

**THE ROLE OF TRADITION AND INNOVATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE PRIMARY EDUCATION THEORY IN AZERBAIJAN (1920-1931)**

***O PAPEL DA TRADIÇÃO E DAS INOVAÇÕES NO DESENVOLVIMENTO DA  
TEORIA DA EDUCAÇÃO PRIMÁRIA NO AZERBAIJÃO (1920-1931)***

***EL PAPEL DE LA TRADICIÓN Y LAS INNOVACIONES EN EL DESARROLLO DE LA  
TEORÍA DE LA EDUCACIÓN PRIMARIA EN AZERBAIYÁN (1920-1931)***

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**ABSTRACT:** The study of the history of primary education in Azerbaijan expands the boundaries of pedagogical thinking. The re-introduction of the progressive aspects of the historical and pedagogical heritage of the 20th century into scientific circles plays an important role in the formation of modern educational culture. Historical and pedagogical heritage is a source of renewal of pedagogical knowledge, acquisition of qualitatively new content, as well as its sustainability. It is important to study the history of primary education, as it helps to solve two problems that are closely related to each other. Firstly, what happened when one first examined the historical pedagogical heritage? How did it happen? Why did it happen and what was the result? What was the significance of what happened during that period and any further development? Secondly, by referring to the historical pedagogical heritage, it is possible to understand the theory and practice of today's education, the problems of modern pedagogical thinking and worldview. The article examines and compares the role of tradition and innovation in the development of the theory of primary education in Azerbaijan in the 1920s. For this purpose, the article analyzes the educational technologies used in that period, general scientific approaches, curricula and content of textbooks prepared for primary schools, and quality criteria in teacher formation. It is argued that this period was politically complex, economically difficult, characterized by a general decline in the common cultural and educational level of the population, but was interesting in terms of the building of a new society and a new state. Reforms in the field of education in Russia were repeated in Azerbaijan. Although experiments in the field of education were aimed at raising the cultural level of society, eliminating illiteracy, establishing new approaches to education, innovations (application of "complex" approach, use of active learning methods, application of project method etc.), they did not improve the quality of education. The introduction of innovations sometimes led to the denial and oblivion of traditions. The new teaching methods applied in Azerbaijani schools without any expertise, as they were brought from European and American schools, created serious problems in the formation of education because the new technology denied the tradition. With the class-lesson system with strict regulations, exhaustive structure and function, rich traditions were replaced by the laboratory-brigade method. The results of incorrect experiments became a serious obstacle to the development of education. For this reason, in the early 1930s, official government decisions banned experiments that hindered the development of education.

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**KEYWORDS:** Azerbaijan. Primary education. Content of education. Traditional education. Innovative education. Alphabet reform. Project method.

**RESUMO:** *O estudo da história da educação primária no Azerbaijão expande os limites do pensamento pedagógico. A reintrodução dos aspectos progressivos do patrimônio histórico e pedagógico do século 20 nos círculos científicos desempenha um papel importante na formação da cultura educacional moderna. O patrimônio histórico e pedagógico é uma fonte de renovação do conhecimento pedagógico, de aquisição de conteúdo qualitativamente novo, bem como de sua sustentabilidade. É importante estudar a história da educação primária, pois ela ajuda a resolver dois problemas que estão intimamente relacionados um com o outro. Em primeiro lugar, o que aconteceu quando se examinou pela primeira vez o patrimônio histórico pedagógico? Como isso aconteceu? Por que aconteceu e qual foi o resultado? Qual foi o significado do que aconteceu durante esse período e do desenvolvimento posterior? Em segundo lugar, referindo-se ao patrimônio histórico pedagógico, é possível compreender a teoria e a prática da educação atual, os problemas do pensamento pedagógico moderno e a visão do mundo. O artigo examina e compara o papel da tradição e da inovação no desenvolvimento da teoria da educação primária no Azerbaijão nos anos 20. Para este fim, o artigo analisa as tecnologias educacionais utilizadas naquele período, abordagens científicas gerais, currículos e conteúdo de livros didáticos preparados para escolas primárias, e critérios de qualidade na formação de professores. Argumenta-se que este período foi politicamente complexo, economicamente difícil, caracterizado por um declínio geral no nível cultural e educacional comum da população, mas foi interessante em termos da construção de uma nova sociedade e de um novo estado. Reformas no campo da educação na Rússia foram repetidas no Azerbaijão. Embora as experiências no campo da educação visassem elevar o nível cultural da sociedade, eliminando o analfabetismo, estabelecendo novas abordagens para a educação, inovações (aplicação de abordagem "complexa", uso de métodos de aprendizagem ativa, aplicação de método de projeto etc.), elas não melhoraram a qualidade da educação. A introdução de inovações, algumas vezes, levou à negação e ao esquecimento das tradições. Os novos métodos de ensino foram aplicados nas escolas azerbaijanas sem nenhum conhecimento especializado, pois foram trazidos de escolas europeias e americanas, e criaram sérios problemas na formação da educação porque a nova tecnologia negou a tradição. O sistema de aulas de classe com regulamentos rigorosos, estrutura e função exaustivas, fez com que ricas tradições fossem substituídos pelo método de brigada de laboratório. Os resultados de experimentos incorretos se tornaram um sério obstáculo ao desenvolvimento da educação. Por esta razão, no início dos anos 30, as decisões oficiais do governo proibiram os experimentos que dificultavam o desenvolvimento da educação.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Azerbaijão. Educação primária. Conteúdo da educação. Educação tradicional. Educação inovadora. Reforma do alfabeto. Método de projeto.*

