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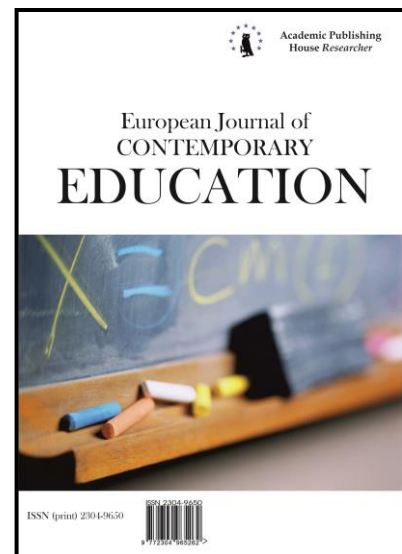
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Social Communication as the Means of Preschool Children Education: Research and Development Opportunities

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Abstract

The article reveals the problem of developing the ability of preschool children to socialize. It covers the theoretical aspects of the issue and draws attention to the association between the social communication of preschool children and their ability to interact and intercommunicate as well as the development of their social and emotional intelligence, motivation, etc.

The article describes methods and methodology for the study of four components of the process of social communication among preschool children such as socio-intellectual, activity-practical, motivational-axiological and emotional. The article considers the following sections of the program which allows forming effective social communications in preschool children: «Socialization. Life skills».

There are represented the results of the experimental research of social communications among preschool children in different educational environments (school, kindergarten, developing center of additional education). The dynamics of the development of the capacity of preschool children for social communications and the changes in their social and communicative personal qualities in the process of experimental work are shown.

The article deals with the discussion issues of the creation of conditions for the development of effective social communications in children. The author substantiates the necessity of creating a developing educational environment for teaching preschool children, the use of the project method, the interdependent form of play activity in group work with preschool children, analysis and

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evaluation of this process by teachers and psychologists. It is also noted that developing centers for additional education of children have opportunities for the implementation of this process.

Keywords: social communications, the social situation of development of preschool children, the psycho-pedagogical program.

1. Introduction

In connection with the changes in the social situation of the development of the child of preschool age, which is associated with the limited number of children's contacts, the lack of a multi-age socialization in the yard, and the communication in virtual rather than real space, the interest of researchers in studying the features of social communications among children has increased.

Modern philosophical studies consider social communications as a universal system of interaction of agents in the socio-cultural space on the basis of the processes of creation, exchange, storage and translation of cultural values, in which a person creates a special kind of communicative niche – social communication (Buzskaya, 2014). In the course of the mediated interaction of subjects, three main goals are achieved: broadcasting and appropriation of knowledge (cognitive), inspiring the social communication participants' actions (stimulating), receiving and expressing emotions (expressive) (Orekhovskaya, 2014). It is important that in the process of social communication, there is a "transition from the speaking of One to the actions of the Other" (Konetskaya, 1997). On the basis of social communications there take place the social adaptation and the identification of the subject in the society.

The interest of a person in the social world is already clearly manifested in pre-school children (Zakharova, 2011). The senior preschooler is able to accept and learn information from other people in a relatively autonomous way, solve elementary problems of interaction with peers and adults, respond emotionally to events in his life. The picture of the social world, formed by a preschool child and his opportunities in the development of social communications not only affect the development of his personality, but also significantly increase the level of adaptation during the transition from a pre-school educational environment to the educational environment of the mainstream school.

L.V. Kolomiychenko regards social communications in preschool children as a dynamic, consistent and multi aspect process that promotes the child's becoming a subject of social culture (Kolomiychenko, 2015). The scientist believes that the main mechanisms for the development of social communications in preschool children are: social orientation, reflex regulation, imitation, emotional identification, normative and inductive regulation, social experience, cultural creation, control, evaluation and reflection.

Discussing social communications among older preschoolers, researchers pay attention to the fact that social intelligence contributes to this process being an integral ability to understand the actions of a partner in communication and a factor of interaction with the social environment, which ensures successful social adaptation of the child (Mikhailova (Aleshina), 1996).

