

ANCIENT GREEK *LOGOS*: AN INVITATION TO HISTORICAL-COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE ON EDUCATION

PELLA CALOGIANNAKIS

Abstract - *This study aims to present some aspects of the methodological and epistemological encounter of contemporary historical-comparative discourse on education with the ancient Greek historical-comparative logos; this encounter will pose a challenging stream of research in the area of comparative education dealing mostly with the historicity, the methodology and the epistemology of this field. Such an approach will attempt to demonstrate that the contemporary historical discourse on comparative education does not remarkably deviate from a process of reasoning and research via the ancient concept of logos.*

Introduction

Starting from the positions and the advancements of the ancient Greek historical comparative *logos*, it becomes challenging to search the origins of contemporary historical comparative discourse on education; key questions include the degree to which the latter is revamped and/or based on the former and to what degree it has acquired a new meaning; finally, it is worth investigating how the contemporary discourse can fit into the various forms of the ancient Greek *logos*: *technology/methodology* (the how it is), *historiology* (the what it is), *epistemology/ dialectology* (the reason, the whether it is), *synkritology* (the relevance/comparison).

Contextualisation

Ancient *logos* is tightly linked to the concepts of method, history/inquiry, knowledge/truth and comparison. The term 'method' is synonymous with the term 'art' (*technê*) in Antiquity. It constitutes a set of expressed norms which aid someone to acquire art and science (*epistêmê*) in depth and in a short period of time. Consequently, the term *technology* or *methodology* emerged with special reference to *technê/method*, which is a well structured expression of research components or of absolute knowledge and is characterised by continuity and consequence (Ong, 1957; Jardine, 1974; Kazazis 1992:185-209). Hence, the work of science came to be a work of art (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a5).

The *historiology* of discourse methodology was developed before Herodotus and the term *logos* was related to the Greek word *history* (*historia*); both of these terms - *logos* and *history* - referred to the inquiry into any matter or related area. Throughout *The Odyssey*, for example, someone finds a clear link between travel, inquiry and comparative knowledge and Odysseus is portrayed as an explorer and curious investigator, and as a man of exploration: 'he saw the cities of many men and learned their minds (or customs), and he suffered many pains in his heart while at sea' (Homer, *Odyssey*, i.3-4).

In *The Odyssey* someone finds a primary form of comparative knowledge at the risk of toils and dangers; hence, the 'suffering' Odysseus is firmly connected with the 'inquiring' Odysseus. This fact motivates Polybius to associate himself with Odysseus in a passage which is important for the relationship between *odysseology* and *historiology* of discourse (Polybius, xii.27.1-28.7).¹ So, in *The Odyssey* this *logos* seems primarily to influence the *historiology* of comparative discourse.

Due to Herodotus' prominence, historical and comparative *logos* became much more specialised. Thus, throughout the years, history as *logos* and *logos* as history have to be understood as systematic comparative inquiry into past events and their interconnections. Herodotus was among the first who sought to record and compare events in the way they actually happened and to critically assess his sources of information. Herodotus, in his presentation of historical-comparative *logos*, worked in a different way than that of Thucydides. In his comparative studies, Herodotus offers illustrations of all subjects which interest him and engages himself in an examination of particulars (*particularising*) not just from history, but also from related domains. From his day forward, the value of historical and comparative study has been noted by Westerners, and the historical-comparative approach has held a firm place ever since. On the other hand, Thucydides constrains himself in the political history of the Peloponnesian War and hardly ever went beyond this. Instead he tries to find broad generalisations (*generalising*) that he could apply to other situations based upon the evidence that he had gathered.

However, in Aristotle's works one finds elements of both men's methods of *logos*. When appropriate, Aristotle uses Herodotus' approach, giving specific details and comparative dimensions. On other occasions, he uses Thucydides' approach and tries to find constants that he can apply to all animals, not just specific categories. This despite the fact that Thucydides and Aristotle discuss quite different subjects.² Thucydides first presents the evidence and his observations and then he draws his conclusions. Aristotle states his reasoning, presents the evidence and then supports his conclusions. Both make attempts to find *generalisations* that can be applicable beyond the specific examples that they cite in their studies.

