EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: ACCESSABILITY AND SAFETY

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Russia's military aggression against Ukraine has challenged the whole existence of our state, its sovereignty, unity and has caused a number of serious problems for the national education system, which are associated with the large-scale destruction of educational institutions, forced displacement of all the participants of the educational process both within Ukraine and abroad, as well as limited access to education for many Ukrainian schoolchildren and students in terms of wellbeing and safety.

Despite the negative consequences of the military actions, a number of international organizations emphasize the importance of continuing education in crisis situations. Thus, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine developed a number of educational projects to meet the key priorities of educational policy for the period of martial law. One of the aspects in ensuring effective educational process is the creation of a safe, accessible educational environment, comfortable for all participants in the educational process, necessary for sustainable functioning and development.

Under the accessible educational environment in the times of war we understand the system of psychological and pedagogical conditions aimed at organizing safe educational interaction of the participants in the educational process; creating opportunities for equal access to education for all school-age children both in educational institutions (in person) and remotely.

The main principles of creating an accessible educational environment are: integrativity, differentiation, individualization, practical orientation, adaptability.

Key words: *educational environment, accessability, participants of the educational process, princoples.*

Анотація. *Війна, яку почала російська федерація проти України стала викликом щодо існування нашої держави, її суверенітету та соборності, зумовила ряд серйозних проблем для вітчизняної системи освіти. Багато учасників освітнього процесу, які опинилися в епіцентрі бойових дій, зазнали значних психічних і фізичних травм. Водночас, незважаючи на негативні наслідки військових дій ряд міжнародних організацій наголошують на важливості неперервності освіти в умовах кризових ситуацій. МОН України було розроблено низку важливих проєктних пропозицій, що відповідають ключовим пріоритетам освітньої політики на період воєнного стану.*

Вагомою складовою для надання якісної та доступної освіти є освітнє середовище, яке є важливим життєвим простором для учня, впливає на його свідомість, вчинки та почуття. Освітнє середовище – це основа освітнього процесу закладу освіти. На сьогодні важливо, щоби освітнє середовище навчального закладу було захищеним, безпечним, а зважаючи на військові дії – доступним. Головні принципи побудови доступного середовища: інтегративність, диференціація, індивідуалізація, практична цінність освіти, адаптаційність, цілісність. Під доступним освітнім середовищем (в умовах війни)

розуміємо систему психолого-педагогічних умов, які спрямовані на організацію безпечної освітньої взаємодії учасників освітнього процесу; створення можливостей щодо рівного доступу до навчання усіх дітей шкільного віку як у закладах освіти (очно), так і в дистанційному форматі. Важливу роль у створенні та покращенні якості сприятливого, доступного освітнього середовища відіграють ефективні стосунки на рівні «вчитель-учень».

Забезпечення якісного освітнього процесу онлайн, створення доступного освітнього середовища (як онлайн так і в змішаному форматі), власне забезпечення безперервності навчання стають основоположними завданнями, які потрібно розв'язувати на даному етапі в умовах війни.

Ключові слова: *освітнє середовище, доступність, учасники освітнього процесу, принципи.*

Introduction. Russia's military aggression against Ukraine has challenged the existence of our state, its sovereignty, unity and has caused a number of serious problems for the national education system, which are associated with the large-scale destruction of educational institutions, forced displacement of all the participants of the educational process both within Ukraine and abroad, as well as limited access to education for many Ukrainian schoolchildren and students in terms of wellbeing and safety.

The living conditions of students in the eastern and southern territories of Ukraine, where armed hostilities are the most intense, are becoming increasingly unbearable. As a result of the war many participants of the educational process, especially those, who live in the epicenter of the military actions, suffered significant mental and physical traumas. Fleeing from the war, they are at great risk of being separated from their families, losing their parents, being subjected to violence, abuse, sexual exploitation, and falling into the traps of human trafficking. Many of them have already experienced extremely traumatic events. These children urgently need increased security, stability, child protection assistance and psychologial support, especially those who are separated from their families or lost their parents. Recently, it has been announced by the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, that this war has caused the most acute child protection crisis since the beginning of the 21st century, because only during the first 100 days of the war in Ukraine more than 5.2 million children found themselves in need of the humanitarian assistance and support (Education of Ukraine under martial law, 2022, pp. 13-14).

