

# The Influence of Natural Objects on the Emergence and Overcoming of the Child's Anxiety During Interaction with Others at the Beginning of Children's Teaching at School

Alina Martin<sup>1</sup>, Nataliya Vyshnivska<sup>2</sup>, Oleksandra Shkurenko<sup>3</sup>, Iryna Sukhopara<sup>4</sup>, Olena Vashchenko<sup>5</sup>,  
Lyudmila Romanenko<sup>6</sup>, Kateryna Romanenko<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Methods of Preschool and Primary Education, Volodymyr Vynnychenko Central Ukrainian State Pedagogical University, 1, Shevchenko Str., 25006, Kropivnitskiy, Ukraine

<sup>2-7</sup>0000-0001-7509-2841, Department of Primary Education Pedagogical Institute, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, 18/2, Ihoria Shamo Blvd., 02154, Kyiv, Ukraine, n.vyshnivska@kubg.edu.ua

## ABSTRACT

The article presents the theoretical and empirical results of the research of the processes of occurrence and overcoming of the child's anxiety during interaction with others at the beginning of school. Emphasis is also placed on scientific data on the types of interaction at the beginning of children's education at school. The influence of anxiety on various processes is considered. In particular, the following are considered: the process of forming educational activities, the process of forming a child's internal action plan, the process of forming interaction with other children; the process of forming a child as a subject of educational activity. It is established that the manifestation of the child's activity in interaction with the teacher and other children in the class is influenced by various factors. However, four factors take precedence among them: 1. Stable type of communication between teachers and children. 2. Partner form of communication. 3. The child's readiness for partnership with the teacher. 4. Readiness of the child to interact with other students. At the beginning of children's education at school, various emotional states can arise. The child cannot control their emotions, because in the psyche there are no processes of emotional and volitional regulation. The objectives of the research: to summarize scientific data on the beginning of school education of the child and his experience of anxiety while interacting with others; experimentally prove the influence of natural objects on the emergence and overcoming of the child's anxiety when interacting with others at the beginning of school.

The complex of research methods is used in the work: general scientific (analysis, synthesis, comparison, systematization, generalization) and empirical (observations, conversations, testing (test "Diagnosis of Anxiety" by Temple, Dorki, and Amen)). Theoretical results: types of interaction at the beginning of the child's schooling; the impact of anxiety on the formation of educational activities; the impact of anxiety on the process of forming a child's internal action plan; the impact of anxiety on the process of forming interaction with other children; the impact of anxiety on the process of forming a child as a subject of educational activity. Empirical results: we found that the beginning of children's education at school while interacting with other objects of nature can cause the processes of emergence and overcoming the child's anxiety. Objects of nature that children do not like exacerbate the process of a child's anxiety. Instead, the process of overcoming a child's anxiety occurs when the teacher uses objects of nature that children like.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, Child, School, Educational activity, Interaction, Objects of nature, teacher, Partnership, Subject.

## INTRODUCTION

Modern human lives in a period of global change, accompanied by uncertainty, imbalance, the impact of innovation and emotional stress. In such conditions, a person's interaction with the environment often leads to the experience of various negative emotional states, including anxiety (anxiety to lose a job, etc.) or fear (fear of uncertainty, etc.) (Lund, 2021).

According to Kiyashko (2011) generalizations, scientists analyze fear as an experience that is related to a certain object or situation; they explain anxiety as an experience that has no object. The scientist reveals the meaning of fear for a person in the context of two functions. The positive function of fear is to signal, warn a person of danger in a situation of threat to his biological or social existence. The negative function of fear is manifested in the disorganization of human activity when

**Corresponding Author e-mail:** tarapakamartin@gmail.com

**ORCID Number:** 0000-0001-8886-2585

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it loses control over the emotion of fear. Prolonged emotional experience of experiencing the negative function of fear can be transformed into anxiety as an individual property of the individual. Scientists refer to the term “anxiety” as the tendency of people of any age to perceive a wide range of situations as threatening to them.

As a result of the study of anxiety, Miklyaeva (2013) identified four factors of fear in younger students. These are:

- 1) *Children's fears* – the content of these fears poses a physical threat to the life and safety of the child;
- 2) *Anxiety* – manifests itself in areas of life that are particularly important for a school-age child (school, testing situations, assessment of the child by peers and adults, etc.);
- 3) *Conflict in family relationships* – the emergence of anxiety in children appears as a result of hostility of family members to each other, the emergence of feelings of inferiority, uselessness, and timidity;
- 4) *Social fears* – anxiety arises as a result of fear of people, other children, loneliness, punishment, fairy-tale characters.