To this advancement of *historiology* of ancient comparative *logos*, other steps of scientific knowledge (*gnôsis*) were added: the *diagnôsis* based on love of truth, the *parakolouthêsis*, which means to follow and investigate or compare a thing with another - Galen, the Greek doctor, uses this word for the *investigation of symptoms* - the '*autopsy*' (Thucydides, I.22.), that involved personal investigation or experience to obtain authentic comparative knowledge and the consideration of facts from the beginning, *anôthen*, with reference to time. The above processes of investigation were accompanied by accuracy and objectivity (*akrivôs*), a consecutive treatment of a matter and the idea of a chronological sequence (*kathexês*). Finally, the word *epignosis* is strongly related to full/absolute knowledge.

Similarly, in Plato the *epistemology* of *logos*, concerning the knowledge of truth (*gnôsis*) and the various areas of discourse of all the different classes of human souls, was supplemented by the knowledge of the different kinds of argument. Only the person who has acquired all this knowledge is a perfect lover of the truth, in so far as perfection is attainable by humans; but the acquisition of this knowledge is a great task and it is connected with the desire to serve the spirit of real art and science (*technê* and *epistêmê*) (Fowler 1982:407sq.).³ The process of collection and division, by which a number of particulars may be brought together under a *generic concept*, is also clearly stated. The latter is of much importance in the dialectic method which for Plato is the only acceptable method of *reasoning*. Plato's dialectic method consists of four types: the definitive, the analytical, the divisible, and the demonstrative (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 265d sq.). The key to the dialectic method appears in the Platonic *Phaedrus*, where Socrates articulates his opinion about the real art of rhetoric and describes two processes: the collection and the division, which characterise all the 'dialecticians'; that is, all who have the sense of sight of everything that Plato names deduction and induction. In reality the *epistemology/dialectology* of *logos* exposed in the above passage establishes not only the standards for the art (*technology/methodology*) of rhetoric but ultimately the principles for all sciences and arts. Earlier, Socrates *compares* the method of the art of healing and the art of rhetoric and ascertains their common grounds, since both of them analyse nature (*Phaedrus*, in the passage 265d-277d).

The above Platonic example of comparative method with the proposed criteria in this *Dialogue* is later adopted by Aristotle, in order to be completed and developed in greater depth. Furthermore, both Plato and Aristotle oppose reason to perception, but Aristotle explains that perception is of the individual as characterised by general qualities, and that reason apprehends general qualities as present in individual things. On the other hand, Aristotle (in the *Prior Analytics*) states and develops his theory of syllogism, analyses and illustrates the various

figures, moods and modes, and describes the conditions under which comparative inquiry is possible (Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, 24a16-25a13); he examines the mechanism of *technology* and *epistemology* of reasoning, while in the *Posterior Analytics* he turns to the problem of knowledge (*gnôsis*): what it is, how it is acquired, whether it is guaranteed to be true, how it is expanded and systematised (Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 71a1-72b25).

All reasoned acquisition of comparative knowledge involves a process in which the mind advances from something that is already known. This starting-point may be knowledge of fact, or meaning, or both. In this way, Aristotle shows that some of our previous knowledge may be only potential and prepares us for the structure of scientific comparative knowledge. In his theory, he supports that science should start with axioms as universal principles which are relevant only to quantities. He sometimes speaks of them as the source, at other times as the means, and as principles indigenous to the particular sciences which are either assumption, or nominal definitions of technical terms. On the other hand, scientific knowledge is concerned only with necessary facts; facts become necessary if they are proved as such; accordingly the premises from which they are derived must be necessary; they also must be scientific implying that certain relations between predicate and subject must exist.

