belorussian from Poland – at Belorussian universities).

The expansive activity of Polish associations in Byelorussia in favor of the development of Polish education and great support of educational institutions and charitable foundations from Poland, despite of a more or less friendly attitude of local authorities, brought on the significant development of Polish educational institutions. This extensive progress induced the Ministry of Education in 1998 to announce *The Methodical-Instructing Act* on the order of organizing of the education of children belonging to national minorities in the Republic of Belarus. Apart from the confirmation of previous acts, it points certain organizational forms of that education. It encourages educational authorities to render state schools or other institutions accessible for educational purposes of minorities, as well. According to the document, the teaching of language, culture, literature and history of national minorities is possible only for parents' (or pupil's legal custodians') written request. The act indicates the following forms of the school and extramural system of education of national minorities:

a) within the frames of the state system of education (programs and textbooks have to be approved by the Byelorussian Ministry of Education; a school director can engage a teacher from the native country of the particular minority way of the mediation between relevant educational authorities; funding these forms of employment is the responsibility of the Belorussian state):

- schools or classes with the minority language as the lecture-language (all subjects, except the Belorussian/Russian language, literature, history and geography, are taught in the minority language)
- bilingual schools or classes (such subjects as: the language, literature, history, geography, and culture of the minority are taught in the language of the minority, and the rest of the lessons are taught in Belorussian or Russian),
- schools or classes with additional language of the minority as a obligatory or optional subject (all other subjects are taught in Byelorussian or Russian)

b) extramural forms:

- Sunday schools – the language of the minority can be taught in non-homogeneous-age groups; teachers can use programs and textbooks approved by the central or local educational bodies.

It could be supposed that conditions of the development of Polish education in Belarus are excellent, but in practice the situation does not look so satisfying. Many officials have treated Poles and their cultural and educational requests with suspicion and reluctance, creating difficulties for the work of Polish associations and institutions. The actual enforcement of the rights stipulated in the treaty and other bilateral acts sometimes becomes a daunting task (The Expose, 2003; The Interview with Anzelika Borys, 2003). The difficult economic situation of the Byelorussian state causes various problems, such as funding teachers' salaries or additional lessons of the Polish language at state schools. Moreover, the conflict related to the elections of authorities of *Zwiazek Polakow na Bialorusi* in 2005 was a serious jolt in the Byelorussian-Polish relation. Unfortunately, the mutual cooperation and exchange were stopped thus the system of education of Polish minority was staggered and stagnated after 2005's events. Since then, the Byelorussian authorities have been openly interfering with the activities of this biggest and the most numerous Polish organization. The leading Polish activists have been harassed, if not persecuted (Stopikowska, 2006).

Models and Organizational Forms Applied in Practice

In Belarus there are 2 Polish-lecture-language schools: in Grodno (since the 1996/97 school year) and in Volkovysk (since 1999/2000). There were plans of building the next Polish-lecture-language school in Grodno and in other localities, but have never come true and – so far – there are no financial, administrative and organizational possibilities to carry out those plans. Both mentioned schools were built – despite of bilateral Polish-Byelorussian contracts at local and central level – thanks to the financial means of the Senate of Polish Republic and Stowarzyszenie “Wspolnota Polska” (the Association “Polish Community”) with a seat in Warsaw. According to international standards and bilateral agreements, schools for national minorities should have been built by Byelorussian state – the same as the Polish have funded schools for Byelorussian national minority in Poland (Karaczun, 1998, p. 23-87; *Szkolnictwo Grodno; Informacja wchodiaszczaja*).

According to the Belorussian law, all subjects are taught in Polish, apart from the subjects mentioned above. Buildings and the whole material base are property of Związek Polaków na Białorusi, but it is leased in use to local municipal authorities, which are obliged to provide schools with all financial support in exchange. The dismissing of the contract can happen in the case of change of lecture-language (*Szkolnictwo Grodno*). Teachers are recruited from local Poles or are delegated from Poland, as well. They are paid the same as at other Belorussian schools (Pietrzyk, 2001). After 2005 events, teachers from Poland usually do not receive appropriate permissions from Byelorussian offices, what means that they cannot be employed at any school in the Republic of Byelorussia (The Interview with Teresa Kryszyn, 2008; The Interview with Volha Vialesik, 2009).