Miklyaeva (2013), analyzing the results of the study of the level of anxiety and fears in children of 8-9 years, found that among them significantly predominate children with a high level of children's fears, namely: fear of death and fear of animals; the average level of anxiety and fear of fairy-tale characters, medical fears, socially mediated fears and spatial fears; low levels of fear of darkness and nightmares and fear of physical injury.

Miklyaeva (2013) also found that girls 8-9 years old tend to show medical fears, fear of physical injury, fear of animals, and boys of this age – interpersonal anxiety, general anxiety, hostility in a family situation.

Shevyakova (2012) characterizes emotional and volitional regulation as a function of minimizing the functional resources of the subject of activity in terms of overcoming subjective and object difficulties, fears, etc. According to the results of scientific research, Shevyakova (2012) identified the following age characteristics:

- Age 14 years – imbalance of the system of emotional and volitional regulation;
- Age 15 years – a qualitative change in the structure of emotional and volitional regulation (changes are manifested in the complication of the internal system of the process of emotional and volitional regulation based on the formation of self-regulation as a new type of regulation);
- Age 16 years – emotional and volitional regulation acquires the mechanism of internal regulation (self-regulation).

However, the formation of emotional and volitional regulation does not cause the disappearance of fears. As a

person grows older, fears do not disappear, but acquire a different meaning. According to the results of the research, Kiyashko arranged the fears of girls and boys from 17 to 23 years of age in the order of decreasing their manifestations (Kiyashko, 2011). In the first place, there is the fear of loss (fear of losing a job, family, money, attractiveness, friends, social status, etc.). In the second place – the fear of defeat and failure (fear of exams, fear of a new case, fear of failure in personal life, etc.). In the third place – fear of criticism, fear of leadership, etc.). In the fourth place – the fear of communication (fear of social contact with people, fear of being the center of attention, fear of loneliness). It has been experimentally proved that anxiety as a property of the individual can be corrected in the case of the direction of development and self-development on the formation of the individual's ability to self-regulation.

The article “Preventing the pre-sick conditions of those who practice lifelong learning” highlights the results of a study aimed at organizing a lifelong learning process based on mental processes and stages of performance dynamics. The authors of the article point out that the likelihood of occurrence of diseases conditions in those who learn during life significantly increases in the case of reduced functional reserves of the body as a result of the intense and prolonged performance of educational activities while experiencing negatively of emotional, including anxiety caused by events during learning activities or events that occurred before this, or experiences of relationships related to the family, etc. (Miyer, Holodiuk, & Savosh, 2021) According to the results of the study, overcoming of anxiety in the learning process should take into account the current emotional states and the dynamics of students' performance, which is manifested in a successive change of such five stages. 1. Getting into work. 2. Relatively able to work. 3. Inefficiency as a norm of efficiency. 4. Gradual decline in performance. 5. Ultimate impulse. These stages are present in the educational process of different duration, in particular, during one lesson, as well as during one school day, one semester, one school year, and so on.

In Lazareva (2010) research, it was established that students who hear the word “school” have two types of associations: 1) association with the place where children study (78% of children); 2) association with a place where teachers constantly ask students (91% of children). Even before starting school, 91% of children begin to feel anxious that they will be constantly asked at school and will not be able to answer successfully.

Also in scientific works, various aspects of manifestations of anxiety that arise in the process of activity and communication are thoroughly considered. At the same time, the influence of natural objects on the processes of emergence and overcoming of the child's anxiety in the interaction that the teacher begins to build at the beginning of children's education at school has not been studied.

## METHOD

### Research Design

We consider the problem of the influence of natural objects on the processes of occurrence and overcoming of the child's anxiety in the interaction at the beginning of his schooling on the basis of generalization of scientific data on the following:

- 1) Types of interaction at the beginning of the child's schooling;
- 2) The impact of anxiety on the formation of educational activities;
- 3) The impact of anxiety on the process of forming a child's internal action plan;
- 4) The impact of anxiety on the process of forming interaction with other children;
- 5) The impact of anxiety on the process of forming a child as a subject of educational activity. Also, the generalization of scientific data on the experimental verification of the influence of natural objects on the child's anxiety during interaction at the beginning of schooling was carried out.

