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THE DIALOGUE IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: DISCOVERING VALUES AND MEANINGS

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Abstract

The authors continue working out a dialogical approach towards organization of educational environment for the pre-school and younger school children. They have made a review of the research dedicated to the problem of dialogism in the sphere of philosophy, culturology, pedagogy, psychology; analyzed the ideas of M.M. Bakhtin, M. Buber, V.S. Bibler, L.V. Vygotsky, E. Erikson; disclosed the meaning of dialogue – a common discovery of meanings in the sphere of communication; clarified the terms "cultural meaning" and "personal meaning"; found out the essence and specifics of pedagogical communication; described a version of modelling the educational environment; discovered the structure of socio-cultural educational environment; put forward a development model of teacher-child interaction in educational sphere sticking to the vector: from incentive to co-action and co-creation; described the methods of dialogue modelling in educational sphere; demonstrated the way of changing the teachers' views on the socio-cultural experience of the child; offered a system of theoretical and empirical research methods: questionnaire; natural, modelling and forming experiments; SWOT-analysis; phsycho- diagnostical methods; mathematical methods of computing the results of research; demonstrated the results of 1520 questionnaire data of pre-school and primary school teachers in seven RF territories; made an important conclusion as to an interconnection of axiological and culturological approaches towards educational environment model building on the initial levels of education.

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1. Introduction

Dialogism is a generalized description of concepts, theories and outlooks of dialogical philosophy. The basis of dialogism as a scientific school are conceptual ideas of Bakhtin (1981), Buber (1970), Bibler (2018). Bakhtin looked for a key to understanding the essence of the human being and a possibility of overcoming a gap between "the world of life" and "the world of culture". Bakhtin's dialogism is a form of understanding a concrete individual and humanitarian thinking as a whole. The term "dialogue" is the key to understanding Bakhtin's philosophical concept. He stated that "the real life of a person is approachable only through dialogical penetration into it, to which it is answerable and freely discloses itself" (Bakhtin, 1979, p.131). That is why "the dialogue" is the basis for every definition of the human being. Buber (1970) looked regarded the dialogue as the structure of being. Bibler (2018) developed a philosophical concept of culture dialogue, in foundation of which he laid the idea of dialogical nature of human reason and culture. The philosophical concept made it possible for Bibler to work out a unified concept of education sphere modernization "The school of the dialogue of cultures".

A great influence on dialogism development was made by Waldenfels (2015), Levinas (as cited in Joldersma, 2014), Marsel (as cited in Tattam, 2011), Rozentsveig, Buber, Levinas, & Bakhtin (2010), Erikson (2019) and other thinkers.

Dialogism makes it possible to interpret language and communication as a socio-cultural phenomenon based on dialogues. In dialogues subjects meet each other in a definite situation of interaction, in a concrete environment at a fixed time. In this context, language is interpreted as a social, interactive, estimated phenomenon. According to Bakhtin (1979), a derivative of this socio-cultural phenomenon is meaning. The essence of language and communication is in a lasting socio-cultural exchange. The dialogical approach has a special meaning for rethinking of communication in the educational environment.

2. Problem Statement

Dialogism allows for a new look at the essence and specificity of communication among the subjects of educational relations, broadens the views of modern pedagogues on the education environment as the expanse of dialogues, leading to discovering meanings and values of culture.

In psychological-pedagogical research, culture is seen as "an internal source" of psychical life and general development of a child (Vygotsky, 1978; Erikson, 2019). In Vygotsky's (2018) cultural-historic concept of the child's development, it is directed not by "the power of things", but "the connection of people", because "through others we became ourselves" (p. 144). Cultural forms of communication and behavior are acquired by him alongside of socio-cultural experience (Mychina, 2015). An. important part in mastering the surrounding environment and building up a system of connections with it is played by speech (Ushakova, 2018). The meaning of a word may only be discovered by the child through communication and interaction with a near grown -up person (Boulby (as cited in Hauptmann, 2018), Winnicot (2018), Lisina (1974)). But it is important that the dialogues be socio-cultural and based on the meanings.