**RESUMEN:** *El estudio de la historia de la educación primaria en Azerbaiyán amplía los límites del pensamiento pedagógico. La reintroducción de los aspectos progresivos del patrimonio histórico y pedagógico del siglo XX en los círculos científicos juega un papel importante en la formación de la cultura educativa moderna. El patrimonio histórico y pedagógico es fuente de renovación del conocimiento pedagógico, adquisición de contenidos cualitativamente nuevos, así como de su sostenibilidad. Es importante estudiar la historia de la educación primaria, ya que ayuda a resolver dos problemas estrechamente relacionados*

entre sí. En primer lugar, ¿qué sucedió cuando se examinó por primera vez el patrimonio histórico pedagógico? ¿Como paso? ¿Por qué sucedió y cuál fue el resultado? ¿Cuál fue el significado de lo que sucedió durante ese período y el desarrollo posterior? En segundo lugar, al referirse a la herencia histórica pedagógica, es posible comprender la teoría y la práctica de la educación actual, los problemas del pensamiento pedagógico moderno y la cosmovisión. El artículo examina y compara el papel de la tradición y la innovación en el desarrollo de la teoría de la educación primaria en Azerbaiyán en la década de 1920. Para ello, el artículo analiza las tecnologías educativas utilizadas en ese período, los enfoques científicos generales, los planes de estudio y el contenido de los libros de texto elaborados para las escuelas primarias, y los criterios de calidad en la formación docente. Se argumenta que este período fue políticamente complejo, económicamente difícil, caracterizado por un declive general en el nivel cultural y educativo común de la población, pero fue interesante en términos de la construcción de una nueva sociedad y un nuevo estado. Las reformas en el campo de la educación en Rusia se repitieron en Azerbaiyán. Aunque los experimentos en el campo de la educación tenían como objetivo elevar el nivel cultural de la sociedad, eliminar el analfabetismo, establecer nuevos enfoques de la educación, innovaciones (aplicación de un enfoque "complejo", uso de métodos de aprendizaje activos, aplicación del método de proyectos, etc.), no mejoraron la calidad de la educación. La introducción de innovaciones a veces condujo a la negación y al olvido de las tradiciones. Los nuevos métodos de enseñanza aplicados en las escuelas azerbaiyanas sin ningún conocimiento, ya que fueron traídos de escuelas europeas y americanas, crearon serios problemas en la formación de la educación porque la nueva tecnología negaba la tradición. El sistema de lecciones de clase con regulaciones estrictas, estructura y función exhaustivas y ricas tradiciones fue reemplazado por el método de brigada de laboratorio. Los resultados de experimentos incorrectos se convirtieron en un serio obstáculo para el desarrollo de la educación. Por esta razón, a principios de la década de 1930, las decisiones gubernamentales oficiales prohibieron experimentos que obstaculizaran el desarrollo de la educación.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Azerbaiyán. Educación primaria. Contenido de la educación. Educación tradicional. Educación innovadora. Reforma alfabética. Método de proyectos.

## Introduction

The change in the political system in Azerbaijan in the 1920s led to a serious change in the educational content. Although this period was politically complex, economically difficult, and characterized by the general cultural and educational decline of the population, it was interesting in terms of building of a new society and a new state. In those years, socio-political, economic, scientific and cultural, educational, and state-building sectors underwent experiments in the Soviet republics, including Azerbaijan. The implementation of economic policies and "military communism" that were inadequate for social life led to certain dissatisfaction in society. Therefore, the state-building was full of mistakes and errors. The terms of the agreement on political and economic cooperation between the RSFSR and the

Azerbaijan SSR were almost violated due to the first party's political ambitions and economic domination. Relationships based on cooperation were unequal (AZERBAIJAN, 2019).