### Study Group

The research was conducted for two years. The research involved 170 teachers and 5,000 children who started school.

### Data Collection Tools

Research methodology includes analysis of scientific works on the interdependence between human existence and the environment and on the unity of human consciousness and its activities (Rubinstein, 2000).

### Data Collection

The research uses the following methods: theoretical (analysis of scientific materials, systematization and structuring of selected information, generalization of the obtained results) and empirical (observations, experiment, conversations, surveys).

The set of research methods is used in the work: general scientific (analysis, synthesis, comparison, systematization, generalization) and empirical (observations, conversations, test "Diagnosis of anxiety" by Temple, M. Dorki, Amen). The authors of the article, together with teachers who taught children, conducted a test "Diagnosis of anxiety" (Temple, Dorkey, Amen) to determine the level of anxiety in children. The test was performed in two stages. At the first stage, the children looked at 14 pictures depicting situations typical of children's lives. In the second stage, children were offered 14 pictures depicting a girl or a boy with a book (for testing girls and boys). An object of nature was depicted on the page of the book. Instructions for performing the test. Look carefully at the picture. What kind of face do you think this child has

– sad or happy? Choose a face image. The child's choice of a sad or cheerful facial expression and an explanation of the choice (why this particular face was chosen) was recorded in a special protocol.

### Data Analysis

To solve the set tasks, a set of interrelated research methods was employed: the study and generalization of psychological and pedagogical experience, the method of comparative analysis, statistical method.

Based on the analysis of the obtained data, a conclusion was formed about the emotional experience of attitude to a particular object of nature and an anxiety index (AN) was established, which corresponds to the number of emotionally negative choices.

$AN = \text{number of emotionally negative choices} / 14 \times 100\%$ .  
Levels: weak (scores 0–1; AN – 0–7.2%); average (2–5; AN – 14.3–35.7%); good (scores 6–7; AN – 42.9–50%); high (scores – 8 and more AN – 57.1% and more). The article summarizes the data on low and high levels of anxiety caused by the influence of natural objects at the beginning of school..

## FINDINGS

Types of interaction at the beginning of the child's schooling

At the beginning of children's teaching at school, interaction can take various forms. This can be:

1. Guardianship – constant care for the child by adults (teachers, parents), constant supervision of his actions.
2. Indifference – the lack of visible to the student interest of others (teachers, parents, students) in the success of his educational activities.
3. Partnership (cooperation) – achieving mutual understanding between participants. The partnership provides for the definition of the purpose of joint activities and methods of action, the organization of joint activities to achieve this goal with the simultaneous implementation of each of the participants in the achievement of the individual goal of activity.

When laying the foundations of partnership, the social situation of development should be taken into account, which corresponds to the beginning of children's teaching at school. The social situation of development characterizes:

- 1) The child's departure from the family;
- 2) Gradual change of the leading type of activity;
- 3) The formation of various spheres of social relations, namely: the sphere of social relations in school "child – adult" ("child – teacher" and "child – parents"), "child – children", "child – child".

The sphere of social relations "child – teacher" for the student is the relationship "child – society". According to

Kolominsky (2000), the child is sensitive to the teacher's attitude, to the style of his communication in the class. As a result of the research, the scientists established the influence of the teacher's style of attitude to the class on the formation of interaction between children in the classroom. The formation of interaction between children occurs with the active involvement of the emotional sphere, because, at the beginning of a child's schooling, there are changes in his emotional reactions. Most often, emotions relate to the satisfaction/dissatisfaction of the need to positive attitude of the environment (teachers, children, parents), approval/disapproval of the process and the result of educational activities.

Consequently, anxiety is caused by the lack of reaction of the environment (teachers, children, parents) to the child. Anxiety is accompanied by a lack of desire to go to school, communicate, and act actively during learning. At the beginning of a child's education at school, the process of forming his interaction with the teacher and other children affects the course of other processes, inhibiting these processes in the case of a child's constant anxiety.

### ***The Influence of Anxiety on the Formation of Educational Activities***

The influence of anxiety can affect the process of formation of educational activities on the background of the game as the main activity of the child. D. Elkonin notes that the child develops a specific attitude to educational tasks. It must be realized that the content of educational tasks is not to get results, but to master the generalized mode of action (Elkonin, 1976). The process of forming a child's conscious attitude to educational tasks affects play activities. Under the influence of learning, the content of the child's game changes. Also, the child begins to realize the learning task of the game (must be performed even if there is no desire to do so). In case the child experiences anxiety, the process of forming the child's conscious attitude to educational tasks and to educational activities in general is slowed down.