Over the past decades, educators and psychologists have addressed themselves to the concept of "educational environment". Educational environment is now looked upon as part of a broad socio-cultural environment in which it is possible to obtain aims and meanings of children's education at all its levels beginning from pre-school and primary school (L.S.Vygotsky, A.A. Leontiev, V.I. Slobodchikov a.o.). Such educational environment involves all the participants of educational relations (teachers, children and their parents) allowing optimal conditions for substantial communication in the form of dialogues directed to the opening of meanings and values by all the participants of educational relations.

The problem of the present research appears to be a search for broadening the views of modern teachers on pedagogical communication in the context of philosophical ideas of dialogism.

3. Research Questions

The theoretical-experimental research has been expected to find answers to the following questions:

What makes it possible to regard the dialogue as an optimal form of communication in modern educational environment?

Is it possible to interpret the modern educational environment as an expanse of dialogues?

What is the essence of the dialogic approach to the construction of educational environment using the social and culture model?

In what way the dialogue approach changes the direction of the aims and the subject of child education at the initial stages of education?

Why it is necessary to purposely prepare teachers for an expanding dialogue with pre-school and primary school children?

4. Purpose of the Study

A strategic aim of the research is modelling educational environment based on dialogues and directed to discovering meanings and values by children at the initial stage of education.

The tactical purpose is working out methods of dialogue modelling as the main form of communication with children of pre-school and primary school age.

5. Research Methods

Natural experiment made it possible to collect and to analyse different educational situations (512 facts) which discover the specifics of dialogues between teachers and children (classes, lessons, games, conversations, walks, educational projects, holidays, etc.).

Questionnaire filling made it possible to study teachers' readiness to communicate with children of pre-school and primary school age. Oral questions took place at four international scientific-practical conferences and twelve authors' seminars, distance questions - in virtual form with the help of "Google forms" and "Webanketa.com" resources. About 1530 teachers from seven RF territories (Belgorod, Vologda, Kursk, Moscow, Perm, Komi, Rostov) took part in questioning.

SWOT-analysis was aimed at discovering strong and weak aspects of the model under study and also at analyzing its possibilities and risks. It helped to think over the potential of the new model under the conditions of variable education.

Modelling experiment was used to study teacher-children communication in specially designed conditions. 312 teachers tested the technology of modelling education environment and the dialogue method aimed at the ways of discovery by the children the meanings of words.

Forming methods were used at different stages of the research to solve specific problems, and so were used in different ways: experiments (pilot, psycho-pedagogical, transforming, forming), experimental-genetic method.

Psycho-diagnostic methods: "Maps of educational environment evaluation" by Faizullayeva (2018), methods of vector modeling of educational environment; a questionnaire of motivational readiness of teachers to work in conditions of alternative forms of education (an adaptation of Mayjer's (Mayjer, Miklyajeva, & Kirillova, 2018) methods); the questionnaire "Teacher's readiness to conduct a dialogue in educational environment" developed by the authors of this article.

Methods of computing the research results: quality analysis, descriptive statistics. Calculations were made with the help of computer programs "STATISTICA 12.0" and "Microsoft Excel".

6. Findings

In the process of experimental research, the authors of the article have obtained the following results.

Philosophical and psycho-pedagogical research on the problem of dialogism (M.M. Bakhtin, M. Buber, V.S. Bibler, L.V. Vygotsky, E.Erikson a.o.) has been reviewed.

The position and meaning of dialogue in modern educational environment as the expanse of communication have been disclosed. The specifics of educational communication have been revealed. The hypothesis stating that the essence of educational dialogue is a mutual discovery of values and meanings by all the participants of educational relations (everyone at his level) has been put forward and sustained.

The method of substantiated modelling the educational environment at the first levels of education has been continued. A technology of modelling the educational environment in the conditions of variable education has been described.

A model of developing teacher – children interaction in educational environment according to the vector: from stimulus to co-action and co- creation has been elaborated.