Furthermore, definition, division and systematisation are substantial elements of the Aristotelian comparative discourse (Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 89b23-90a34). Aristotle's object is to study and *compare* phenomena as carefully as possible and to put forward only such theories that have the potential to be proved. The *kinêsis* (motion/transition, also a central concept for Thucydides, without which there can be no history) and *metabolê* (change) which were crucial in his theory, deals with the essence of the *epistêmê* and the *cosmos* per se (Aristotle, *Physics*, 194a36, 200b3 and passim). Aristotle places observation before theory, and makes the theory fit the facts rather than the reverse. Especially (according to Aristotle) in the more concrete sciences, which take account of secondary qualities, much good work can be done through observation (*theôrêsis* /contemplation) long before quantitative exactness is a necessary condition of further progress (W.R.Ross, 1955:xi-xii).

It was via these scientific comparative paths that the concept of *synkrisis* which, in recent times means comparison, a *synkritology of logos* emerged; it should be noted that in Aristotelian theory *synkrisis* expresses the process of the *inter-*, the *cross-* and the *multi-* dimensions of scientific inquiry, as well as the interconnection and *synthesis* of phenomena and it is opposed to the concept of *diakrisis* which means distinction and separation (Aristotle, *Physics*, 187a31, 243b8-29, 260b11,265b20-22). In addition, within this context of *logos*, Aristotle poses five kinds of categories that each science should attempt to

answer via a dialectic reasoning: the *fact*, the *reason*, the *whether it is*, the *how it is* and the *relevance*.

Contemporary historical-comparative discourse on education

Modern researchers can not limit themselves to national historical-comparative educational approaches. The comparison of international educational phenomena in different fields must be taken into consideration. The historical conditions which also determined the essence and content of pedagogical events must receive proper attention. The comparative approach in the historical analysis of educational phenomena today is very important, because it allows us to define a revived glance of the historical-comparative discursive paradigm in education. We discuss that a great need emerges in the field to work on 'a new comparative education' (Calogiannakis, 1993; Calogiannakis, 1988); hence, comparative education has to engage itself to reestablish/rethink the concept of comparison, placing it in the framework of ancient *synkrisis/comparison* and dialectic reasoning concerning the *fact*, the *reason*, the *whether it is*, the *how it is* and the *relevance*, that is in an inter-/cross-/multi-context. The most important components of this revived historical-comparative discourse on education could be presented in the following figure:

HISTORIOLOGY OF LOGOS	EPISTEMOLOGY OF LOGOS	SYNKRITOLOGY OF LOGOS
Comparative knowledge/ truth particularising, generalising systematic inquiry/ (diagnosis parakoluthêsis, autopsy, anôthen, akrivôs, kathexês), epignôsis	reasoning/ the <i>fact</i> , the <i>reason</i> , the <i>whether it is</i> , the <i>how it</i> <i>is</i> and the <i>relevance</i> . Dialectic, scientific knowledge, epistêmé	synkrisis/comparison the inter, the cross- the multi- diakrisis synthesis

According to the figure, some basic key-concepts can be carefully considered as the origins of contemporary historical comparative discourse.

Firstly, the concepts of the 'general' and 'particular' which have been treated by the ancient comparative *logos*, are related to the process of assessing to the sources of information/ facts/data in the context of the historical and comparative studies. These concepts also have to do with a category of problems that someone can find in the conceptualisation of contemporary historical educational comparisons. Besides, a concept can be considered as a *logos* approach, which is a part of the process of definition, collection, division and systematisation by which the comparative mind grasps educational reality. This phenomenon is particularly found in the formulation of theory which is a product of history; thus, it emerges under given historical conditions and history validates, or not, their relevance in the *historiology of logos*. Usually, a concept should be able to cope with the complexity and changes in various situations; to this the problem of meaning may be added. Thus, it is possible to establish similarities among differences and differences among similarities, that is to say to grasp the universal (*generalising*) in the particular (*particularising*) (Lê Thành Khôi 1988:87-113). Concepts which have been basic to historical analysis, *historiology of logos*, have become the basis for profoundly different treatment amongst social scientists, and amongst comparative scholars. Changed interpretations have also marked the historical-comparative discourse on education, since scholars have tried to 'escape' from what they have perceived as oversimplified versions of the concepts and their use by historians.