The impact of anxiety on the process of forming a child's internal action plan is of great importance. The impact of anxiety can affect the process of forming a child's internal plan of action. This process becomes the basis for the formation of a responsible attitude to the implementation of educational tasks, the ability to consciously set a goal, determine the means to achieve it, overcome difficulties and obstacles in the implementation of educational activities, the formation of skills that underlie various actions. These are the following actions:

- Actions of self-control (comparison of the child's educational actions and their results with the standards and samples set by the teacher).

- Actions of self-assessment (fixing compliance or non-compliance of learning outcomes with the requirements of the educational situation).
- Actions of self-organization in the study of educational material (time planning, organization of actions in accordance with the purpose of activity, control and evaluation of the results).
- Actions of self-organization of meaningful, purposeful, and effective educational activity at school and at home as a result of awareness of the purpose and ways of learning.

If a child at the beginning of school is constantly experiencing anxiety while interacting with others, the process of forming an internal action plan slows down, and the processes of forming actions of self-control, self-evaluation, and self-organization do not begin, because the child is constantly in an emotional state (not perceived, not supported by others). The impact of anxiety on the process of forming a child's internal action plan is of particular importance.

The impact of anxiety can affect the process of forming interactions with other children based on their cohesion in learning activities. Children's cohesion is an important characteristic of the state of children's work in groups. These groups are formed by the teacher to perform a specific learning task. Cohesion enhances children's activity, their enjoyment of communication, increases learning productivity, and eliminates children's anxiety.

At the beginning of children's teaching at school, when grouping children, situations may arise that will cause anxiety, as the teacher will not always take into account interpersonal relationships between children (i.e., relationships between children that are manifested in the nature and ways of mutual influences on each other in the process of joint activities and communication), as well as the compatibility of children and the peculiarities of the work of children with different levels of mental development.

The results of research by Vinogradova and Pervin showed that in a homogeneous group, which includes children with a high level of mental development, interaction is almost absent, and the educational task is performed independently by each child. Children do not show a desire to interact with others (Vinogradova & Pervin, 1987). If children with an average level of mental development are united in a homogeneous group, then there is also no interaction, as there is a low productivity of educational activities.

Also in the course of the research (Cheredov, 1985), it was established that the work of children with medium and low level of mental development in heterogeneous groups is a necessary condition for them to gain experience in independent performance of educational tasks and experience of partnership. At the same time, the organization of children's work in heterogeneous groups can cause the child

to experience anxiety, if the teacher by his own example does not demonstrate the manifestations of mutual assistance in the process of performing a learning task or discussing rational actions. He will also explain to the children that their cohesion during the educational task depends on the extent to which belonging to the group satisfies the needs of each of its members (the need for activity, communication, involvement in the common result).

### The Impact of Anxiety on the Process of Forming a child as a Subject of Educational Activities

The impact of anxiety can affect the process of forming a child as a subject of educational activities. The essence of the term "subject" is revealed in the works of scientists. Rubinstein (2000) points out that this term refers to the unity of man with the environment and the interdependence of their existence.

The unity of man with the environment is manifested in the conditions of various and specific activities, features of consciousness and activity. One of the most important features of the subject is the conscious influence on the environment in order to transform it. The subject is always active, able to respond in a timely and adequate manner to changes in the environment, to show freedom in decision-making. However, the position of the subject is largely influenced by society (Antsyiferova, 2000).

Abulkhanova (2009) reveals the essence of the subject in the context of interaction, communication processes, cognition and performance of various activities by an individual subject (the subject is one person) or (and) a collective subject (the subject is a group of people).

Shchurkova (2005) pointed out that the formation and development of the subject is possible only within a certain social community, i.e., during interaction with other people. Vygotsky (1991) scientifically substantiated the process of forming a person as a subject. The scientist notes that this process occurs due to human activity, which is aimed at self-improvement, development of personal qualities and moral and volitional qualities. Vygotsky considers the subject in a social environment, i.e., in constant interaction with other people. The scientist notes that in interaction with other people, there is a manifestation of human subjectivity.