Despite the negative consequences of the military actions, a number of international organizations emphasize the importance of continuing education in crisis situations. Thus, the Safe Schools Declaration states that education is a fundamental element in the development and full realization of human rights and freedoms (Safe Schools Declaration, 2015). Of course, ensuring proper education in times of the war is an extremely difficult task that requires constructive solutions from the Ministry of Education, educational managers and providers of the educational services. It was mentioned in the manual "What Schools Can Do to Protect Education from Attack and Military Use" (2016), that there are various scenarios for organizing the educational process in schools during the military aggression. One of the presented scenarios highlights the importance of creating the child-friendly learning environment that is accessible, safe and ensure protection for learners. The key component of this child-friendly environment is the use of teaching methods that are inclusive, gender-sensitive, supportive, and free from humiliation and abuse, ensuring the active involvement of each participant in the educational process (What Schools Can Do to Protect Education from Attack and Military Use, 2016).

Many educational and non-governmental organizations are trying to make Ukrainian education more accessible, providing financial and technical support. Among a number of educational projects that meet the key priorities of educational policy and the

regulations developed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine for the period of martial law (Education of Ukraine under martial law, 2022, p. 22) there are initiatives, which could be divided into three major categories aimed at:

- provision of the digital devices for educational institutions (projects aimed at purchasing laptops and tablets for students and teachers in order to ensure constant access to education for students and enable teachers to use digital technologies for distance education);

- opening educational hubs abroad (projects aimed at ensuring the cooperation of the Ukrainian refugees abroad with the Ukrainian education system, providing them with the opportunity to study according to the state standards, receive educational counseling and psychological support);

- development of digital educational passport, which is the actual creation of a digital educational ecosystem to track the educational trajectory of each student, facilitate the work of the teacher and digitalize the management processes in the educational institution.

Obviously, the decisive factor in the implementation of effective educational transformations during the military aggression is the coordinated and effective cooperation of all participants of the educational process. One of the aspects in ensuring productive educational interaction is the creation of a safe, accessible educational environment, comfortable for all participants in the educational process, necessary for sustainable functioning and development.

Main part. It is important to note that among the nine key components of the new school formula, a significant role is played by a modern educational environment that provides the necessary conditions, facilities and technologies for the education of students, porfessional activity of the teachers, and interaction with parents not only in the premises of the educational institution (New Ukrainian School, 2017, p. 11). The outstanding Ukrainian humanist and pedagogue Vasyl Sukhomlynsky once noted that "education by means of the environment, with the things created by the pupils themselves, or the objects that enrich the spiritual life of the children group, is, in our opinion, one of the most delicate spheres of the pedagogical process" (Sukhomlynskyi, 1976, p. 89). The author actually understands the educational environment as everything that surrounds the child; the collective where the child lives and interact; and the set of characteristic features of the school life that have both direct and indirect influence on the formation of the student's personality, while calling them "the background".

The issue of educational environment is considered and studied by many scholars. They basically pay considerable attention to the study of the educational environment of the particular educational institution (G. Ball, J. Gibson, W. Mace, O. Pekhota, V. Rybalka, V. Semichenko, etc.). Their research often considers various aspects of the educational environment, analyzing it from the standpoint of the relevant subject of their research, mainly in the context of its organization, content, but the problem of an accessible educational environment during the war, as a relevant educational phenomenon, requires a broader study. Thus, **the purpose of our article** is to theoretically substantiate, analyse and compare various definitions and aspects of the accessible educational environment during the martial law in order to provide the background for further empirical research.

Taking into account the problem of our study, we find it important to interpret the educational environment as a characteristic feature of the life inside the educational institution, a system of influences and conditions for the formation of the personality, as well as a system of opportunities for students' personal development within the social and spatial-subjective environment (Tsyuman, Boychuk, 2018, p. 9). O. Yezhova understands the educational environment as a system of conditions for the existence, development and

activity of the individual in the process of mastering the specific systems of scientific knowledge, practical skills and abilities; a system of conditions for the education and training of the individual (Yezhova, 2011, p. 272). According to O. Savchenko, the educational environment is the students' living space that affects their consciousness, actions, feelings. The researcher emphasizes the unique opportunity of the educational institution to create its own design of the environment due to the freedom of the development, favourable conditions for partnership, social competences of teachers and students (Savchenko, 2009, p. 74). M. Chomczyńska-Rubacha defines the educational environment as a set of external stimuli in relation to the individual, and notes that it is a context that ensures the quality of students' everyday school life and determines the learning outcomes (Chomczyńska-Rubacha, 2003, p. 240).