Shortly after the approval of the "Regulations on the Unified Labor School in Azerbaijan", the People's Commissariat of Education published the "Approximate Schedule of Primary and Secondary Schools for 1920/21". This curriculum for primary schools differed significantly from previous curricula in its perfection. The given curriculum included subjects that were not typical for primary school (natural history, drawing), and did not provide for the teaching of foreign languages (German, French) along with Russian. Some subjects were integrated and reduced in number (the number of subjects was reduced from 14 to 9), and the weekly workload of students was adjusted to the norms. The total teaching load in the curriculum decreased by 4 hours in the 1st grade, 6 hours in the 2nd grade, 5 hours in the 3rd grade, and 2 hours in the 4th grade; 36 hours (27.2%) for mother tongue in I-IV grades, 28 hours for mathematics (21.2%), 18 hours for nature and country studies (13.6%), 10 hours for handicrafts (7.6%), 10 hours for painting (7.6%), 10 hours (7.6%) for singing, 10 hours (7.6%) for physical education, 6 hours (4.6%) for geography in grades IV-V, and 4 hours (3%) for cultural history. The main emphasis in the curriculum was on the mother tongue and mathematics. Article 1 of the decree "On conducting language classes in primary and secondary schools" approved by the chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Azerbaijan N. Narimanov (September 18, 1920), considered the instruction language to be the mother tongue in primary and secondary schools. The decree stipulates that Russian should have been taught 4 hours a week in the first 6 years of secondary schools, Azerbaijani or Russian should have been taught in minority schools, French and German should have been taught in a single labor school, and Latin should be excluded from the curriculum of a single labor school. It was also intended to teach the language of the minority nationalities (provided there were at least 10 children in the class) (AZERBAIJAN, 1920).

Thus, 48.4% of the total teaching load fell on the subjects of mother tongue and mathematics, and 51.6% on 7 other subjects (nature and country studies, handicrafts, drawing, music, physical education, geography, cultural history). One of the shortcomings of the first curricula was that it was possible to increase or decrease the weekly workload by the decision of the school principal in primary schools and the pedagogical council in secondary schools. Especially in rural areas, the number of school days was much lower than planned due to seasonal work. Another issue was the exclusion of Sharia lessons from the curriculum. Beginning from the 1920s, the newly formed government formed the Union of the Atheists, published an equally-named magazine, ordered the demolition of churches and mosques, and

promoted atheism. This was not unambiguous, and such an approach led to immorality. Religion is spirituality, morality, the basic principle of human's spiritual development, spiritual education, the formation of high morality.

A new regulation on schools was adopted for the 1922/1923 academic year. According to the regulations, the learning load of primary school students was reduced, as homework, group transfers, and final exams were abolished. Curricula were improved and re-approved following the regulations. The main change in the primary school curriculum was related to the names of subjects and the weekly hours allocated to them.

The transition to a new economic policy marked the beginning of changes in education. The main direction of the reforms in the education system was to reconsider the content of children's education and upbringing in accordance with the requirements of the time. The new content of education could be formed as a result of the joint work of researchers and practitioners (school teachers). Content reforms in primary education took into account the goals of the new state, as well as the most advanced theoretical ideas, innovative approaches, and practices of foreign educators (especially J. Dewey). This concept was a new philosophy of education. Its essence was to form an enterprising and active personality who is ready to take a creative part in the social change of the world in the process of educational and cognitive activity. Although this philosophical approach referred to the progressive aspects of Western pedagogy, which resonated with the postulates of Marxism, political neutrality was maintained. The content intended for primary schools in Azerbaijan differed even from the schools of the RSFSR.

In the first half of the 1920s, Azerbaijan still had progressive traditions in the field of primary education. There were only a few months left before the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan would become a Soviet Azerbaijan. In the beginning, schools, teachers, textbooks, and teaching resources were the same, even in the early days, pre-revolutionary mother tongue books were used. General, compulsory, and free education was declared, regardless of religion, gender, or nationality. Primary schools nationalized during the ADR continued their activities. The language of instruction was the mother tongue in both ADR schools and Soviet Azerbaijan. The new curricula did not differ significantly from the previous ones. Democratic principles prevailed in the schools, and the teachers who carried out the enlightenment mission were the bearers and propagandists of humanist traditions. Even at that time, the chief ideologue of the Soviet school, N. K. Krupskaya, interpreted the main goal of the new school as "the full and comprehensive development of the student's personality" (KRUPSKAYA, 1992, p. 14). However, the introduction of the new economic policy has led to a fundamental



change in the state's education policy. Humanistic and democratic approaches to education gradually gave way to the "proletarian class approach." Opinions about the purpose of education became the subject of intense political debate. The specialists who determined the content of primary education at the People's Commissariat of Education considered that the main task of primary education was to create a Marxist worldview in students and teach them dialectical thinking. This approach was an initiative to politicize education and to reconsider the content of subjects. For this reason, the subject of "Social Studies" (only 6 hours were allocated in grades IV-V), which was not typical for primary schools, was included in the curriculum.