In the works of scientists Ulybina and Deryabo, the concept of "subjectivity" is defined differently. Subjectivity is considered a personality trait that reflects its activity in relation to society (Ulybina, 2001). This is a set of personality traits, in particular: the ability to self-organization, ability to further self-development (Deryabo, 2002).

According to the research of Selivanov (2002), the main features of subjectivity appear at an early age, when the child consciously tries to separate by using the simplest words the most important for him objects, creatures, events.

At the beginning of children's teaching at school, to reduce the level of anxiety, the process of forming the child as a subject of educational activities should take into account the subjectivity, which reflects the child's activity in interaction with the teacher and other children in the class.

The child's activity in interaction with the teacher and other children in the class can be influenced by various factors, but the priorities among them are as follows.

1. Stable type of teacher communication with children: a teacher's words, smile, gestures, facial expressions gives the child to understand a caring attitude towards him. The child begins to feel anxious in other types of communication. These are:
  - Passive-positive type (the teacher from the very beginning of schooling chooses only formal communication);
  - Unstable type of communication (style of communication with the child depends on the mood or feelings of the teacher);
  - Passive-negative type of communication (the teacher is able to create external signs of good organization of education, but indifferent to children).
2. Partner form of communication. During such communication, the child feels self-confidence, the value of his opinion. During the partnership form of communication, the teacher and the student plan learning activities, establish connections, determine the best way to complete the learning task, and so on.
3. The child's readiness for partnership with the teacher. This readiness is manifested in the child's ability to hear the teacher's advice, keep it in mind and follow during the action, ask questions.
4. Readiness of the child to interact with other students. This interaction can be one-sided (a student with a higher level of mental development helps a student with a lower level of mental development) or two-way (mutual assistance).

### DISCUSSION

Thus, at the beginning of children's teaching at school, when interacting with others, a significant number of situations may arise in which the child may experience feelings of anxiety. According to the results of the research we conducted, all situations can be divided into two groups. The first group is the situations that the teacher must anticipate and thus prevent their occurrence. The second group is situations that have already arisen, and the teacher's efforts are directed to their correct solution. We investigated two groups of situations. Among the situations, we focused on situations in which various objects of nature are involved. The research was aimed at establishing the influence of natural objects on the occurrence and overcoming of the child's anxiety when interacting with others at the beginning of schooling.

According to the results of the research, it is established that children show a certain attitude to objects of nature at the beginning of school. In relation to objects of nature, children repeat the actions and words of parents, choose actions and behaviors for which parents will not quarrel (Figure 1).

At the beginning of children's teaching at school, natural objects are clearly divided by children into two categories. The category of "pleasant" – objects of nature that children like. Category "dangerous" – objects of nature that children do not like. Objects of nature that children like, cause positive emotions, the desire to touch, to have such an object of nature. Objects of nature that children do not like cause negative emotions.

The research found that children included objects of nature that were associated with certain unpleasant memories, experiences of pain, and those that children feared (Figure 2).

During the interviews, it was found that children do not like plants with thorns on their stems because they sting (I was in pain). Children do not like the plants because of which they tripped and fell (I was in pain). The children also classified snakes, frogs, worms, mice, mosquitoes, and spiders as objects

of nature they did not like (Figure 3). They marked these objects of nature with the words "I'm afraid".

It was also found that children classified butterflies as category "dangerous" (Figure 4). The children explained, "Butterflies turn into caterpillars, and I'm afraid of caterpillars," "A butterfly will become a caterpillar and damage an apple, I love to eat them".

One and the same object of nature, namely a dog, children marked differently depending on the size of the animal. The children said the words "I'm afraid", pointing to a large dog, and the words "I like" looking at a picture of a small dog (Figure 5).

It was found that children classified wasps and bees in different categories, despite the fact that both insects can bite (Figure 6).

According to the results of the research, at the beginning of children's teaching at school, in the process of forming a partnership with the teacher, the child becomes anxious in the following situations: the need to express own thoughts, the need to tell about something; the need to explain own reasoning (Figure 7).

