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Received: 18.02.2025; revised: 1.05.2025; accepted: 7.05.2025

FOREIGN AUTHORIAL EXPRESSIONS REGARDING NATURE CONSERVATION USED IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF POLAND (1918–1939)

ZAGRANICZNE EKSPRESJE AUTORSKIE DOTYCZĄCE OCHRONY PRZYRODY STOSOWANE W PRAKTYCE EDUKACYJNEJ W II RZECZYPOSPOLITEJ (1918–1939)

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest zaprezentowanie treści wybranych zagranicznych dzieł, źródeł drukowanych, które wykorzystywano w praktyce dydaktyczno-wychowawczej w szkołach powszechnych w Polsce, w okresie dwudziestolecia międzywojennego. Ponieważ problem badań jest osadzony w paradygmacie interpretatywnym nauk humanistycznych / społecznych zastosowano metody badań jakościowych (jakościowa analiza tekstu, rozumienie hermeneutyczne). Artykuł implikuje strukturę problemową, składa się ze wstępu, trzech części oraz konkluzji i bibliografii.

Słowa kluczowe: historia edukacji, II Rzeczypospolita (1918–1939), ochrona przyrody, edukacja dzieci

Abstract: The purpose of the article is to present the content of selected foreign works and printed sources that were used in teaching and educational practice in public schools in Poland in the twenty years period between the two world wars. The research problem is embedded in the interpretive paradigm of the humanities/social sciences and therefore qualitative research methods were used (qualitative text analysis, hermeneutical understanding). The article implies a problem structure and consists of an introduction, three parts, conclusions and bibliography.

Keywords: history of education, the Second Republic of Poland (1918–1939), the protection of nature, children's education

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Introduction

In the Republic of Poland in the interwar period (1918–1939), teaching and educational activities included innovative works by foreign authors on ecology and nature protection, which had been created since the second half of the 19th century. The exemplification is the work of the German zoologist Prof. Ernst Haeckel entitled *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen* (1866), in which Haeckel isolated and explained the concept of ecology in relation to all relationships (friendly, hostile) of individual entities in a given habitat of life. An example in this respect may be the scientific assumptions of the entomologist Stephen Alfred Forbes (1895), who made the concept of ecology the subject of his scientific investigations in order to clarify this term (Dołęga 2003). In the Second Republic of Poland, teaching and educational practice used from the scientific findings of the German botanist Hugo Conwentz, a pioneer of the idea of nature conservation, author of many publications on nature conservation, especially rare species of plants and animals (e.g. yew, pine tree, beaver, turtle) (Szafer 1924).

In the discussed historical period, publications by foreign authors were popular in the Republic of Poland, such as Arabella Arends, John Charles Cornish, Leopold Kny, Arabella B. Buckley, Karl Georg Lutz, Henri Coupin, Ernest Thompson, Curt Floericke (Archiwum Akt Nowych 1930), P. Ledoux (Guide... 1925), Georg Glower Lewis, Jean Henri Fabre (ibidem, Rozkład... 1933), Alfred Edmund Brehm, Eduard Hassenpflug, Alfred Berg. The works of the above-mentioned authors developed for school use. They were translated into Polish by, among others, Maria Arct-Golczewska, Zofia Bohuszewiczówna, Adam Czartkowski, Bohdan Dyakowski, Helena Grotowska, Wanda Haberkantówna.

Exemplifications of auxiliary works addressed to children studying in public schools, translated from English into Polish

Jane Andrews wrote children's books titled *What Mother Nature told her children* (transl. M. Krzeczowska) and *Animals in images and descriptions* (transl. M. Arctówna). Teaching activities were also based on the publication by Alen Walton Gould entitled *Children of Mother Nature – Talks about the life of plants and animals* (preface and trans. E. Landowska). The mentioned works explained the importance of animate and inanimate nature in ecosystems, understood as the basic organizational units of nature, separated into a functional system in which organisms naturally cooperate to create food chains. The aim of these works is primarily to educate children to have positive emotions for creatures living in the Earth's ecosystem (Gould 1919a). Gould writes about the wisdom of nature, natural resources, and the gifts of nature (Gould 1919b) necessary for living organisms. He wrote about the changing appearance of animals (in summer and winter) and about storing food reserves for the winter (Gould 1919c).