The content of primary education, defined by leading educators in the early 1920s, remained relatively stable for a short time. From the second half of the twentieth century, the content of primary education began to improve frequently, to be politicized following the requirements of the time, and to develop in a completely new direction. The politicization of the content of education was related to the requirements of the state policy defined by the country (USSR). Even teaching people to read and write was associated with politics. This idea was further "developed" by political leaders. As a result, the concept of "the purpose of education should serve the proletariat, not the peasants, or the intelligentsia" (KALASHNIKOV, 1927, p. 35) was formed. The essence of the class principle was completely distorted and interpreted as the superiority of the proletariat over other classes.

Significant changes in the content and technology of education since 1924 have necessitated the development of new curricula under the application of "comprehensive training programs".

One of the issues that attracted attention in the curriculum developed for primary schools in 1920-1931 was the allocation of appropriate hours for the teaching of ethnographic materials in the subjects "Nature" and "Geography". At that time, the pedagogical process in Azerbaijan was seriously psychologized. The school was aimed at the full development of the child's abilities and natural potential and making the fullest of their childhood. Despite the lack of the necessary infrastructure for education, there were luxuriant conditions for the creative and free development of the child's humane nature and personality. On the other hand, despite the significant politicization and idealization of educational activities, the concept of primary education content included such concepts as democracy, openness, and collegiality, creative use of foreign best practices, regular improvement of education strategies, and tactics, support for innovative teachers' initiatives. The formation of the school personality was the core of pedagogical research.

Taking into account the above, we set the following **goal**: to review and generalize the strategies and tactics used in the organization of pedagogical processes in Azerbaijan in 1920-1931, the conceptual approaches used in the formation of school personality, pedagogical research, and the use of world pedagogical experience.

## **Materials and methods**

The research involved the study and analysis of archival documents, historical-comparative, and empirical methods.

## **Results**

### **Development of curricula for primary schools**

Frequent changes in the educational content in the 1920s and the approval of new curricula for primary schools by the People's Commissariat of Education required the development of new curricula. There were some difficulties in developing new programs, as national educators and methodologists had little experience in this area, in contrast to curricula and textbooks. The New School magazine wrote on this subject: "The most important point in schools is to develop a program" (NEW SCHOOL MAGAZINE, 1926, p. 88).

The first program for primary schools in Azerbaijan was published in 1923. Academician M. Mehdizadeh assessed the publication of these programs as "an important pedagogical event in the history of our schools" (MEHDIZADE, 1958, p. 6). In addition to systematically providing the content of subjects taught in a primary school in classes, teachers needed to carry out specific educational tasks for each subject (mother tongue, nature, geography, drawing, music, etc.). Pedagogical and methodological instructions were given. In addition to educational goals, the programs focused on educating children in the spirit of collectivism, a task that should be taken into account in the teaching of all subjects, especially "mother tongue, social studies and geography" (BAKU, 1923). These programs were based on imparting certain knowledge, skills, and habits to primary school students in different subjects.

The program was traditionally designed for subjects, not for "complexes" that were foreign to our schools and teachers. Programs organized on various topics were called complex programs. The purpose of the developers of complex programs in the State Science Council was to create a natural connection between the teaching materials of different

subjects. Although complex programs were widely used in Russian schools, they were applied experimentally in the USSR in Azerbaijan only in the Nukha (Sheki) model school and the Black City (Baku) primary school from the 1923/24 academic year. Although the curriculum developed by the national pedagogues and methodologists preserved the tradition, there was a tendency to have a less complex training system. The inclusion of “Mother Tongue” instead of Mother Tongue and Literature in the existing curriculum, and “Social” instead of Cultural History and Political Economy was influenced by complex programs. In terms of integration, the transfer of subjects in this way, in our opinion, was a progressive case for that period.

Despite the shortcomings, these programs, which met the requirements of primary schools, played an important role in the development of young students' speech, their acquisition of speed reading skills, and their understanding of natural and social phenomena. Although these programs were the first ones that were created for primary schools, they were systematic and understandable. The program was aimed at developing students as individuals at school. The responsibilities of the school were so extensive that it even bore the burden of the family and society. P. P. Blonsky paid special attention to school in the development of society and wrote in his "Tasks and Methods of New Public Schools" book: "The public school must be a place where the masses are educated, and they must now be given what is most important to Russia, which neither the family nor the environment can provide" (BLONSKY, 1979, p. 134).

The creation of the first primary school curricula was based more on traditions and experience. For this reason, educators and those with some experience in this field have taken the initiative to define the structure and principles of the programs. B.P. Yesipov, N.K. Goncharov in Moscow, B.B. Komarovsky, A. Hajiyev in Baku defined the general requirements for the development of programs. They considered it important to observe the following requirements when designing primary school curricula: 1) each curriculum should provide the necessary content for the development of a set of knowledge and skills, and to create a worldview; 2) the volume and nature of the program, and teaching material should be appropriate to the age characteristics of students; 3) the program should cover systematized knowledge and skills.