The organization of bilingual schools on a wide scale was the main objective of Polish activists. First of all, Byelorussian-Polish or Polish-Byelorussian, where would be classes with Polish-lecture-language and Byelorussian-lecture-language, were the most desired. The general idea was that the renaissance of “Polishness” is in crucial Byelorussian national interest and on the other hand – revival of “Byelorussianness” is essential for Polish minority and for Belorussian state, too. But – as it’s appeared, the model of bilingual education hasn’t been accepted as a valid type of schooling, though it functioned in Minsk and Brest (*Szkolnictwo Grodno*). The lack of interest of Byelorussian parents was the main obstacle, as well as the political turn towards Russian Federation and towards “Russianness”, with reversal from “Byelorussianness”.

The Polish language has been introduced as obligatory mainly in numerous schools in Grodno district (*Obwód grodzieński*). However, the model of teaching Polish as a facultative language or as additional activities beyond the educational program is much more usual – even 7 times more school-children learn Polish in facultative or voluntary forms than obligatory ones (*Informacja o szkolnictwie 1999-2009; Statystyka szkolnictwo*). It’s very crucial that children acquaint with Polish at very beginning of education. That is why even at the pre-school level Polish groups or at least additional language activities are organized for kindergarten-children. Lessons are delivered by tutors of kindergarten or teachers from the outside (*Przedszkola; Przedszkola Macierzy*). Organizational convenience and solution to the matter of teachers’ remuneration are the basic advantages of “Polish lessons” organized at schools or kindergartens. Children need not leave their schools for additional activities at the time and place not always harmonized with their school timetables. Polish language fixed in educational program of school has greater rank and is regarded as officially and publicly accepted, which creates a much better atmosphere around this subject.

The extramural secondary schools teaching in evening mode, although not directly pointed by the Byelorussian law, have become a very common type of organization of ethnical education of Poles. They are run by educational-cultural Polish associations, which provide learners a wide range of knowledge of Polish literature, history and geography. The offer is addressed to the older youth at a secondary school level, especially to those who want to apply for university courses in Poland. The most significant and model extramural secondary schools have functioned at Polska Macierz Szkolna in Grodno and at “Polish Club” in Baranovichi (*Ankiety młodzieży o nauce j. polskiego; Szkolnictwo Grodno; Liceum Społeczne; Podania do Liceum; Stopikowska, 2008*). Where Poles lives in Diaspora, Sunday-schools are organized. This offer is addressed not only to children or the youth but also to adults. Groups usually aren’t age-homogeneous and teachers from Poland can be engaged. However, ensuring suitable place and appropriate remuneration for teachers are the basic problem of extramural

forms of ethnic education (Gredzik-Radziak, 2002, p. 181-219).

When there are no possibilities for introduction of Polish lessons into state schools or setting up own extramural schools, Polish associations run Polish language courses, folk universities for adults or universities of the third age. One of the most active universities of the third age is run by Polska Macierz Szkolna in Grodno (Stopikowska, 2004C; *Kroniki Uniwersytetu Trzeciego Wieku*). Extramural forms of education are usually paid by participants. Apart from tuition fees, the financial support of charitable or cultural organizations from Poland and work of volunteers are very important to the functioning these forms of education of Polish national minority on Byelorussia (Stopikowska, 2003, 2004A).

Although the Byelorussian educational law requires using programs and textbooks approved by Education Ministry of Byelorussia at every type of forms of ethnical education, extramural schools generally use their own programs and didactic materials (*Instrukcje szkolnictwo; Konspekty lekcji*). This is mainly due to the fact that many of the programs or textbooks are still under consideration in the process of accepting by the Byelorussian Ministry (*Program MEN RB*). Laxity in this respect is viewed as very convenient for Polish extramural education, especially that these schools are the centers of much more broaden variety of educational and culture activities not only related to teaching Polish language (Stopikowska, 2004B).