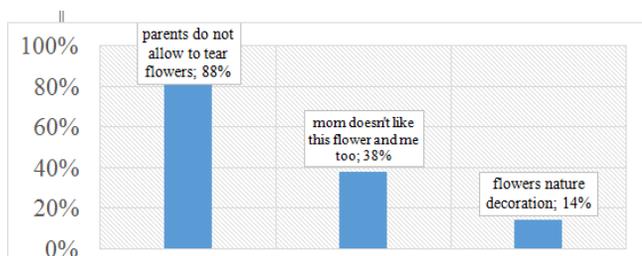


Fig. 1: Subjects of formation of children's attitude to nature

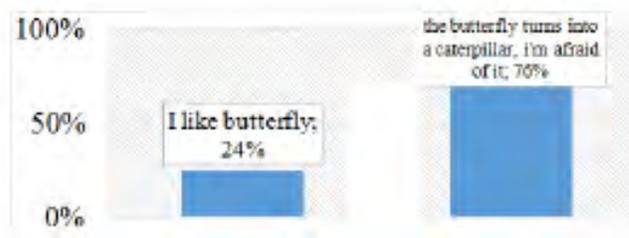


Fig. 4: Children's statements about butterflies

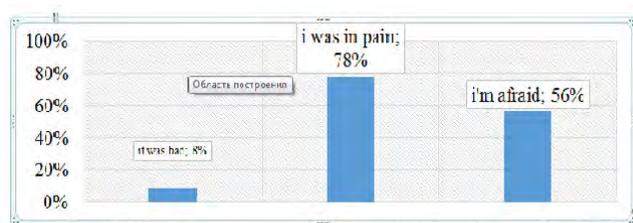


Fig. 2: Children's statements about natural objects that are classified as "dangerous"

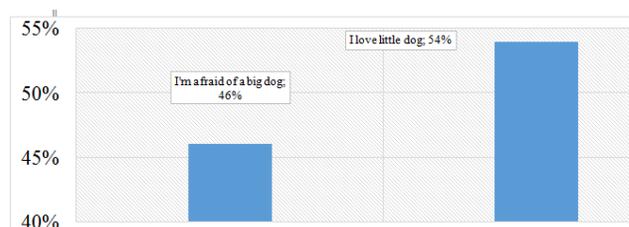


Fig. 5: Assignment of a dog both to the category of "dangerous" and to the category of "pleasant" depending on its size

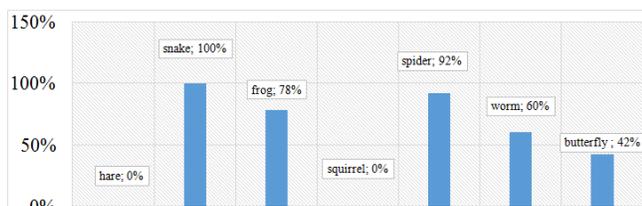


Fig. 3: Marking objects of nature with the words "I'm afraid" at the beginning of children's teaching at school

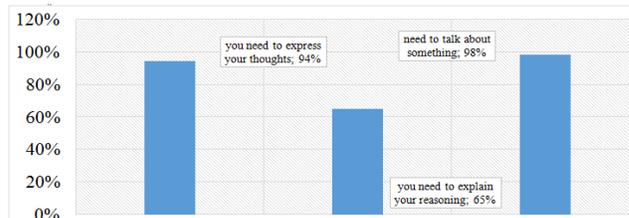


Fig. 6: Assignment of wasp to the category of "dangerous" and bee to the category of "pleasant" depending on the benefits of insects

The research also found that the appearance of anxiety at the beginning of children's education in the school is influenced by the object of nature, which needs to be told.

If children classified the object of nature as "pleasant", their level of anxiety decreased. If the object of nature was perceived by children as belonging to the category of "dangerous", the story consisted of a short one phrase, sometimes two phrases. There were also micro movements (raising the shoulders, blinking, lowering the eyes, redness of the face) (Figure 8).

The research found that when using objects of nature that children classify as "pleasant", the level of anxiety is reduced from 65% to 22% (Figure 8). Among the objects of nature that children classified as "pleasant", in a situation that caused them feelings of anxiety, children most often chose a bunny and an eagle (Figure 9).