These requirements were intended as prerequisites for all programs. At the same time, the primary school curriculum required students to create a wide range of ideas about real objects and events. Great emphasis was placed on acquainting students with such objects and events, teaching them the necessary concepts, and increasing vocabulary. The program required the development of content according to the subjects, assignments for independent



work, and conformity to easy-to-difficult scheme. Improving the content of education, adapting it to the goals and objectives of the new school required a change in the procedural and methodological aspects of children's education, the solution of issues related to the cognitive abilities and life situation of the child. Any situation was conditioned by various internal and external, objective, and subjective factors.

In the 1920s, the principle of the general nature of the content of primary education was formed. General education covered a set of knowledge, skills, and habits related to the scientific basis of animate and inanimate nature, history, and thinking, which were necessary for all, served the common development, broadened the scope of the common vision. At that time, the content of primary education was to give a general character to the fact that the vast majority of the population was satisfied with literacy courses or primary education. After completing literacy courses, people of school age started working. It was practically impossible to involve the entire population in secondary schools, for which there was no financial base, infrastructure, and qualified human resources. Primary school graduates were to be given the necessary knowledge, skills, and capabilities so that they would have no difficulty in adapting to social life.

Another issue to consider when determining the content of primary education was the upbringing nature of education. The content defined for primary schools provided students with basic knowledge, skills, and habits of vital importance, as well as developed their physical and mental abilities, and boosted moral and spiritual development. In this sense, primary school was the beginning of knowledge, morality, and work life for the student. Proper organization of the educational process at school implied the creation of mutual understanding, interaction, love, trust, a sense of collectivism, and a humane environment in school life.

In the 1920s, science was given more priority in curricula and programs for primary schools. The purpose of teaching nature and geography at school was to "understand the world, to get acquainted directly with objects and events, with a system of precise knowledge about the universe and a human being." Starting from the 1924-1925 academic year, complex programs were introduced in Azerbaijani primary schools to create integration between different teaching materials. The complex programs taken from American pedagogy and approved by the pedagogical department of the State Science Council in Moscow were transferred to Azerbaijani schools without any adaptation to national conditions. In 1925-1927, complex programs were implemented in some emergency centers and, at the same time, in railway schools.

The complexity of the technology of developing complex programs did not allow its mass application. In complex programs, students learned about society and natural phenomena in a complex way, not in separate subjects, but as a whole. Several topics were covered in primary schools throughout the year, and the pedagogical process was based on it. For example, "Our city", "Our village", "Autumn in the village", "Spring in the city", "Health protection" and so on. Each of these topics was studied in three aspects (nature, labor, and society). In 1930, it became clear that the "complexes" of a conversational nature did not justify themselves, and were replaced by "complex-projects" of a production nature.

Although this approach was new, it disrupted the systematic teaching of subjects more than complex programs. The "complex-project" did not provide students with systematic knowledge of subjects, and students' socially useful work was placed at the center of the learning process. For example, instead of "Spring works in the village" and "Our factory" in the "complex" program, "complex-project" programs included topics such as "Let's take part in the spring work of the collective farm" and "Let's help to implement the factory plan". The knowledge acquired in the individual subjects was not generalized, the place of study of the students (school) was the field of labor, workshops, factories, and mills. The practice was far ahead of theory. For this reason, the idea of "school death" was born, which has no scientific basis. Shortcomings in school life were seriously discussed in the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party (SCP) and it was decided that "school education does not provide a sufficient amount of general education" (MURADKHANOV, 1964, p. 42).

Primary school was tasked with teaching subjects systematically. Primary school curricula were redesigned and switched to subject-based curricula. The "complexes" were completely forgotten. In the later scientific literature, "the complex programs were built on anti-scientific and anti-Marxist principles" (YESİPOV; GONCHAROV, 1941, p. 396), their effectiveness was completely forgotten. The further development of the primary school showed that from year to year the theoretical basis of the programs exceeded the practical part. Until the early 1990s, theoretical part in primary education was well ahead of the practical one. At present, the opposite process is taking place, and the practical lessons in primary school is far ahead of theory.

### **Alphabet reform and development of new generation primary school textbooks**

One of the most important reforms in the formation of new schools in Azerbaijan in the 1920s was the proclamation of the Azerbaijani language as the main language of

instruction. One of the most pressing issues was the preparation of textbooks in the mother tongue for primary schools. The development of national culture depended on the level of usage of the mother tongue. It was not possible to develop national schools without creating textbooks and additional teaching resources in the national language. It was difficult to develop new textbooks in a short time for all classes and subjects. There were various reasons for this difficulty: 1) lack of experienced authors who could write textbooks on all subjects; 2) lack of scientific terminology in biology, physics, mathematics, and other subjects; 3) inexperience in the field of printing and publishing; 4) lack of professional translators; 5) Arabic alphabet, which was culturally advanced, etc.