The Development of Polish Education in Byelorussia in the Historic-Quantitative Aspect

After the Second World War, in spite of existence of a large Polish national minority in the Belorussian Socialist Soviet Republic, educational and cultural needs of Poles were ignored consistently both by central authorities as well as the republican ones. Last schools with Polish-lecture language were closed in 1948/49 (Gawin, 1993, p. 7-47). When in the school year 1988/89 Polish lessons were introduced into educational program of several schools of Grodno district (Stopikowska, 2004A). Establishment of the Republic of Belarus and its domestic law as well as bilateral agreements have formed favorable conditions for rapid development of Polish education there. The educational achievements of Polish national minority in Byelorussia in the last 20 years are illustrated in the following figure 1:

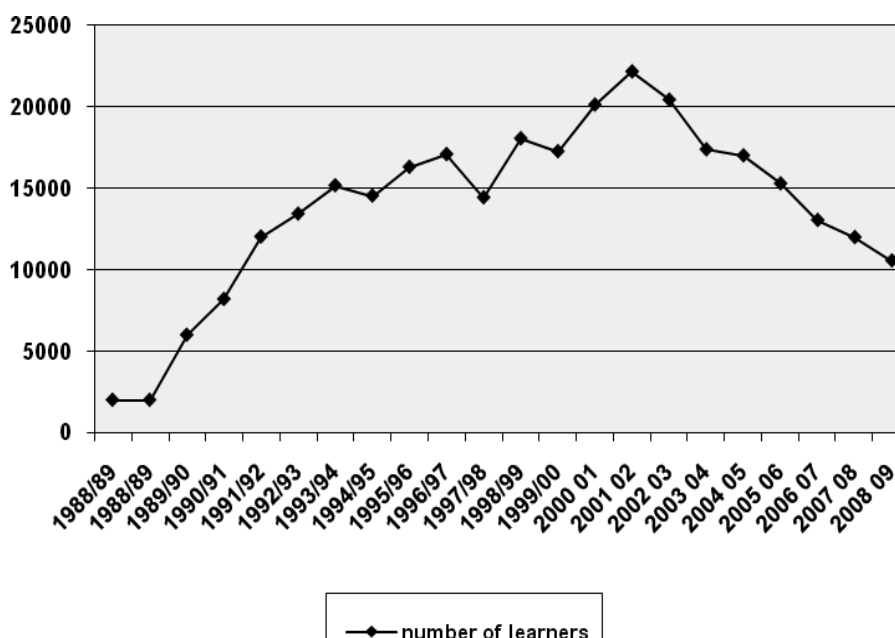


Figure 1. Development of Polish education in Byelorussia in 1988-2009.

Sources: *Informacja o szkolnictwie 1999-2009 [Information on Education 1999-2009]*. Vol. 1-7. The Archive of Polska Macierz Szkolna, Grodno, BY; *Statystyka szkolnictwo [Statistics of Education]*. The Archive of Związek Polaków na Białorusi, Grodno, BY.

The above data show a dynamic development of Polish education in Belorussia and its potential possibilities for further increase, which unfortunately came to no avail. The years 1988-95 were, above all, the time of creating of up non-existent structures of Polish education in Byelorussia, while the years 1995-2005 were a period of its stabilization. Until the 2001/02 school year, the increase tendency is noted; however, in the next years, there is a significant fall in numbers of learners. At that time the intensification of oppressive actions towards Związek Polaków na Białorusi, and the events related to the elections of this organization authorities in 2005 influenced in a decrease of the interest in ethnical education significantly. It seems that the feeling of insecurity of Polish national minority was one of the most important factors which caused the fall, mentioned above (Stopikowska, 2008). However, the demand for Polish lessons is the form of declaration of identification with the Polish origin, or at least an expression of the interest in the matter...