The publication by Arabella B. Buckley (from the publishing series “Turn your eyes to nature”) consists of several parts:

1. Life of plants
2. Life of birds
3. Life in the forest and on the meadow
4. Pond and river
5. Trees and bushes

The work was translated and prepared for school use for Polish readers by Maria Arct-Golczewska, as one can assume so that children could better understand the importance of harmless (sustainable) human activity in the process of developing ecological factors in the natural system. As already mentioned, Maria Arct-Golczewska translated into Polish Arabella B. Buckley’s richly illustrated talks for children entitled *Trees and shrubs*. The work implies information about the environmentally beneficial, life-giving importance of trees because they purify the air. Forest resources also serve people in their free time as a place of rest, and due to their aesthetic value, they can be a creative inspiration in the process of painting and poetic expression. Moreover, they are useful for economic reasons (Buckley 1909). However, in the publication entitled *Buckley’s Life in the Woods and Fields* encourages young readers to learn about life in nature, especially a variety of animals and spring flowers. It draws children’s attention to the life of spiders in the bushes, the nests of woodpeckers, larks and bumblebees, as well as the functioning of squirrels and a mole in their habitat. Describes friendly and hostile relationships in the natural system. In order to create a pleasant perception, the author enriched her written expressions with colorful illustrations (Buckley 1908). In other talks, titled *Plant life in the field, meadow and garden*, Buckley motivates children to observe nature, learn and understand natural regularities in selected ecosystems: meadow, field, garden (Buckley 1919).

In Polish educational practice in the years 1918–1939, the English illustrated publications of Karl George Lutz were also the basis as the topics of collecting, identifying, drying plants and arranging a herbarium. These valuable teaching tips were especially useful in helping children learn about the vegetation of their locality (Arctówna 1905). Ernest Thompson’s nature stories about birds and other animals were used in the school learning process (Thompson 1909). George Glower Lewis took up a similar topic. He included descriptions of plants in his nature stories (see Lewis 1918). Thanks to Lewis’s publications, young readers learned about the ecological interdependence of organisms living in the pond ecosystem (ducks, snails, water snakes, frogs, mosquitoes, shorebirds and aquatic plants such as the water buttercup) (see: *ibidem*). This well-known English naturalist is the author of the Nature Propaedeutics Program, in which he described how a student should research nature using methods of independently reaching knowledge. Lewis assumed that children’s natural exploration attitudes should be developed in close

connection with the educational content provided during lessons in many subjects, e.g. geography, poetry, drawing, music (Lewis 1918).

Also noteworthy is the English methodological guide for science teachers by Eduard Hassenpflug, in which the author explained to teachers how to use various teaching resources in educational practice (importantly, not only school textbooks and auxiliary publications). Hassenpflug valued direct interactions with animate and inanimate nature. He motivated teachers to develop children's attitudes of respect for nature, shaping (especially) the emotional component of these attitudes. He argued that the idea of nature protection and active ecological attitudes can be successfully implemented in a school garden, familiarizing children with the natural regularities of this ecosystem, and educating them to respect the non-material value of nature (Hassenpflug 1929). Hassenpflug emphasized the importance of practical activities in the garden and children's explorations of observing and breeding animals and potted plants. He recommended education in the area of the creative value of combining teaching resources, e.g. the use of stories, slides and nature films during drawing and painting expression lessons. In addition, he justified the didactic value of systematic observations under a microscope at school (e.g. in the process of examining microorganisms). But above all, Hassenpflug motivated teachers and their students to protect and love the nature of their home country (ibidem).

The teaching and educational process in the Second Republic of Poland was also based on the books of the English naturalist John Charles Cornish about the life of domestic, domestic and exotic animals. Cornish recalled that in old Scandinavian legends the squirrel played the role of "messenger of the gods" (Cornish 1911). In his publications, he also included lists and drawings of birds, reptiles and fish (see Cornish 1913).

Moreover, in the Polish teaching and educational space there was a book by Robert Baden-Powell translated into Polish entitled *Scouting for boys, raising a good citizen using the wilderness method*. The fifth chapter of this work ("Forestness, or getting to know animals and nature") implies the topic of shaping sustainable relationships with nature, especially observing animals in their natural habitats and sensible help to animals (Baden-Powell 1938) on the foundation of ecological values: respect for life, compassion/compassion. Baden-Powell wrote about the educational importance of valuing birdsong and the practical use of knowledge about nature, e.g. images of birds and other animals in the totem poles of individual troops or teams (ibidem).

Selected auxiliary books for children translated from French into Polish

Maria Arct-Golczewska prepared for school use Henri Coupin's stories about the life of animals: monkeys, gibbons, mountain goats, seals, sharks, toads, dogs and cats (Coupin 1910). Teaching and educational activities also included other valuable

publications translated from French into Polish. A good example are the works of P. Ledoux devoted to the importance of water in the life of people, plants and animals (Ledoux 1916). In his works, the author justified why water should be valued, saved and protected against pollution. P. Ledoux also touched on the topic of food plants, such as rye, millet, buckwheat, corn, bulb plants (beetroots, potatoes). He tried to draw the young reader's attention to the life-giving importance of forest fruits and trees, emphasizing the need to protect them (Ledoux 1918). He stated that the forest and its undergrowth should be protected as a valuable component of this ecosystem (*ibidem*).