Despite all the difficulties, in 1920 a special commission was set up under the school department of the People's Commissariat of Education to write and publish textbooks. A year later, the publishing department of the People's Commissariat of Education was established. In 1924, the publishing house was expanded and turned into Azerneshr. Another problem was related to terminology, so in 1922 a scientific-terminological commission was established under the People's Commissariat of Education. One of the main problems was related to the introduction of the new Azerbaijani (Latin) alphabet. This issue was discussed on January 5, 1921, in the People's Commissariat of Education of the Azerbaijan SSR (STATE ARCHIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, f.57, p. 192).

The participants of the discussion were divided into two streams: 1) Latins (those who wanted to change the Arabic alphabet to the Latin alphabet); 2) Arabists (those who wanted to make a reform by adjusting the Arabic alphabet). Based on the report of Prof. P.K. Juzen, it was decided to switch to the new alphabet, and to continue publishing books in both Arabic and Latin alphabets for some time.

In 1922, the New Turkic Alphabet Committee was established under the Central Election Commission of Azerbaijan. When the committee was first formed, its members included Samadaga Agamalioglu, Farhad Agazade, Khudad Malik Aslanov, Abdulla Tagizade, and Ahmad Pepinov. Later, Jalil Mammadzadeh, Mammadaga Shahtakhtli, and others joined the committee. The committee organized its activities in three directions: 1) editorial and publishing department; 2) training and science department; 3) organizational department. There was much discussion about the compatibility of the new Latin alphabet with Azerbaijani language, harmony, and pronunciation, and finally, on July 22, 1922, it was decided to switch from the Arabic alphabet to the new Latin alphabet. "The issue of compulsory teaching of the Azerbaijani language in secondary schools with the new alphabet was discussed at the meeting of the Presidium of the Central Election Commission of

Azerbaijan on March 10, 1923. It was decided to introduce the Azerbaijani language in the new alphabet in the primary and secondary schools and labor faculties (STATE ARCHIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, f.379, p. 16).

On October 20, 1923, the Central Executive Committee of Azerbaijan and the Council of People's Commissars of the Azerbaijan SSR issued a decree "On the adoption of the new Turkish alphabet as the state alphabet" (1923).

Although these alphabets (Arabic and Latin) were initially considered equal, by the decision of the Central Election Commission of Azerbaijan dated June 27, 1924, the Latin alphabet was considered mandatory. When discussing the alphabet, it was considered important to correct the numbers. The Office of Higher Political Education, established at the People's Commissariat of Education, played an active role in eliminating illiteracy, organizing political education, and switching to the Latin alphabet.

On March 16, 1925, the issue of a new alphabet was discussed at the IV Congress of the Soviets of Azerbaijan. The Congress adopted a resolution on the transition to a new alphabet starting from the 1925/26 academic year in all first-grade schools and ending in the first-second grade national schools in the country in the 1932/33 academic year (AZERBAIJAN, 1980, p. 16). Under the resolution of the IV Congress of Soviets of Azerbaijan, on April 5, 1925, the People's Commissariat of Education of the Azerbaijan SSR adopted a decision "On transition to a new alphabet in the primary Azerbaijani schools in the new alphabet" (STATE ARCHIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, f.57, p. 18).

Primary schools first used native language textbooks published by national educators in the early twentieth century. There were some books published for the primary school: "Alphabet for Children" written by A. Sh. Talibzadeh, "Second year" written by M. Mahmudbeyov for second grades together with his colleagues (S.S. Akhundov, S. Abdurrahmanzadeh, F. Aghazadeh, A. Shaig, A. Afandizadeh), "Reading for the third year" and "New school" for the third grades, written by A. Sahhat. A. Shaig's "Reading book" (for grades I-IV), Abdulla bey Afandizadeh's "Latest Turkish alphabet" were among the textbooks used in the primary schools.

One of the first textbooks for primary schools published in the Latin alphabet in 1922 was the New Turkish Alphabet. The authors of this book, published by the New Turkish Alphabet Committee, were M. Mahmudbeyov, S. Abdurrahmanzade, F. Agazade, S. Akhundzade, A. Talibzade, A. Afandizade. The 78-page textbook provided alphabet training (3-44 pages) and short texts for reading. This textbook, written in the Sovti method (Sovti – sound, voice), was compiled by comparing both the Arabic and Latin alphabets. The letters

and words in one column were given in the Arabic alphabet, and in the other column in the Latin alphabet. The alphabet was taught in this way, the number of words was gradually increased, and the students worked on individual sentences. In 1924, the book "New Turkish Alphabet" was published by F. Agazadeh, S. Akhundzadeh, and M. Mahammadzadeh.

V. Khuluflu's "Rules of writing in the New Turkish Alphabet" (1925), F. Agazadeh, S. Akhundzadeh, and J. Mahammadzadeh's "New Turkish Alphabet (for the 1st group of I grade schools) (1926) books were published at the initiative of and with funding of New Turkish Alphabet Committee.