More detailed data are shown in figure 2:

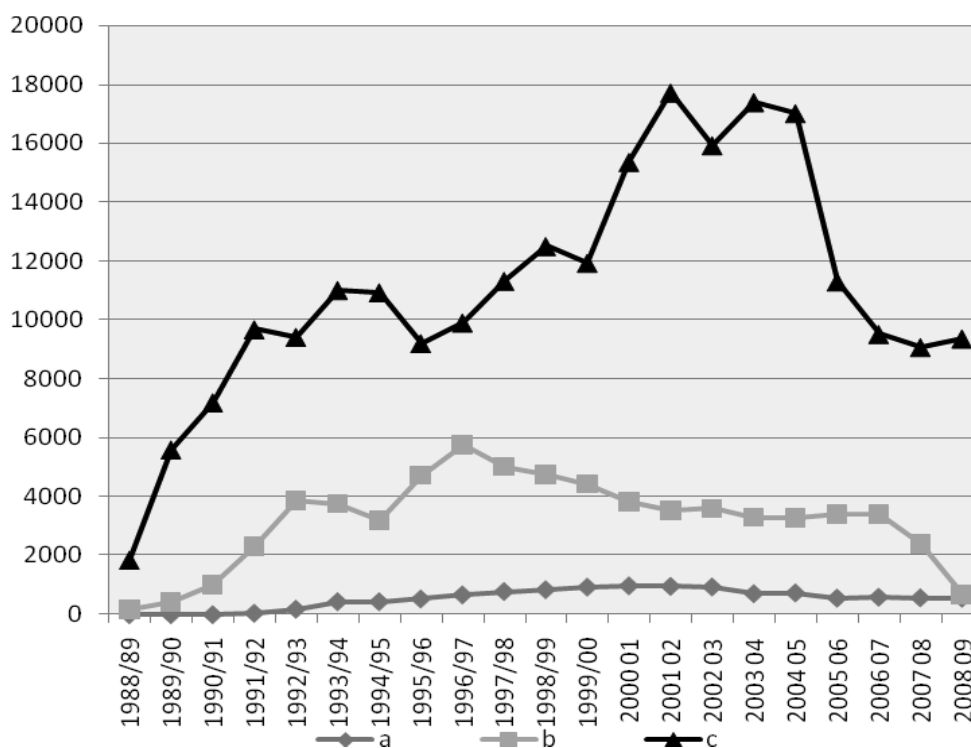


Figure 2. Development of specified forms of Polish language teaching in 1988-2008.

a – the number of learners attended classes with Polish as lecture-language at state schools

b – the number of learners who learn Polish as subject at state schools

c – the number of learners who learn Polish as facultative at state schools, kindergartens and at extramural forms of teaching

Sources: *Informacja o szkolnictwie 1999-2009 [Information on Education 1999-2009]*. Vol. 1-7. The Archive of Polska Macierz Szkolna, Grodno, BY; *Statystyka szkolnictwo [Statistics of Education]*. The Archive of Związek Polaków na Białorusi, Grodno, BY.

As the above graph shows, extramural forms of teaching Polish are the basic ones in Belarus. However, even this type of learning has been decreasing since the conflict related to elections of authorities of Związek Polaków na Białorusi in 2005 followed by persecutions of Polish activists. The data concerning the number of learners who choose Polish as a subject at state schools shows the most significant decline. The number of learners is nearly the same as in the second year (1989/90) of the Polish education existence in Byelorussia. The Byelorussian state's financial problems as

well as the reluctance of both central and local authorities towards the Polish ethnic education are the main reason for this fall. It is also caused by the events in 2005, so it can be considered to be the final blow to this form of education which tends to have been almost eliminated. After the opening of 2 Polish-lecture schools, the number of learners in these schools remains at nearly the same level, even though a small fall can be noted after 2005.

Conclusions

In general terms, the Byelorussian law is very favorable towards ethnical education of national minorities. Due to the fact that all basic rights of minorities are preserved by the domestic law and bilateral Polish-Byelorussian agreements, Polish ethnical education used to be well developed. The internal political perturbations and conflicts related to the elections of the biggest Polish association in Byelorussia, followed by persecution of its leaders, caused a significant fall in this education. Hence, the Polish language as an obligatory subject is almost eliminated while other forms of teaching Polish face decline and problems. The future of Polish ethnical education is uncertain and highly dependent on the current policy of the highest authorities of Belarus.