Social communication is also viewed in the activity-practical aspect, in particular from the point of view of possibilities of influencing the game interaction of preschool children and their peers, their communication, and its role in creating special social and communicative situations for the successful implementation of the process (Veraksa, 2014; Samokhvalova, 2015). In addition, researchers point to the possibility of using the subject-generative and subject-joint types of interaction in the development of social communications in preschool children (Panov, 2014).

Turning to the motivational-axiological aspect of social communication in preschool children, scientists emphasize that it is difficult for a child to choose between personally significant and socially significant motives, that the hierarchy of motives as a relatively stable manifestation of personality is earlier formed in children with a higher socio-psychological status (Belkina, 2015).

Researchers point to the emotional aspect of social communication in children and view it through the development of the child's emotional intelligence, that is, his ability to differentiate his own feelings, the initial ability to control them, the understanding of the emotional states of communication partners, etc. (Andreeva, 2008).

In the process of social communication, preschool children develop social skills, which in their turn are influenced by a favorable atmosphere in the group of children, positive relationships with teachers and peers he interacts with. The assimilation of social and moral

cultural rules of public life and the realization of moral norms are achieved through playing the with the help of educational games which take into account gender differences, etc. (Singer, 2007; Johansson, 2006).

Summarizing all of the above, we can say that by developing a child's social communication skills, we meet the child's need for the other, and ensure his successful entry into the society. At the heart of this development there is the mastery of ways to cognize the elements and systems of other people's behaviour, the positive motivation in interaction with them, an adequate assessment of one's own emotional state and that of the communication partners (Antopolskaya, Zhuravleva, 2016).

The problem is to determine the conditions under which preschool children will be more successful in implementing social communications.

2. Materials and Methods

In the experiment on the development of social communications in pre-school children, three groups of preschool children aged 6-7 years took part. The children were in different educational environments.

We assumed that social communication will be more effective in that organization where the educational environment is that of a creative type and children are engaged in a special psychological and pedagogical program that forms social and communicative skills. Preschoolers of this group will be involved in various forms of play activity and communication which are based on the subject-generative and the subject-joint types of interaction.

We investigated four components of the process of social communications: social-intellectual, activity-practical, motivational-axiological and emotional. There are psychodiagnostic methods used in the experiment: the "Social Intelligence" test (J. Guilford, M. Saliven, adapted for the Russian-speaking E.S. Mikhaylova (Aleshina), the hardware method of modeling the joint activity "Arka" (A.S. Chernyshev, S.V. Sarychev), "Methodology for determining the degree of involvement of older preschool children in play interaction with a peer" (S.S. Zhuravleva), "Emotional persons" (N.Ya. Semago), "Scheme of monitoring the communication of children in different types of joint activities" (R. Beyls, adapt Ya.L. Kolominsky, E.A. Panko), "Communicative-personal questionnaire" (R.S. Nemov), Socio-metric method of J. Moreno (in the modification of T.A. Repina), method of expert evaluations ("Questionnaire of definition type of social and communicative interaction of older preschool children in gaming activities" (V.I. Panov, S.S. Zhuravleva).

The first stage of the study revealed the features of the educational environment in which preschool children were trained and determined the levels of their social communications. At the second stage of the study a shaping experiment was carried out. The independent variable was the specially created psychological and pedagogical conditions and the implementation of the program "Socialization. Life skills" among preschoolers, the dependent variable being the level of social and communicative development of children.

The psychological and pedagogical program "Socialization. Life skills" was established and then piloted during 5 years in order to create conditions favorable for effective social communications among preschool children. It was conditionally divided into three parts: specially organized training in the form of classes; joint activity of the child and an adult: designing, project activities, preparation and participation in interactive festivals; free independent activity of children: socio-dramatic plays, designing, artistic creativity. The contents of the program included the following sections:

- "The secret of my own self": living through various emotional states, gaining experience of dealing with one's own sensations, emotions and feelings and those of another person; forming gesture culture in children and the ability to express their thoughts and feelings through facial expressions; creating safe environment for self-knowledge and understanding of one's own self and individuality; developing adequate self-esteem.