Secondly, dialectic reasoning in the context of ancient *logos* can be seen as solid ground for modern comparative scholars in the field of their epistemological and methodological approaches: collection and division, deduction and induction in the context of comparative dialectic reasoning is a challenge to contemporary comparative analysis. In addition, the historical-comparative discourse today implies several features, such as the dynamics of multiple interpretations, the holistic approach, the dialectic comparison, cross-cultural/cross-pedagogical interactions, re-interpretation process, multi-methodological revision. Researchers are continuously confronted with new challenges and opportunities, especially in the context of the postmodernism. Postmodern times elicit a new framework for alternative interpretive discourse on education, *the dialectic reasoning*, and different methodological procedures, different 'how'. This is due to various factors such as the following: (a) the consideration of each society as a dialectic unity/*logos* of biological and social components and as a set of relations rather than of objects or events; (b) the consideration of change not as an incidental outcome but inherent to the social process; (c) the use of different scenarios of evolution or comparison/*synkrisis*, of discontinuities or internal social

contradictions; (d) the use of different patterns for the investigation of educational problems; (e) the natural and social environment as a dynamic relation. Consequently, modern discourse in the field rethinks/reevaluates on the concept of the *cosmos/world* and expands the locus of comparative dialectic reasoning; concurrently, it seeks to re-grasp its concern with culturalist studies, with the historical dimensions of its tradition, with its *transitology* that deals with the complexities of the transition from pre-modern/ancient to late-modern educational phenomena (post-modernity deals with the downfall of educational and pedagogical forms and principles) and finally, with the concept of globality, multiculturalism, identity and alterity (Cowen 1996:151-170; Flouriş 1977:17-39; Damanakis 1977: 23-112).

Thirdly, the nature of scientific comparative knowledge is considered to be a key-concept for both ancient and contemporary *logos*. This kind of knowledge can be associated with the ancient dialectic knowledge that leads to the truth, the perfect truth which in modern *logos* has to do with different concepts/problems such as: the ideology of progress, the concept of science/*epistêmê*, the new units/objectives of comparisons, the historical comparative method, and so on. In line with the above issues, it can be stated that current research (Novoa, 1995:22-24) in the field of contemporary historical-comparative *logos* is based on five axes: (1) the ideology of 'progress', the old principle which assumes that 'education is equivalent to the development and scientific progress is not valid any more'; therefore, the need for the revision of education's role is posed; (2) the concept of the 'science'/*epistêmê*, the argument that 'the adoption of general accepted norms (*generalising*) for the function of the educational phenomena which led to the concepts of 'pre-said' and 'pre-seen' is not valid for the educational systems any more. On the contrary, the so-called 'meta-modern realities' are based on the new concepts which promote the idea of interconnections supporting that nothing can be thoroughly understandable/known in an absolute way.

This somewhat Herodotian thesis implies that there is not a unique accepted interpretation but different interpretations and parameters; the *diagnosis* of an educational fact or problem suggests the idea of its contemplation (*parakolouthêsis*), its *autopsy*, its accuracy and objectivity and finally its placement to a historical and local continuity in order that scholars have an *epignôsis*/full knowledge of it; (3) the old concepts that are replaced today by other more relevant to the new concepts of reality, like 'the local', the 'universal', etc; this renewed orientation poses the problem of establishing new units/objectives of the comparison; (4) the emergence and the dissemination of renewed values rooted in the context of inter-, cross-, and multi- dimensions of educational comparison; (5) the establishment of the historical-comparative method/methods, this axis poses the biggest conflict since contemporary historical-comparative

logos is considered to be an interdisciplinary field of research and hence it elicits various interpretations.