Today, the educational environment also becomes a direct source of important educational impulses and cognitive conflicts (Kruk, 2009, p. 494). At the same time, we emphasize that in modern conditions, the educational environment of an educational institution is not isolated from external and internal factors, their influence, which can have both positive results and contain threats, dangers and risks that can contribute to destructive changes in the institution. In view of this, it is important to ensure that the educational environment of the educational institution was protected, safe, and, given the ongoing state of war, accessible to counteract these changes. It should be noted that in modern circumstances, the educational environment does not have certain boundaries, it is only determined by the subjects of the educational process (school leaders, teachers, parents, children). Therefore, it is important to ensure the accessibility, comfort, and quality of the educational environment, which is didactically filled with modern forms, methods, technologies, and teaching aids (Bilyakovska, 2020, p. 320).

We believe that the educational environment is the basis of the educational process, which should be mobile, purposeful, and aimed at obtaining education anywhere, according to an individual plan and schedule of the student, while interpersonal interaction takes place through electronic learning tools. We argue that it is a complex system that accumulates intellectual, cultural, methodological, organizational and technical resources, which promotes the development and formation of a creative, socially developed personality. The structural components of the educational environment include subjective-spatial, communicational, and the activity based ones (technological and didactic). It should be mentioned that the successful existence of the modern educational environment is impossible without the introduction of the ICT technologies into the educational process. Virtuality becomes an unseparable aspect in creating an accessible educational environment for children who are forced to change their places of living during the military aggression.

The leading idea in designing an open accessible educational environment is the use of personality-oriented and competence-based approaches to teaching and learning. It means that the educational environment should maximally satisfy the students' learning needs, ensure the organization of the educational process both in educational institutions and through information and educational resources, regardless of the location of any subject of learning, using typical technologies implemented in the Internet environment (Onopchenko, 2015). The educational environment itself, with limited access to educational institutions, becomes a virtual educational environment where each child can learn, communicate, and feel protected.

The advantages of the virtual educational environment include:

1) flexibility - the ability to provide the educational process in a convenient place and at a convenient time, regardless of the location of the participants of the educational process;

2) interactivity - the use of Internet technologies in the educational process, which allow to expand the possibilities of training in interactive mode;

3) mobility - virtual mobility, which allows students and teachers to "move" in the virtual educational space from one learning place to another in order to gain knowledge, transfer or exchange experience, overcome national isolation;

4) economic efficiency - reducing the cost of education, especially when the learning process is provided to students from different locations;

5) variety of learning and communication forms – it allows the flexible use of different forms of teaching, learning and communication: individual, pair and group forms, promotes dialogues in the learning process, etc.

It should be mentioned that the main principles of creating an accessible educational environment are:

- integrativeness – establishing clear intra- and interdisciplinary links in the learning process, uniting children's interests in out-of-school education;
- differentiation – providing opportunities for pupils to acquire different levels of knowledge, to choose the direction of study, the form of implementation of their own individual study plans and program;
- individualization – taking into account the educational needs of students in the organization of the learning process, development their abilities and cognitive interests;
- practical value of education – ensuring that students acquire knowledge and skills necessary to solve practical tasks and various life problems;
- adaptability – providing the opportunities for all pupils regardless their physical abilities to acquire knowledge; development / use of educational materials that are adapted to the capabilities and needs of the child;
- integrity – mutual coherence of various forms of education, complementarities of the lessons by extracurricular learning activities of students.

Researchers note that while modeling the educational environment it is necessary to take into account the importance of teaching students to learn independently throughout their life, provide the foundations for creative thinking, and independent creative work, which will facilitate students' further transition to self-education, self-improvement and self-expression, foster the formation of a personality with a flexible mind, eager for knowledge and capable of independent actions (Prykhodchenko, 2011, p. 69).