- "Me and the other. The world begins with me ": organization of game activity in accordance with the age development, learning game interaction, formation of social skills while communicating with peers.

- "This strange world of adults": the formation of the foundations of arbitrary behavior, emotional-volitional regulation, mastering the rules of adequate safe behavior in society.

- "I'm learning to be a pupil!": Acquainting children with the conditions and nature of educational activities at school, the formation of primary skills of learning, the formation of a positive attitude towards school and adaptive behavior in the transition to a new level of education.

The forming stage of the experiment also included the involvement of all the subjects of the organization in the work on the implementation of the program; actualization of the subject-generative and subject-joint types of interaction in the course of practical classes with children; analysis and evaluation of results on the part of teachers and psychologists.

3. Results

According to the ascertaining stage of the experiment children from control group № 1 had the dogmatic type of the educational environment as prevailing. In the second organization (kindergarten), engaging the children of the control group 2, the career educational environment prevailed. In the third organization (the developing center for additional education "Dialogue", Kursk), where preschool children from the experimental group were trained, a typical creative environment prevailed.

The results of the experimental work revealed a significant dynamics in the development of preschool children social communications ability.

Table 1. Dynamics of socio-communicative development of preschool children

Components of the socio-communicative development	CGr 1			CGr 2			CGr 3		
	The beginning of the academic year	The end of the academic year	t, p	The beginning of the academic year	The end of the academic year	t, p	The beginning of the academic year	The end of the academic year	t, p
socio-intellectual	2,8	3,6	6,212***	2,86	4	10,258***	3,1	4,6	9,326***
activity-practical	2,45	2,78	8,569***	2,67	3,2	7,105***	2,55	4	11,989***
motivational-axiological	3,26	3,86	4,123***	2,97	3,46	3,623***	3,15	4,45	10,257***
emotional	3,65	3,93	6,797***	3,21	4,1	8,524***	3,4	4,91	11,942***
Straight average, scores	3,04	3,54		2,93	3,69		3,05	4,49	
Educational effect			10,00			15,20			8,80
Positive shift			46			56			69
Negative shift			2			1			
Zero shift			30			21			

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Negative shift			2			1			-
Zero shift			30			21			9

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Notes

* Statistically invalid differences ($p \geq 0,05$);

** Statistically verifiable differences ($p < 0,05$);

*** Statistically verifiable differences ($p < 0,01$).

We elicited the highest for this age group level of the emotional component of social communications development – 78.6 %; low level of the activity-practical component development (55.6 %, i.e. 2.67-3.2 points); the average level of the development of socio-intellectual (76 %, i.e., 2.86-4 points) and motivational-axiological components (71, 2 %, i.e. 2.97-3.46 points). In the experimental group, the number of children with an above-average and high levels of social and communicative skills development has increased significantly.

In the course of the experiment, we determined a change in the socio-communicative personal qualities of children.

Table 2. The expert assessment of socio-communicative qualities of children CGr1, CGr2 and EG (%)

Socio-communicative qualities of preschoolers	CGr1	CGr2	EG
Kindness	90, 2	93,8	95,5
Consideration	48, 4	65	81,2
Honesty	59,5	70	86, 2
Politeness	82, 5	69, 4	88, 4
Sociability	92, 3	70,6	81, 2
Generosity	87	49, 4	72, 4
Sympathy	79,3	63, 1	95,5
Fairness	58,6	60, 6	88, 4
Cheerfulness	89, 2	61,3	95,5
Responsibility	35,1	67,5	65, 4

The expert assessment of socio-communicative qualities of children CGr1, CGr2 and EG showed that the majority of preschool children possess sufficiently marked qualities of kindness, sympathy, sociability, fairness, cheerfulness, politeness, consideration and honesty. The results of the development of these qualities are equally high in the three study groups, but in the CGr1 the indicators of the consideration and honesty are slightly reduced, as well as those of cheerfulness and politeness in CGr2.