One of the main subjects taught in primary school was mathematics. In the 1920/21 academic year, 28 hours per week were allocated for teaching mathematics in grades I-V, and 30 hours in the 1923/24 and 1926/27 academic year. There were some difficulties in preparing books on mathematics.

In 1920, G. R. Mirzazadeh's "Geography" (part 1, for the 4th grade of the primary school) was published. The book was published in 1922, 1923, and 1924 in an improved form. G.R. Mirzazadeh was also the author of "Geography" textbooks written for secondary schools at that time. At the Congress of Azerbaijani Teachers held on May 25, 1925 (Muradkhanov, 1964, p. 56-66) dedicated to the transition of primary schools to the Latin alphabet and the preparation of new generation textbooks, Deputy People's Commissar of Education of the Azerbaijan SSR Jalil Mammadzadeh reported about the transition to the Latin alphabet in schools and scientifically substantiated the difficulties of the Arabic alphabet.

In the first half of the 1920s, multidisciplinary development in education was delayed for some time by the introduction of "complex" and "complex-project" programs and the transformation of textbooks into "workbooks." "Complex" and "complex-project" programs that did not justify themselves in school practice and did not instill the necessary knowledge and skills in students were removed from school practice and classical traditions were restored by the decisions of the Central Committee of the SCP dated September 5, 1931, and August 25, 1932.

### **Use of personality-oriented educational technologies in primary schools**

In the 1920s, the application of developmental learning technologies in the pedagogical process in primary schools began to attract the attention of practical teachers and

researchers. This interest arose, above all, from the general situation of building a new society and the realization of new goals and objectives of education.

Although the innovations in the educational process in the pedagogical literature of the 1920s were not given the concept of pedagogical technology, it was considered one of the main tasks of the school, which played an important role in the implementation of political struggle. The goal was to manage the pedagogical process more efficiently and optimally. The concepts of "technology" and "pedagogical technology" entered the public consciousness in the second half of the twentieth century and took a special place in scientific and practical thinking. Pedagogical technology encompassed any system of technologically developed methods and techniques of the teacher (tutor). Pedagogical technology involves mobilizing the best achievements of pedagogical science and practice to achieve the set goals, building the activities of teachers and learners on a scientific basis, predicting and designing the pedagogical process to the maximum. In other words, the technological type of activity is the dominant feature of human activity, which means the transition to a qualitatively new level of efficiency and optimality. The operational side of pedagogical activity cannot be separated from its personal-subjective parameters, the rational regulation side - from the emotional one. The technologies used in primary schools in the 1920s were different. To increase the efficiency of the training process, to prepare students for life, creative research was conducted, the experience of foreign schools was used. In the pedagogical literature of that time, research, active-labor, laboratory, excursion, and heuristic methods were mentioned among the methods that were more suitable for solving creative tasks.

### **Dalton plan as a group method of teaching in primary schools**

In the 1920s, a serious research began in the field of forms of education in primary schools. Changes were made to the traditional regulated classroom system. School self-government, class-group (Dalton Plan), and laboratory systems have emerged, which allowed planning one's work independently, to develop creative activity, to have a sense of responsibility, to accept a teacher as a senior fellow-instructor (in modern terms, a facilitator). The Dalton Plan was given a lot of attention in primary schools, and some experience was gained in this field.

Helen Parkhurst, a well-known American educator, is the creator of the Dalton Plan (named after Dalton, Massachusetts, USA), a special form of training. She first introduced this system in 1918 in US schools. The essence of the Dalton plan is a conscious attitude of



children to the proposed tasks, a clear understanding of the purpose and outcome, and the independent performance of accepted tasks by students. H. Parkhurst argued against a strict rules-based classroom system, arguing that collective learning forces high-gifted students to work at the speed of weak and middle-class students, limiting students' independent work (VAN DER PLOEG, 2013, p. 314-329).

## **Discussion**

In the Dalton Plan, each student had an individual task, so they worked according to their talents and abilities, presenting the program tasks sooner or later than their peers. The speed of the work depended on the student's talent, enthusiasm, and motivation. According to the Plan, children were divided into classes and groups, and the form of group training was abolished. The lesson schedule was abolished, and each subject and laboratory had weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly individual assignments. These tasks comprehensively described what knowledge and skills were required of the students, what books the students read, and what experiences and classes they had to acquire this knowledge and skills. In the Dalton plan, the composition of the groups remained stable during the initial period when the tasks were distributed and the students got acquainted with the curricula and plans. Then the students freely chose the task and the laboratory.