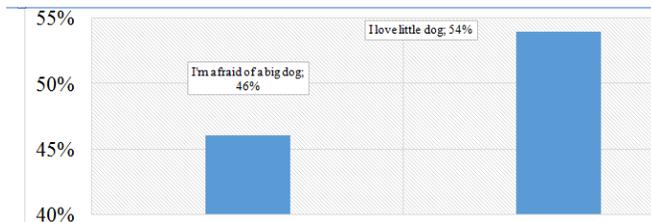


Fig. 7: Situations that cause to become anxious at the beginning of children's teaching at school in the process of forming a partnership with the teacher

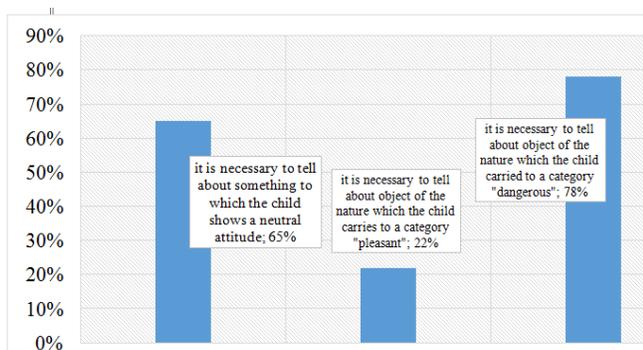


Fig. 8: Children with a high level of anxiety when interacting with others depending on the child's attitude to the object of nature (pleasant, dangerous)

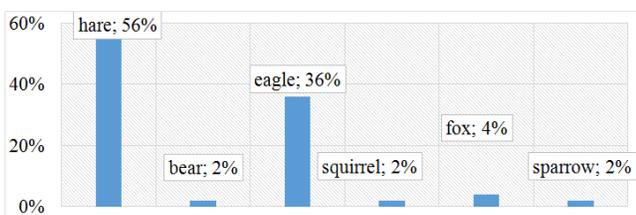


Figure 9. The influence of natural objects on overcoming a child's anxiety when interacting with others at the beginning of children's learning at school

## CONCLUSION

Even before starting school, 91% of children begin to feel anxious that they will be constantly asked at school, and they will not be able to successfully answer (K. Lazareva).

Beginning school is also a situation that causes children to feel anxious, as children are involved in various processes that imply their activity. It is the process of formation of educational activity, the process of formation of the child's internal action plan, the process of formation of interaction with the teacher and other children, the process of formation of the child as a subject of educational activity.

Objects of nature can enhance the course of the emergence and overcoming of the child's anxiety when interacting with others at the beginning of children's teaching at school. This process becomes possible because the child emotionally responds to the environment, distinguishes between pleasant and unpleasant objects of nature.

If the children talked about the object of nature from the category of "pleasant", the level of their anxiety decreased. If the object of nature was classified by children as "dangerous", then their story consisted of a short one phrase, sometimes two sentences, the children experienced a state of anxiety.

At the beginning of children's teaching at school to overcome the child's anxiety while interacting with others, it is important to strengthen the child's position by using a favorite animal.

## SUGGESTION

Egocentric fears based on the instinct of self-preservation are complemented by socially mediated fears affecting the life and well-being of others, first parents and those caring for the child, and then people outside the sphere of his direct communication. The considered process of the differentiation of fear in the historical and personal aspects is the path from fear to anxiety, which can already be spoken about in senior preschool age and which, as a socially mediated form of fear, acquires special significance at school age.

It is necessary that the awareness of the content by schoolchildren is cultivated in parallel with the development of a stable-negative personal attitude to their fears and the ability to fight and manage their fears, rationally organize their lives, control the emotional sphere, for which younger students should be placed in the position of an active participant in the set of classes. Correction of fears is a special form of psychological pedagogical activity aimed at creating the most favorable conditions for optimizing the mental development of the child's personality, providing him with special psychological assistance. Increasingly, the diagnostic and corrective function is referred to as essential, paramount ones in the activities of a modern, personality-oriented teacher. While the goal of bottom-up correction is exercise

and consolidation of what the child has already achieved, top-down correction is anticipatory and is structured as a psycho-pedagogical activity aimed at the timely formation of psychological new formations. At the same time, the main direction of fear correctional work is the purposeful formation of generalized ways of orienting the child in various spheres of objective activity and interpersonal interactions, ultimately – the social situation of development. The very correctional work should be built not as a simple training of skills and abilities (subject, communicative, etc.), but as a holistic, meaningful activity of the child, naturally, organically fitting into the system of his daily life relationships.

### LIMITATION

The limitations of presented study include small size of the sample and oversimplified research design and results processing. However, we aimed at general outlining of the influence of natural objects on the beginning of children's teaching at school in the context of children's fear and anxiety, determining development of fears in the later age. Further studies in this area are expedient and highly relevant.

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