The results of the formative stage of the experiment demonstrate statistically significant differences in CGr1, CGr2 and EG in terms of the level of development of social communications. ($t=2,421$, $p < 0.05$ – for groups of CGr 1 and EG; $t = 2,726$, $p < 0,01$ for groups CGr2 and EG), the emotional component ($t = 3,856$, $p < 0,01$ for groups CGr1 and CGr2, $t = 2,512$, $p < 0, 05$ for CGr1 and EG groups, $t = 4,225$, $p < 0.01$ for KG2 and EG groups).

In particular, the statistical differences in the development of the socio-intellectual component ($t = 3,253$, $p \geq 0.05$ – for groups CGr1 and CGr2, $t = 5,128$, $p < 0.01$ – for groups CGr1 and EG, $t = 3,245$, $p < 0.01$ – for groups of CGr2 and EG); the activity-practical component ($t = 5,363$, $p < 0.01$ – for groups CGr1 and CGr2, $t = 4,124$, $p < 0,01$ for groups CGr1 and EG, $t = 4,986$, $p < 0, 01$ for groups CGr2 and EG); the motivational-axiological component ($t = 3,741$, $p < 0.01$ – for t groups CGr1 and CGr2, $t = 3,236$, $p < 0.01$).

4. Discussion

Discussing the development of social communication in children, researchers draw attention to the fact that in different educational environments, there are differences in conditions that ensure successful social communication among preschool children. This is proved by our experimental work.

Scientists draw attention to the fact that socio-communicative development of the child is most successful in developing centers of additional education for children. It is there that conditions are provided to meet the needs of the individual: to be as the next man (identity with the surrounding world); be a personality (the desire for self-determination); to be different (searching for opportunities to go beyond the boundaries of one's self) (Frishman, 2014; Yasvin, 2001). At the

same time, a number of opportunities these organizations present for a child's development contribute to the successful entering the social world:

- flexible, creative forms of organizing classes and activities;
- diversity interaction subjects;
- the possibility of carrying out "social tests" in the nearest microcommunity;
- the predominant role of play motivation in the organization of communication and interaction of children;
- the possibility of choosing a teacher and that of parents' being present at the lessons.

Developmental educational environment is essential for forming social communications of preschool children. It should have characteristics of a creative type of environment (Yasvin, 2001), i.e. create opportunities for free development of the child's personality. Such an environment encourages the actualization of the processes of interaction, communication, intensification of communicative, intellectual and behavioral components of play activity, development of the subject position of the senior preschooler in interaction with a peer. Such kind of environment may be called a social oasis, which changes the personality of a child and the children's group (Chernyshev, 2007).

It should be borne in mind that a specially created developmental educational environment not only provides a successful solution to the problems of the age-related development of the preschooler, but also promotes the actualization of the zone of his nearest development, the realization of conditions for free activity in the peer group and joint activity with the adult as well as has a positive impact on the emotional state of the child and takes into account the gender differences of children. Under the conditions of a specially created developmental educational environment, acquired in the result of integrated pedagogic actions, children get interested in communication and begin to feel a need for it which contributes to forming co-operation skills, behavioral norms, skills of safe behavior in society and other socio-communicative skills.

Experimental work has confirmed that one of the productive methods of teaching preschool children social communications is project activities. N.E. Veraksa points out that it is the project method that is the main condition for encouraging activity and initiative in children of the senior preschool age (Antopolskaya, Zhuravleva, 2016). Project activities are classified as integrative methods and imply the foreseeing of the result of joint project activity while being initiated and implemented by children themselves on the basis of common interest. In the course of project activities, children acquire the experience of productive interaction in a group of peers, which causes changes in their interpersonal relationships as well as the nature of their relationship with parents as partners in shared experiences. The presentation of the project activities results and their appreciation by adults and other children is an essential condition of personal development of the child.

