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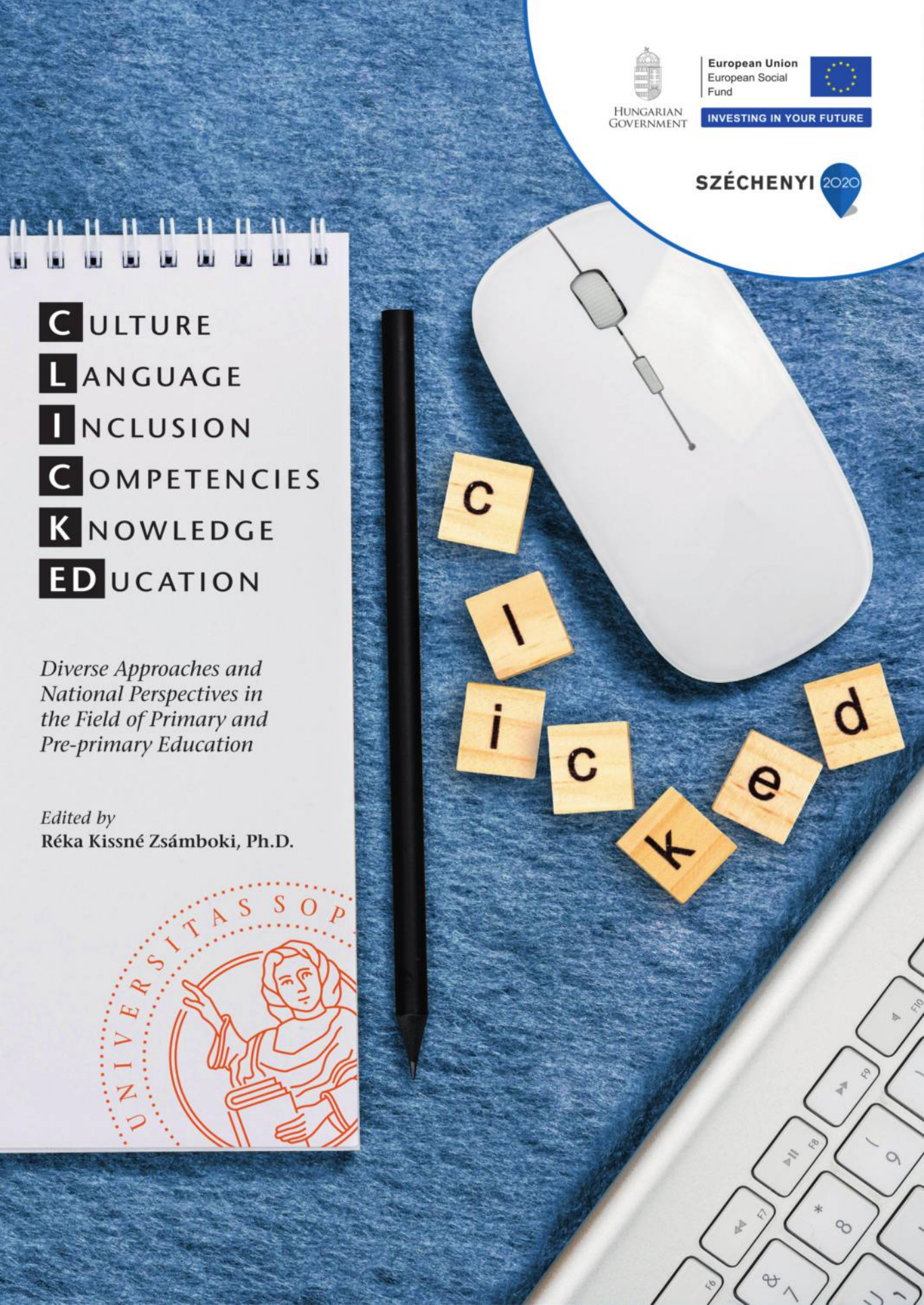
Diverse Approaches and National Perspectives in the Field of Primary and Pre-primary Education

Edited by
Réka Kissné Zsámboki, Ph.D.



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Diverse Approaches and National Perspectives in the Field of Primary and Pre-primary Education

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PROLOGUE

It is now well-known that the early years play a crucial role not only in the complex and harmonious development of personality but in the physical, emotional, social and cognitive learning process, too. Learning is a holistic and a wide term and it combines knowledge, skills, actions, emotions, sensory observations, bodily experiences and thinking in a culturally oriented and diverse environment. This puts emphasis on the significance of social skills, self-expression, interaction skills, cultural and transversal competences.