Each student had a specific task and work plan, working in his laboratory on this or that subject. Such laboratories had all the necessary teaching aids, tools, devices, books, methodical recommendations, and questionnaires. During independent work, each student was responsible for his work. He clarified, learned, understood, summarized, reinforced everything by repeating, and adapted his activity to the ultimate goal of the task he was performing. Each student performed the same tasks in one or more subjects, if necessary, received advice from the teacher, and when he considered himself ready, submitted his work to the teacher and recorded the received mark on the record card. In this way, training was organized individually based on the independent work of students (WEÏCHHART, 2012, p. 181-193).

Under the terms of the Dalton Plan, one student could finish school earlier and the other one later. During independent research, students developed intellectual endurance, the habit of work, the ability to work patiently, the ability to choose what was necessary, the ability to distinguish what was important from secondary. The main feature of the Dalton Plan was to instill in students a sense of responsibility. The nature of the work performed and the

conditions created for learning created in students a sense of responsibility and accountability by creating initial research skills. The student saw himself at the center of the learning process. He realized that his learning achievements depended on his activity and independent performance of tasks (THE LAND-GRANT TRADITION, 2012).

It is not the teacher who is responsible for the knowledge, skills, and habits he will gain. This, of course, not only encouraged children to work better, but also taught them to work, to control themselves, and to create a conscious discipline. It wasn't the teacher who taught the students this way, the students learned by themselves. This idea of the Dalton Plan is consistent with the learning process taking place in Azerbaijani education today. The students reveal their inner potential as a result of personal research. Learning tasks are given as per the wishes and requirements of the students, their inner needs, interests, level of knowledge, opportunities, and abilities.

The Dalton Plan, which was widespread in the United States and Britain, became widespread in Russia in the early 1920s. Shortly afterward, this form of teaching applied in Russian schools was similarly transferred to Azerbaijani schools. In the 1920s, the Dalton Plan became widespread in Azerbaijani schools. The whole work on the Dalton plan was divided into three stages:

- 1) accurate and clear formulation of the task;
- 2) independent development of the given material by students, joint work with the teacher in the identification and elimination of difficulties;
- 3) checking the results of the work and self-examination.

Different forms of the Dalton plan (individual work, work in pairs, work in groups) were used in Azerbaijani schools. Later, the project method was used, which involved the creative activities of students within the group. In 1928-1931, the Dalton Plan was refined and continued to be applied by the "laboratory-brigade method". In the pedagogical literature, it has been interpreted as a laboratory-research method. In some pedagogical literature, it is called the "laboratory-brigade method". Unlike the Dalton Plan, classes were not abolished here. However, the students in the class were divided into brigades of 5-6 people. Assignments were given to all students in the class, not to individual students (SOROKIN; SAKHAROVA, 2016). The subject was distributed among the brigades. The development of each task consisted of three stages: 1) introductory conference (the teacher gave recommendations on how to work on the topic); 2) Within 15-20 days, each brigade, under

the guidance of its brigadier, learned its share of the topic using books, and partly in the laboratory and booth (in this case, the teacher could be asked the necessary questions on the topic); 3) final conference.

Here, each brigadier and one of the brigade members gave information about the part they learned, and the teacher evaluated the work of the brigade based on his answer and concluded the topic. Although this method had a strong impact on the development of research skills in students, it had methodological shortcomings. Thus, many students relied on their teammates instead of working independently on the material. Because when evaluating the result, the answer of the active brigade member applied to the whole brigade. Another methodological shortcoming was related to the same study of the topic by the students in the class. Although each brigade was well acquainted with the unit assigned to it, they had little knowledge of the other units. If in 1926-1929 more complex and design methods were used, in the next three years the "complex-project" method was preferred (IVANOV; IORDANSKIY, 1930, p. 156-168).

## **Conclusion**

As in modern times, the main principle of the creation of personality-oriented educational technologies in the 1920s was the conscious attitude of students to the task, the understanding of the purpose, and the independent development of the tasks by students. Organizing the work in this way instilled in the students a sense of responsibility and self-confidence. Students experienced the joy of personal "discovery", they developed the necessary qualities in the process of creative teaching and work. Although the artificial division of teaching methods into two in the late 1920s and early 1930s was forgotten in the 1940s and 1950s, it has gained widespread popularity in the Azerbaijani press and school since the 1990s. In our opinion, this is not a scientific approach, but it may be more effective to use not only "active" methods in the learning process, but a synthesis of all methods to gain knowledge and skills. The ban on the use of traditional methods in the teaching process, which were tested hundreds of years ago and became an integral part of school life, severely damaged staff training in the early 1930s, leading to a decline in the quality of education. This issue became the subject of serious discussions both in the official Central Committee of SCP, the USSR Council of People's Commissars, and the USSR People's Commissariat of Education, and in scientific circles. As a result, an appropriate decision was made. In the 1920s, the transformation of some technologies (project method) into a universal method in

the course of innovative research, the application of which did not take into account regional characteristics, created certain difficulties in the teaching process. This trend is still observed.

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