A broadening of the contemporary teachers' views on the educational environment as an expanse of communication built on dialogues has been demonstrated. The goal orientation of amplifying the child's socio-cultural experience has been substantiated.

The method of developing the scientific aspect of speech in the educational environment worked out by Ushakova (2018) and Lavrentieva (1998) has been adapted for modelling dialogues.

Analysis of dialogism has enabled the authors to make a conclusion about expediency of modelling the educational environment according to the pattern of socium and culture. For the realization of dialogue approach at the first levels of education (in the kindergarten and in the primary school), an

educational environment which provides communication of the types "an adult- a child", "a child- another child", "a child- other children" was constructed. Such an environment makes it possible for every child to most successfully realize himself, to demonstrate his own individuality and activity, to open up cultural and personal meanings and express them in words.

The language of culture is a system of all signs of verbal and non-verbal communication which makes it possible to preserve and transmit all culturally meaningful information. The language of culture includes those universal means (signs, images, symbols, texts) with the help of which people communicate and freely get their bearings in the expanse of culture. That is why the language of culture may be looked upon as a universal form of comprehension of reality. This form allows one to organize in a systematic way different semantic constructions: those that already exist and ideas, notions, images and other vehicles of meaning newly appearing in people's consciousness.

Analysis of the results of theoretical-experimental research (Lykova & Kozhevnikova, 2017) confirms truthfulness of L.S.Vygotsky's cultural-historical concept of the three-stage scheme of speech and consciousness development. At the first stage, an adult person stimulates a child to activity with toys and other things in their environment with the help of signs-words (words-stimuli). At the second stage, the child allows feedback owing to comprehension of words-incentives addressed to himself and word-stimuli addressed to the adult person. At the third stage, the child addresses the words-stimuli to himself and begins to regulate his own behavior. At all stages of communication the word plays a key role in "adult – child" dialogues only if a child has gained socio-cultural experience, and it opens up the meaning of a word – cultural and personal.

Socio-cultural experience includes the following: norms, values, objectives, samples of behavior, modes of action which are specific for the given socio-cultural community. (It should be understood that the word "activity" is interpreted in the broader sense as any form of material and spiritual mastering of the environment by man). They are formed in the course of historical development of socio-cultural community and are acquired by a person in the process of his development and formation.

A personal socio-cultural experience is the information, mastered by a person, as the basis for his readiness to act in the specific cultural situations (Lykova & Kozhevnikova, 2017). According to its psychological form, a socio-cultural experience emerges as knowledge of objects, phenomena, attitudes and regularities, sensually "given" to the subject in the process of cognitive familiarizing with culture and society.

The basis of the socio-cultural personal experience is made up of universal meanings which arise to the level of values and constitute a framework of the world's picture. Let us name these values:

individual-personal (human life, child's rights, honor, dignity);

family (parents' home, parents, family harmony, family pedigree, family traditions, friendship, love);

national (way of life, behavior, communication; Homeland, the land's sacred things, national heraldry, native language, native land, folk culture, nation's unity, patriotism);

mankind (biosphere as a medium for man, ecological culture, world science and culture, peace in the world and others).

Below is a version of modelling the educational environment built on dialogues and to discovery of the word meaning by children.

At the first stage, the educational environment is made ready for such conditions in which children are beginning to understand that each object (and also its characteristics and the actions connected with it) has its own name. Teachers and parents help children to realize that every word denotes (names) something: either an object, or specific traits and qualities (form, color, staff, texture), or the state of the object and a person's actions connected with application of that object. At this stage, children come to the "discovery" of the meaning of the term "word": it is not an object itself (or its characteristics, signs, actions), but "the name" of an object. Therefore, an important role is passed over to the usage of the term "word" in different situations of adult-child communication (say the word, find the word, by what word this object may be named, find the object which bears this name, and so on). It makes a basis for the initial notion of the children about the meaning of the word, language, speech. And it provides a subsequent development of a universal capability to realize the facts of language reality. Every child develops his personal language cognition.