Epistemological and *methodological* issues overwhelm inquiry in applied research. Some reports reflect the major topics of the theory of knowledge in relation to various perspectives. Since a rationale for eclecticism among perspectives is needed, it is argued that the falsificationist approach is better than any other theory of knowledge for overcoming the major problems in the domain. According to the reconsidered approach of ancient *logos*, analysis, definition, collection, systematisation, diagnosis, design, and implementation could be the successive stages of the change process. Design-oriented research, testing the developed design in comparable situations, is compatible with the positivist approach to science. It is also stressed that researchers may enhance the impact of their work by taking into account criteria of usefulness and clarity. *Epistemological* as well as *methodological* issues raised by conceiving of such theories as normative rather than merely procedural are discussed, and a plea is made for all educational comparative scholars to recognise the place of their theories of inquiry in their research activities. A theory of process of inquiry should be both acknowledged and, in fact, chosen deliberately and consciously incorporated and conducted in a reasoned and open manner. In more qualitative research, there has been more acknowledgment of the role of theory of inquiry/*logos*. The form of inquiry that most carefully defines its normative perspective is known as critical inquiry. Furthermore, given the wide spectrum of ways of ancient knowing/acquiring the *truth* and the growing pluralism in the contemporary social sciences, several recent attempts have been made to reduce the epistemological diversity in historical-comparative educational approach. Because epistemology of *logos* is most usefully viewed as a tool in dealing with reality, scholars in historical-comparative educational approach may try to consider an ecumenical orientation that favors heterogeneity, open textuality, and tolerance for different ways of knowing (Meel, 1991). Besides, scientific, positivistic approaches to comparative education have often been circumvented, or even suppressed, and alternative comparative knowledge domains have emerged. Such views are supported in the post-industrial era where knowledge paradigms are becoming holistic, context-dependent, and integrative, narrowing the gap between theory and practice (Masemann, 1990:465-473); this gap does not seem to mark ancient *logos*.

Fourthly, the character of the contemporary comparison is strongly connected to the ancient concept of Aristotelian *synkrisis* dealing with the process of inter, cross- and multi- dimensions of scientific inquiry. In recent times, the historical-comparative discourse on education has acquired, internationally, new or renewed areas of focus (international/global, cross-cultural, multicultural areas,

etc.) coupled with new methodologies and historiographical interests (CIES, 1995). In a global age we cannot have a concept of single homogenous approach in education, since the world is comprised of diversities and peculiarities failing to apply a standard operation of an intelligentsia to a single concept/image of *cosmos*. The condition of ancient conceptualisation of globality can no longer grant us common notions of earth-nature, or cosmos-world, as in the past (Flouris and Spiridakis, 1992). Instead, today's sense of globality is the integrated global space (*topos*) of educational practice and comparison/ *synkrisis*. Education now puts the distinction and the synthesis of phenomena in a multiplicity of different economic, social, cultural, and political movements (Pirgiotakis and Kanakis, 1992; Winther-Jensen, 1996; Psacharopoulos and Calogiannakis, 1996:9-19; Calogiannakis and Makrakis, 1996; Vamvoucas and Hourdakis, 1997). In the past, such globality was the illusion of philosophers and scholars but now it has become the every day occupation of educational theory and practice. More particularly, cross-cultural/ cross-pedagogical comparisons could be presented as a criterion by which to establish a renewed framework of historical-comparative *logos*. Yet throughout history, cross-cultural/ cross-pedagogical interactions have influenced people's life and education across the boundary lines of societies and cultural regions. As comparative educational researchers view the past from broad, comparative, and global viewpoints, they will need, on one hand, to consider the roles of cross-cultural/ cross-pedagogical comparisons in history while on the other they might also recognise patterns of continuity and change that reflect the experiences in the field of education. However, it is known that every pedagogical problem has a global, ecumenical, and planetary nature and a set of values which are common to the human race. The distinctive feature of this *logos* which deals with the entire globe rather than with a particular country or region, is a result not only of western or non-western thought but of that of all mankind (Hourdakis 1996:157-182).