Acknowledgement

The article was prepared with the financial aid of University of Gdansk (Statutory Research Program in 2003-2006 (BW 7300-5-0153-3; BW 7300-5-0019-4; BW 7300-5-0362-5; BW 7300-5-0377-6).

References

- Ankiety mlodziezy o nauce j. polskiego [Questionnaires of the Youth on Learning Polish]*. The Archive of Polska Macierz Szkolna, Grodno, BY.
- Biaspamiatnych, M. (2003). Ludnosc polska Grodzienszczyzny w swietle badan etnokonfesjonalnych i socjokulturalnych Uniwersytetu Grodzienskiego [Polish population in the light of Ethnic-Confessional and Socio-Cultural Searches of Grodno University]. In: *Problemy swiadomosci narodowej ludnosc polskiej na Bialorusi [Problems of National Awareness of Polish People in Byelorussia]*. Grodno: Zwiasek Polakow na Bialorusi, 112-123.
- Eberhardt, P. (1994). *Przemiany narodowosciowe na Bialorusi [National Transformations in Byelorussia]*. Paris: Editions Spotkania.
- Expose by Zofia Szmyd, vice-consul of the General Consulate of the Republic of Poland in Grodno, for the beginning of school year at the Extramural Polish Secondary School (10.09.2003)*. The Private Archive of M. Stopikowska, Gdansk, PL.
- Gajda, S., (1995). Kompetencja kulturowa a ksztalcenie sprawnosci porozumiewania sie [Culture Competences and Development of Communicative Skills]. In: *Ksztalcenie rodakow (1989-1995) [Educating Compatriots (1989-1995)]*. Lublin: UMCS, 19-26.
- Gawin, T. (1993). *Ojcowizna (Pamietniki 1987-1993). Odrodzenie polskosci na Bialorusi [Patrimony (Memoires 1987-1993). Revival of Polish National Awareness in Byelorussia]*. Grodno-Lublin: Fundacja Pomocy Szkolom Polskim na Wschodzie.
- Gredzik-Radziak, A. (2002). *Oswiata i szkolnictwo polskie na Bialorusi 1989-2001 [Polish Education in Byelorussia 1989-2001]*. (Doctoral dissertation, Catholic University of Lublin, 2002).
- Informacja wchodiaszczaja [Received Correspondence]*. The Archive of Zwiasek Polakow na Bialorusi, Grodno, BY.
- Informacja o szkolnictwie 1999-2009 [Information on Education 1999-2009]*. Vol. 1-7. The Archive of Polska Macierz Szkolna, Grodno, BY.
- Instrukcje szkolnictwo [Instructions for Education]*. The Archive of Zwiasek Polakow na Bialorusi, Grodno, BY.
- Karaczun, R. (1998). *Odrodzona szkola [The Revived School]*. Grodno: Zwiasek Polakow na Bialorusi.