Children are growing up in a culturally, linguistically and ideologically diverse world. This book is also a diverse and unique collection of scientific studies, research reports and essays including different approaches and national perspectives in the field of primary and pre-primary education.

Our purpose is to draw attention to the importance of early years and the inclusive education in the light of culture, language, art, literature, learning and holistic development. Children also develop their thinking and learning through diverse individual experiences, social-emotional interactions and pedagogical activities provided by the teachers. It truly matters how we communicate, observe, listen to, support, encourage, educate and care for children, as well as what kind of learning opportunities and environments we offer them. Working in the field of pre-primary and primary education is sometimes demanding, but also very rewarding.

Let's "click" together for our children's prospering future!

The Authors

Arianna Kitzinger

FROM 'CULTURE' TO 'CULTURE': CULTURE AS THE MEANS OF INTERNATIONALISATION IN EDUCATION

Abstract

The concept of culture has undergone several changes during the centuries from an anthropological point of view. The outcomes of these changes should also be reflected in education, in case education tries to adjust to developments and if it aims to transfer modern contents to students. The paradigmatic shifts can especially be noticed in foreign language teaching (FLT) whose one of the major/essential parts has always been culture. However, in the second part of the 20th century, in parallel with socio-political changes, new questions about culture arose and new solutions had to be found, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. The remote culture in textbooks gradually became accessible and tangible through travelling (Hartl, Molnár, Kollarics, 2018) by extending culture with a capital C into culture with a small c. Internationalisation via student exchanges is a key element of modern education. With that, also acculturation strategies, consciously or unconsciously, have to be followed. The article intends to give insight into the major changes relating to the role of culture in education and how the results are manifested in the life of students in higher education.

"It is proof of high culture,
to say the greatest matters
in the simplest way."[1]

Introduction: the concept and characteristics of culture

Culture as a term can be traced back to the Latin verb *'colere'* which means *'cultivate, tend and look after'* as Rédei (2007) reveals. If we go back in time, we notice that Bacon in the 17th century handled the idea as a *'pool of knowledge'* (Rédei, 2007, p. 171), plus a system of customs, which is acquired by the individual. From the very concrete (agricultural) meaning of the cultivation

1 from The Conduct of Life by R. W. Emerson

of a land, later it was used as the cultivation of an art (music, painting, architecture, etc.). From this latter category the notion of *"high culture"* (culture with a capital *'C'*) can be derived while by now culture has gained a much more extended meaning. In relation with culture and its changes we must not forget about the historical background either, for instance, in the case of states based on or influenced by Anglo-Saxon societies in the 19th and 20th centuries. Colonialism, together with modern globalisation and migration, had a considerable impact on the language and culture of these countries. Sir Raymond Firth (Rédei, 2007) from a definitely social aspect unfolds that in a society culture also means the lifestyle of people. If society is taken as the network of people, the content of these connections is the culture itself. He also adds that culture, as a complex phenomenon, is made up material and non-material means.

The concept of culture has gone under changes during the centuries from an anthropological point of view. First, cultural anthropologists put the stress on the objects of exotic people which were displayed in museums. Later, culture was thought to be equal to customs and traditions and especially learnt behaviour. Then, interpretative anthropology noticed that culture was not embedded in the tangible objects. It has an underlying characteristic feature, a so-called *"cultural knowledge"* (Feischmidt, 1997, p. 18) which individuals share about the visible world. This knowledge can especially be recognised in the language. The main point of this trend was that it assumed a stable world with a never-changing culture. On the other hand, one of the branches of cultural relativism, epistemological relativism realised that each culture is unique; therefore, they cannot be compared.

Culture as a concept (Cohen, 1997) has undergone several paradigms shifts as well. It used to mean a decisive factor of behaviour developed by the given environment or technology. Then, culture was regarded as a tool, which integrated politics, economy and religion. Recently culture has gained a much wider meaning: it mirrors social interactions where individuals are not only passive receivers, but also active participants and aggregators of social processes (Bodnár, 2006). Critical culture research draws attention to the interlocking of culture and politics and deals with two types of culture, i.e. canonised and popular culture. In this way, it finds important to show and analyse different cultures beside the mainstream culture (Feischmidt,1997).

The relationship of culture, language and nation is also worth mentioning. Risager (Koyama, 2007) states that these three do not overlap absolutely, as it was believed in the nationalist theories and they have to be examined in terms of linguistic and cultural *"flows"* (Koyama, 2007, p. 436). This means that these entities go beyond borders and are able to network with each other in the localities. These localities can be either regions, communities, homes and schools without distinct socio-cultural borderlines.