At the second stage, conditions are created in the educational environment in which children begin to discover words in the speech whose meanings are connected by certain semantic relations. This skill allows each child "to build in" new and yet new words (lexical units) into his language cognizance.

It is important to note that it is not a simple accumulation of vocabulary (active and passive) increasing its volume, but a construction of a personal language system, reflecting the linguistic laws of the language under study. Teachers and parents help children to make empirical generalizations, for example: how to call by one word the objects we play with (toys); how to call by one word what we are eating (food); how to call by one word the thing we wear (clothes) and so on. Children master ways of grouping words depending on their lexical meanings. Individual linguistic consciousness of the child is thus developing and becoming more structural.

At the third stage, conditions are created in the educational environment in which all lexical tasks are directed to enrichment of individual utterances and support of interpretations connected with the child's personal experience. In each educational situation, the information is devided into two interconnected parts: the theme (the contents already known to the children) and the theme (the new contents for all children or only for one of them). The teacher sets himself a complex task: to help the children learn to orient themselves on the communicative centre of an utterance and select the words compatible with the sense of the utterance. appropriate words. Parents help their children to broaden their communicative experience, and they create conditions for diverse cultural practices. As a result, three-year old children begin to consciously select and independently use lexical means of their native tongue depending on specific speech situations. Further development of a child's individual language consciousness supports itself on his ability to communicate and to reflect in his interpretation certain facts, phenomena, events in utterances.

It is important to note that the aims of children - adults interaction in the educational environment bring about forms of their interconnection. If the aim is to discover world culture by the children (at the level of discovery and conferment), co-action will be a real form of communication, but if the educational aim presupposes a way out at the level of an experience of its transmission and development conferment,

which is impossible without " discovery" experience (cognition of oneself through " discovery" (cognition) of another person, only co-creation in the form of dialogues can be an optimal form of communication.

A vector of transformation of one form to the other is an amplification (or broadening) of cultural experience. Amplification (from lat. amplify – to broaden, facere – to act) is understood in modern science as: 1) increasing, broadening, spreading, strengthening of all parameters of a complex multifactorial system or 2) all-round usage of potential possibilities of the development of one's mentality at each age level.

In the educational environment, the vector of amplification of children socio-cultural experience development, is supported by the principle of culture - conformity which helps to see a multi-level connection between education and world culture. On the one hand, socio-cultural experience is an important factor of a person's socialization, and therefore, it determines its place in the structure of the society, and also its world outlook, aesthetic and spiritual- moral (ethical) foundations. On the other hand, the specifics of cultural experience comes out as a characteristic feature of the society as a whole, because of the means of cultural experience transmission from one generation to the other are dependent on the unity of traditions and innovations, that is a combination of tendencies to preserve and innovate cultural experience. It should be noted that in their everyday life people use their "background" cultural experience which is generally familiar in this community, and that is why an individual is not aware of it until he meets with another person, which happens in case of collision of meanings.

7.   Conclusion

A dialogue is an expanse of communication in which its participants discover meanings. The main problem of communication in an educational environment is that of understanding. Understanding is dependent on the ability of the subject of interaction not only to exchange information, but to decode cultural codes and express their personal attitudes (meaning is a phenomenon connected to a person's attitude to the world and to himself). The vehicle of the cultural code is meaning. Cultural meaning is universal, which helps people to understand one another. Personal meaning is individual, and that makes each situation of interaction unique. Speech is the main communication tool which makes it possible for people to exchange information, to understand one another, to "discover" cultural and personal meanings.

According to Bakhtin (1981), the essence of a person may be only understood if he is ready for dialogue, when one comes face to face with another person. But this is only possible in the cultural expanse of signs - in a dialogical communication when collision of different meanings takes place. In his activity, ideas, emotions, actions, appraisals the child represents himself as a subject of culture since he relies in a certain degree on the meaning common to humanity – spiritual and moral.

The dialogical approach is the key condition of discovering meanings and values of culture by pre-school and primary school children. It is possible on the basis of axiological and culture-logical approaches to modelling educational environment at the first levels of education.

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