Thus, under the accessible educational environment in the times of war we understand the system of psychological and pedagogical conditions aimed at organizing safe educational interaction of the participants in the educational process; creating opportunities for equal access to education for all school-age children both in educational institutions (in person) and remotely.

The characteristic features of such an accessible educational environment include: an individualized model of interaction between the participants of the educational process, provision of psychological support and protection of the children; knowledge, skills, abilities are considered not as a goal, but as a means of educational development of the individual; the main means of communication are mutual understanding, recognition and perception of the child's personality; the teacher's ability to put her/himself in the child's place; empathy, understanding that the child, by means of the environment, changes, outgrows "him/herself", and develops.

As it was mentioned above, the educational environment does not have certain boundaries, it is only determined by the subjects of the educational process (school leaders, teachers, parents, children), thus it is necessary to organize additional extracurricular activities for children, which ensure their participation in various forms

and activitioes of social orientation: educational, artistic, sports, social and organizational (Hontarovska, 2010, p. 15).

An important role in creating and improving the quality of a supportive, accessible educational environment is played by effective teacher-student relationships, which contribute to the empowerment of students, their social intelligence and self-regulation (Kumar, 2019). The process of creating such a relationship should be carefully designed by the teacher and based on methods that have proven to be effective, such as self-regulated learning, cooperative learning between the teacher and students on the one hand, and among the students themselves on the other. The educational environment itself should be considered as a dynamic network of interconnected pedagogical events, the key point of which is the joint activity focused on cooperation and active position of the participating parties (Onopchenko, 2015, p. 96).

Conclusions. Back on October 29, 2021, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2601 (2021), which strongly condemns attacks on schools, children and teachers, which in fact, for the first time, focuses directly on the connection between education, peace and security. Resolution 2601 (2021) underlines the invaluable role of education for individuals and societies, especially as a vital safe space. The provision, protection and promotion of education during armed conflict must remain a key priority for the international community (Resolution 2601 (2021)). At the same time, we are witnessing that even the UN Security Council's strong condemnation of attacks on schools, participants of the educational process (children, teachers) and their call for the immediate elimination of such attacks, and refraining from actions that impede access to education are ineffective when it comes to the russian federation. An important task that has arisen at this point in time is to provide an accessible, safe educational environment for all children - internally displaced and those who remain in the war zone, both in Ukraine and outside our country. It is important to take into account all aspects, from the possibility of providing children and teachers with access to educational institutions and considering the emotional and psychological condition of students and teachers, who often do not have access to educational materials or the habitual basic living conditions. Providing a quality online educational process, creating an accessible educational environment (both online and in a blended format), and ensuring the continuity of learning are the fundamental tasks that need to be addressed at a current situation.

A large number of platforms, websites, programs and applications make it possible to provide access to the educational environment. For effective online learning, it is necessary to choose a few universal programs that are convenient and accessible to all the participants of the educational process.

Special attention should be paid to the provision of an educational environment for Ukrainian children who were forced to leave the territory of Ukraine for other countries due to active military actions. Thus, according to the UNICEF International Children's Fund, as of June 1, 2022, more than 2.2 million children were outside our country (UNICEF: 100 days of war in Ukraine). Therefore, it is important that every child who was forced to leave Ukraine because of the war has the opportunity to study abroad in a convenient form, to adapt to the educational institution of the host country, but at the same time not to be separated from the educational standards of Ukraine, to continue studying relevant subjects, in particular the Ukrainian language, the history of Ukraine and others (Udalova, Dziubynska, Revka, 2022). Ukrainian schoolchildren and their parents abroad face a number of problems, especially when they have a desire to continue their education remotely in Ukrainian educational institutions, because many host countries have the mandatory requirement for the refugees from Ukraine to attend local educational institutions.

Thus, the organization of an accessible educational environment for all participants in the educational process, regardless of their location, becomes an important task in times of war. The educational environment should be safe, flexible and adaptive, providing psychological protection, safe conditions of staying, convenient learning format (full-time, distance, mixed). Further scholarly research should be aimed at determining the organizational principles of creating an accessible safe educational environment, identifying its functional mechanisms and difficulties that arise in the process of its organization, as well as explanation of the connections between accessible educational environment and students' individual trajectory of learning, participatory approaches to teaching, inclusiveness and safety.

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