- Konспекты лекcji [Lessons Conspects]*. The Archive of Polska Macierz Szkolna, Grodno, BY.
- Kroniki Uniwersytetu Trzeciego Wieku [Chronicles of the University of the Third Age]*. Vol. 1-3. The Archive of Polska Macierz Szkolna, Grodno, BY.
- Liceum Spoleczne Polska Macierz Szkolna [The Extramural Polish Secondary School of Polish Educational Society]*. The Archive of Polska Macierz Szkolna, Grodno, BY.
- Miodunka, W. (1992). O koncepcje ksztalcenia mlodziezy polskiej ze Wschodu [The Concept of Education of Polish Youth from the East]. In: *Problemy ksztalcenia Polakow ze Wschodu [Problems of Education of the Polish in the East]*. Lublin: UMCS, 11-17.
- Obwod grodzienski [Grodno District]*. The Archive of Zwiasek Polakow na Bialorusi, Grodno, BY.
- Pietrzyk, B. (2001). Polscy nauczyciele na Bialorusi [Polish Teachers in Byelorussia]. In: *Nauczyciele polscy na Wschodzie 1989-2000 [Polish Teachers in the East 1989-2000]*. Warszawa: CODN, 59-65.
- Podania do Liceum Spolecznego [Applications for the Extramural Polish Secondary School]*. The Archive of Polska Macierz Szkolna, Grodno, BY.
- Program MEN RB [Program of Ministry of Education of Byelorussia]*. The Archive of Polska Macierz Szkolna, Grodno, BY.
- Przedszkola [Kindergartens]*. The Archive of Zwiasek Polakow na Bialorusi, Grodno, BY.
- Przedszkola Macierzy [Kindergartens of Society]*. The Archive of Polska Macierz Szkolna, Grodno, BY.
- Statystyka szkolnictwo [Statistics of Education]*. The Archive of Zwiasek Polakow na Bialorusi, Grodno, BY.
- Stopikowska, M. (2003). Z problemow wspierania polskiej oswiаты na Wschodzie [Problems of Support of Polish Education in the East]. In: *Z dziejow Polski i emigracji (1939-1989) [The History of Poland and Emigration (1939-1989)]*. Gorzow Wlkp.: Stowarzyszenie Polska w Swiecie, 517-530.
- Stopikowska, M. (2004a). Polacy z Kraju wobec Polakow ze Wschodu – nadzieje, zlodzenia, rzeczywistosc [The Poles in the Homeland and the Poles from the East – Hopes, Illusions, Reality]. In: *Nadzieje, zlodzenia, rzeczywistosc. Studia z historii Polski XX wieku [Hopes, Illusions, Reality: Studies on History of XX Century Poland]*. Gorzow Wlkp.: Stowarzyszenie Polska w Swiecie, 455-468.
- Stopikowska, M. (2004B). *Udzial dzieci i mlodziezy w organizacjach polskich i polonijnych na Wschodzie [Participation of Children and the Youth in Polish Organizations in the East]*. In: *Mlode pokolenie polskich emigrantow, jego losy i problemy w XX wieku [The Young Generation of Polish Emigrants, Their Fate and Problems in XX Century]*. Wloclawek: The World Research Council on Poles Abroad, 95-113.
- Stopikowska, M. (2004C). Wklad Uniwersytetu Trzeciego Wieku w Grodnie w integracje spoleczna osob starszych – Polakow, obywateli Bialorusi [Contribution of the University of the Third Age in Grodno to the Social Integration of Elderly People – Poles, Citizens of Byelorussia]. *Rocznik Andragogiczny*, 121-135.
- Stopikowska, M. (2004D). *Wspolpraca polsko-bialoruska w zakresie rozwoju oswiаты polskojęzycznej na Bialorusi [Polish-Byelorussian Co-operation in the Field of Developing Polish-Language Education], w: Беларуска-польска-ўкраінскае філалагічнае памежжа: гісторыя, сучасны стан, будучыня [Byelorussian-Polish-Ukrainian Philological Borderland: the History, the Present, the Future]*. Brest: Izd-wo Akademiya, 94-97.
- Stopikowska, M. (2006). *Edukacja narodowa mniejszosci polskich i Polakow za wschodnia granica Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej [National Education of Polish Minorities and Poles beyond the Eastern Border of the Republic of Poland]*. Report on International Scientific Conference „Педагогическое образование национальных меньшинств” organized by International Academy of National Minorities’ Research, Minsk, BY.
- Stopikowska, M. (2008). *Dwudziestolecie (1987-2007) Spolecznej Szkoły Polskiej w Baranowiczach na Bialorusi [Twenty Years (1987-2007) of Extramural Polish Secondary School in Baranovichi in Byelorussia]*, w: *Polonijna panorama [The Polish Panorama]*. Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski, 221-239.
- Szkolnictwo Grodno [Education in Grodno]*. The Archive of Zwiasek Polakow na Bialorusi, Grodno, BY.
- The Act on Associations (1994). In: *Wybor dokumentow prawnych dotyczacych mniejszosci narodowych [The Choice of Legal Documents Related to National Minorities]*. Vol. 2. *Polacy na Bialorusi [Poles in Byelorussia]*. Warszawa: Wspolnota Polska.
- The Act on Education at Republic the Belorussia (1991). In: *Wybor dokumentow prawnych dotyczacych mniejszosci narodowych [The Choice of Legal Documents Related to National Minorities]*. Vol. 2. *Polacy na Bialorusi [Poles in Byelorussia]*. Warszawa: Wspolnota Polska.