Jean Henri Fabre was a French naturalist and nature lover who devoted his life to exploring nature. His research focused primarily on the life of insects in their habitat (natural conditions) (see Fabre 1925c). As a teacher, he gained experience in teaching children knowledge about nature. He is the author of publications with which he motivated young readers to develop positive attitudes towards nature (Bohuszewiczówna 1922). In his works, he emphasized primarily the emotional component of attitudes, related to the love of individual entities in the natural system, especially insects (Fabre 1922). He also wrote about pests (Fabre 1925b), but above all he passed on knowledge about useful animals, such as bats, moles, owls, eagles, ravens, crows, woodpeckers, cuckoos, swallows, snakes, lizards, frogs and toads (Fabre 1925a). He explained the negative effects of human prejudices against selected (and useful) animals, such as the toad (*ibidem*).

Examples of auxiliary publications used in public schools, translated from German into Polish

The topic of learning about animals during trips was taken up by German naturalist Dr Kurt Floericke in his publications for children. He described the life of birds, including lark, rook, oriole, kestrel, buzzard, hawk (Floericke 1912). He also wrote about the lives of other animals (a hare, a mole, a hedgehog, a field mouse, a hamster, a lizard, a slow worm) (*ibidem*). Floericke justified the ecological importance of grasshoppers and fireflies (*ibidem*) in the natural system. Alfred Edmund Brehm is the author of an illustrated publication in which he described the habitats and feeding methods of animals: a hedgehog, a mole, a bat, a mouse, a guinea pig, a domestic rabbit, a field hare, a fox, a wolf, a lion, a brown bear (Brehm 1927a). Alfred Edmund Brehm's books are carefully researched (Brehm 1936), contain valuable knowledge about the life of birds (Brehm 1927b) and other animals. They sensitize children to the often difficult living conditions, especially of sick and old animals, such as the horse, which was widely used for hard work and was treated badly in the interwar period (cf. Brehm 1901). Brehm wrote about the need to skillfully build birds' nests in gardens, by the river and provide them with food (Brehm 1902) because they are useful. His works were used in the Second Republic of Poland in the process of ecological education, nature conservation education,

shaping attitudes of sustainable coexistence of organisms in the natural system, understanding the interdependence of human and animal life (Grotowska 1930).

German botanist, Prof. Dr Leopold Kny is the author of works on plant habitats, both ornamental plants (e.g. rose bushes) that beautify the human living environment (in gardens, fields, forests), but also other plants that create conditions for their development (Kny 1907) in a given ecosystem.

Among the authors, noteworthy is the work of the German scientist PhD. Rudolph Penzig. A publication entitled *How to answer children's questions* was devoted to the topic of shaping ecological attitudes. In his opinion, children raised in a rural environment (compared to children growing up in cities) have more knowledge and skills in nature. Penzig metaphorically assumed that for both people nature is an unknown "land", perceived as the opposite of culture (Penzig 1905). In his opinion, it is necessary to explain to children that culture is a complement to nature, and to teach them to intelligently interpret and understand nature (sea, mountains, plants, animals), also thanks to – as he metaphorically put it – the sublimity of its beauty, the symphony of beautiful colors (*ibidem*) in full life. He recommended parents and teachers to educate children in harmonious attitudes of coexistence with nature and nature.

In the discussed historical period in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, German works by Alfred Berg were also used, mainly about the educational importance of school trips, serving to deepen knowledge about the home country (Berg 1923). Moreover, it can be emphasized that, just like in the 21st century, at the beginning of the 20th century, there were zoological parks in Europe where animals lived in captivity. During the Second Republic of Poland, a story by the German traveler and animal trainer Carl Hagenbeck was known (Hagenbeck 1910) about animals in a zoological park near Hamburg. The educational goal of this story is to shape the emotional sphere of children's personalities, especially positive feelings for animals. Hagenbeck, focusing on the life of animals in captivity, described the work of a sensitive guardian who cares about the animals' well-being, and they are grateful to him and very attached to their guardian.

Conclusion

Based on the outlined conclusions from the analysis of the content of selected foreign works used in the Second Republic of Poland in the teaching and educational process in public schools and taking into account the quantitative criterion, it can be concluded that in Polish schools works by English and German authors predominated (which were translated into Polish for a school use). Foreign works existed alongside numerous school textbooks and auxiliary books by Polish authors, approved for school use by the Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment. Importantly, the authors justified the importance of sensitizing children to ecological values, such as respect for life (reverence),

symbiosis, responsibility for the natural environment, compassion, restraint in living without waste and shaping active ecological attitudes, especially attitudes of compassion for animals, they emphasized the didactic educational value of direct contact with nature.

It can be added that educational practice was commonly based on innovative foreign concepts of the broadly understood New Education, including on the pedagogical progressivism of John Dewey “learning by doing”) (see: Lipska-Librachowa 1918), as well as on the concept of “a school tailored to the child” by Edouard Claparede, “free education” by Maria Montessori, education according to the Dalton Laboratory Plan by Hellen Parkhurst and “creative active school” by Celestine Freinet. The works of Amelie Hamaide were used, in which the author explained the then innovative concept of the Ovide Decroly active school in the process of raising children in a socio-natural environment, shaping nature conservation attitudes, sensitizing children to the content of education and application activities in this area.

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