In the course of the experiment the following stages of the project proved themselves: preparatory (deciding on the topic, methods and outcome of the forthcoming activity; goals and objectives setting.); principal (independent performance of the work); preparation for project defense; defense; evaluation (by external experts). Psychologically, the process of working on a project is more important than its result, because it allows you to master the "new" forms of human activity in a group of peers. Deciding on the issue of the project is related to the implementation of the "three questions model" (What do I know about the object-matter of the project? What do I want to discover? What needs to be done to get this information?). Projects can be short-term and long-term. At the initial stage of the project implementation, preschool children discuss the content and the sequence of the forthcoming work and distribute assignments within the group. The realization of even short-term projects makes parents, teachers of additional education, musical directors, recreational gymnastics instructors and art tutors be involved in active interaction with children. During the forming stage of the experiment, the following projects were prepared: "Me and Others", "I am Going to School", "Safety Area", etc.

An important method of teaching preschoolers effective social communications in our experimental work was finding solution in difficult communicative situations (what you could do if your group mates need help, what can be done to resolve a conflict situation between two children, what you should do if the adult offended you, etc.). Solving these situations does not aim at demonstrating the communication skills of dealing with peers and adults that have already been learnt and they do not have the only correct solution. While solving them, preschoolers learn to

interpret the situation, to choose an adequate way of dealing with the problem. Thus comes the change in personal agency of preschool children, i.e. transition from the subject-object type to the subject-generative type of children interaction within their group. Preschoolers learn not only to settle situations by themselves, but also master stereotypes of socially approved ways of communication with peers.

As demonstrated by our experimental work, the ways of organizing interaction in the group of preschool children are mechanisms that provide for the child's social and communicative development. In the experiment we employed the ideas of L.I. Umansky and his followers regarding forms of organization of joint activities of children (Chernyshev, 2007). From our point of view, these forms can be described as follows. The essence of the joint-individual form of interaction between subjects is in fulfilling a common task by all actors simultaneously, but each of them makes its part of the common work independently of each other. The joint-sequential form of interaction is based on the relay or conveyor mode, i.e. the result of activity of one subject becomes the object of activity of the other. The joint-interdependent interaction form is more complex in terms of its organization, as the task is carried out with direct (simultaneous and within the same space) involvement of each subject with all the rest. From our point of view the use of interdependent form of play activity in group work with preschoolers allows making teaching children social communications most effective.

It is crucial that children are given clear meaningful goals and the adult puts the child into a positive frame of mind when it comes to communication with peers analyzing and discussing some issues and arranging the joint activity of children. The adult also creates conditions for independent choice and personal contribution to the result of mutual play activity. It should be mentioned that the development of the child's personal agency through play interaction with a peer is supported by his emotional-axiological excitement about the overall result of the activity.

Such activities as playing games based on dramatization, doing training exercises, composing and acting out stories, improvising, playing active theme-based games, making socio-dramatic play more complicated and plot building help to strengthen socio-communicative skills.

One of the important conditions for the socio-communicative development of senior preschoolers is the analysis and evaluation of this process by educators and psychologists. It is these subjects that not only record the quantitative and qualitative changes in the mental development of children in the educational process, but also the changes in the interaction of children in the peer group.

5. Conclusion

Thus the theoretical analysis of the problem of development of the capacity of preschool children for social communication and the experiment which has been carried out allows us to state that:

- this problem is of an interdisciplinary nature, there are different points of view on its understanding;
- the solution of the problem will increase the adaptive capabilities of preschool children needed during the transition from a pre-school educational environment to the educational environment of the mainstream school;
- there are pedagogical conditions that facilitate the process of teaching preschool children social communications: the creation of an educational environment of a creative type; the use of various forms of play activity and communication among preschool children on the basis of the subject-generative and subject-joint types of interaction; realization of the psychological and pedagogical program of social and communicative development of children.

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