The Act on National Minorities in the Republic of Byelorussia (1992). In: *Wybor dokumentow prawnych dotyczacych mniejszosci narodowych [The Choice of Legal Documents Related to National Minorities]*. Vol. 2. *Polacy na Bialorusi [Poles in Byelorussia]*. Warszawa: Wspolnota Polska.

The Agreement on Co-Operation between the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Education of Republic of Byelorussia (1997). In: *Wybor dokumentow prawnych dotyczacych mniejszosci narodowych [The Choice of Legal Documents Related to National Minorities]*. Vol. 2. *Polacy na Bialorusi [Poles in Byelorussia]*. Warszawa: Wspolnota Polska.

The Agreement on Co-Operation in the Fields of Culture, Science and Education between the Polish and Byelorussian Governments, (1995). In: *Wybor dokumentow prawnych dotyczacych mniejszosci narodowych [The Choice of Legal Documents Related to National Minorities]*. Vol. 2. *Polacy na Bialorusi [Poles in Byelorussia]*. Warszawa: Wspolnota Polska.

The Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, (1994 with alterations and amendments in 1996, 2004). From: <http://www.president.gov.by/en/press19329.html>.

The Interview with Anzelika Borys, the Manager of Educational Department of Zwiasek Polakow na Bialorusi (09.09.2003). The Private Archive of M. Stopikowska, Gdansk, PL.

The Interview with Teresa Kryszyn, the Director of the Extramural Secondary School at Polska Macierz Szkolna (08.09.2008). The Private Archive of M. Stopikowska, Gdansk, PL.

The Interview with Volha Vialesik, a graduate of the Polish Secondary School in Volkovysk (10.01.2009). The Private Archive of M. Stopikowska, Gdansk, PL.

The Methodical-Instructing Act, (1998). In: *Wybor dokumentow prawnych dotyczacych mniejszosci narodowych [The Choice of Legal Documents Related to National Minorities]*. Vol. 2. *Polacy na Bialorusi [Poles in Byelorussia]*. Warszawa: Wspolnota Polska.

The Treaty on Good Neighborhood and Friendly Co-Operation, (1992). In: *Wybor dokumentow prawnych dotyczacych mniejszosci narodowych [The Choice of Legal Documents Related to National Minorities]*. Vol. 2. *Polacy na Bialorusi [Poles in Byelorussia]*. Warszawa: Wspolnota Polska.

Winnicki, Z. (2003). Uwagi o wpływie i skutkach stosowania niektórych metod i srodkow depolonizacyjnych na obszarze Ziemi Bialoruskich na polska swiadomosc narodowa w drugiej polowie XX wieku i wspolczesnie [Comments on the Influence and Effects of some Anti-Polish Methods and Means Used in the Byelorussian Territories on the Polish National Awareness in the 2nd Half of XX Century and Presently]. In: *Problemy swiadomosci narodowej ludnosci polskiej na Bialorusi [Problems in the Area of National Awareness of Polish People in Byelorussia]*. Grodno: Zwiasek Polakow na Bialorusi.

*Advised by Kazimierz Kossak-Główczewski,
University of Gdansk, Poland*

Malgorzata Stopikowska

PhD, Assistant Professor at Department of General Pedagogy, Institute of Educational Studies, University of Gdansk, Poland.
Bazynskiego 4, 80-288 Gdansk, Poland
Phone: +48 516 555 464.
E-mail: malgorzata.stopikowska@univ.gda.pl
Website: <http://pedagogika.univ.gda.pl>