Despite the plethora of research activities, however, a series of problems remain to a large extent unclear. The main reason for this situation can be traced firstly to the most prominent interpretive schemes which have been employed, and secondly to the methodological inadequacies in the majority of research projects. This variety of schemes and projects is reflected in the evolutionist paradigm, the un-historic and un-critical use of analogy, the reproduction of a fragmented past, the failure of most attempts to design research projects with an explicit definition of the internal social problem in mind; in the focus mainly on the site of educational phenomena as a unit of analysis and not on the region and the continuous landscape; in the failure to recover, study and integrate within an overall interpretation the various categories and the nature of historical evidence. These constitute a number of serious problems that contemporary

historical-comparative educational discourse must face, since this modern *logos* has to adopt some basic elements of the *odysseological* and *Herotodian* dimension, that is to find a link between 'suffering' and 'inquiring' and to trace the interconnections between particular educational events and phenomena.

Generally, historical-comparative discourse/*logos* on education needs constant revision: new historical inquiries, conditions and interpretations lead to new inclusive definitions and knowledge (Kazamias and Schwartz 1977:153-176; Kazamias and Massialas, 1992; Arnove and Kelly 1992; Matheou 1993; Bouzakis and Koustourakis 1995:97-134). Renewed discourse/*logos* to define the boundaries and the content of the subject in modern perspectives and the use of the latest research from cross-disciplinary areas constitute the basis of the historical-comparative discourse on education. This discourse can be placed in the framework of key-concepts already existing: systematic inquiry and comparison for the dialectic comparative knowledge/truth in the context of the inter-, the cross- and multi- dimensions of educational phenomena.

Contemporary conceptualisation on historical comparative *logos* certainly takes into account some basic methodological and epistemological ideas of the former key-concepts dealing with ancient *logos*; furthermore, some of them have acquired a new meaning due to the new cultural, political, social and educational order. We have argued that the ancient *logos* can be presented as a general framework/conceptualisation/problematic for modern comparative *logos*/discourse. At the end of the 20th century and the dawn of the 21st, interconnections, interactions, comparisons and interdependence between countries and peoples have become closer than before. Peoples in the world are closely interconnected and constitute part of a global entity. A vital and urgent need exists to grasp the essence of current changes and the way in which the desirable ends can be achieved. Future generations will live and work in a multinational and multicultural environment where the ancient concept of *logos* will always be presented as the reasoning of the *what*, the *why*, the *whether*, the *how* and the *as to*.

Notes

¹ 'Nature has given us two instruments... by which we make all inquiries and obtain information (hearing and sight) and sight is by far the more trustworthy, according to Heraclitus... Personal investigation... demands much exertion and expense, but it is very important and is the greatest part of history... and the poet has been even more emphatic on this subject... wishing to point out for us the qualities that a man of action should possess, he presents the image of Odysseus... it seems to me that the business of history also demands such a man'.

² In the *History of the Peloponnesian War* and the *Generation of Animals*,

³ Cf. the 'Introduction' to Phaedrus in the stereotyped edition LCL.

Pella Calogiannakis received her Ph.D. from the University of Paris, Sorbonne, and is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of Crete, Greece. She has published books, articles and chapters in Greek, English, French and Arabic. Her research interests include comparative education and sociology of education. Address for correspondence: University of Crete, Faculty of Education, Pedagogical Department, 74100, Perivolia, Rethymno, Crete, Greece, fax: +0831-24067; e-mail <hourd@cc.uoh.gr>

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