Additionally, culture is not a static phenomenon, but, according to Barth, its continuous changes and development must be taken into consideration as

well (Feischmidt, 1997, p. 16). The dominant discourse tends to take culture as a stable and solid phenomenon, which is inherited from older generations, and is passed on to the next ones (Byram et al., n.d.). Opposite to this aspect, demotic discourse finds that culture is dynamic, ever-changing continuum where individuals have the right and will to make alterations and changes. Irzik and Irzik (2002) support the concept that culture is not static. They firmly believe that both culture and identity have the space and chance to develop or change, as neither of them can be regarded as a *"closed-off, homogeneous entity"* (Irzik & Irzik 2002, p. 395). Today the term *'culture'* is used as our common tradition, value and beliefs, which are handed on from generation to generation. Thus, culture can be defined as the *"practices, beliefs, values, symbols and traditions"* (culture with a small *'c'*) of a society (Byram et al., n.d. p. 9.).

Culture in education

Culture and its related terms, especially multiculturalism, are highlighted in modern education. Pedagogical multiculturalism considers each culture equal and stresses mutual respect among cultures (Kissné & Patyi, 2018; Kovács, 2108; Molnár, 2018; Pásztor, 2018). According to Radtke (1997) it is a socio-romantic form of multiculturalism which underestimates material conflicts and gives culture a folkloric hue. In this *"naive structure"* (1997, p. 40) institutes, teachers and researchers tend to play a leading role as active professionals. Hamburger's determines three basic pillars of multicultural education: mutual tolerance, solidarity and a universal moral (Feischmidt, 1997).

Culture in education indeed has a very special place. Martin-Jones and Heller (1996) warn us that seemingly minor arrangements at school, for instance the organisation of a classroom and the structure of a lesson can affect students' language use and cultural attitudes. The authors give an example of turn-taking, which is an everyday practice in the classroom and only few notice its influence on children's behaviour and language use. Participants are covertly controlled about the contents and the form of their speaking.

Classroom interactions may even lead to deny one's own identity at the expense of other (majority) identity. Interactions are very often misinterpreted as well. Carbaugh in an interview (as cited in Berry, 2009) gives an example of it when he recalls his memories about one of his research activities in the USA. At the University of Montana native American students were labelled as *"uncooperative or incorrigible"* (2009, p. 235). According to Carbaugh, this is a typical discourse in the United States and a pure misunderstanding of native culture where being *"uncooperative"* is a sign of respect. On the other hand, these native students have often been exposed to situations which, in their interpretation, made no sense. *'Invisible misunderstandings'* (2009, p. 240) can also be discovered in language use where, although the speakers may share the same language,

certain terms and vocabularies may have different connotations which causes a gap in understanding.

A huge gap in language use was detected at home and at school in three nearby communities by Heath (1982, 1983). In her classic study, she reveals the relations of language and culture and, what can be considered even more important in this context: how they are manifested in education. Heath compares three communities, namely a black working-class, a white working-class and a black and white middle-class community where different patterns of language use can be observed. Beyond the description of the language patterns, the author, using the methodological repertoire of a participant observer, goes further and analyses the relationship between school expectations and family customs through language use. The influence is two-directional. While the language use (rooted in family culture) creates considerable impact on school progress, the prevailing school norms (e.g. the expectation of giving one-dimensional answers to what-questions, and following a strict story-line) seem to absolutely neglect the cultural traditions of for instance, non-mainstream black children.

Michaels (1981) gives a similar account of her observation series conducted in an ethnically integrated first grade classroom in the United States. She observed young children during their *'sharing time'* activity, which is a usual narrative process when children describe an interesting or important object or event in their lives in front of their peers and with their teacher's comments or questions. The action aims to prepare children for literacy. Michaels, the researcher carefully sets her own categories along which she is able to analyse this key situation at school. Among others, she puts intonation patterns, teacher's sharing schema and children's sharing style into focus. What she concludes shows great similarity with Heath's (1983) results, i.e. there is a serious mismatch between children's performances and school's expectations. Schools are simply not prepared to receive and develop children with different home values: home-based experiences conflict with school expectations to a great extent.

The reason why both of the studies (Michaels, 1981; Heath, 1983) can be called a breakthrough is that researchers, with their elaborated ethnographic methods, manage to go beyond the traditional labels, dig deeper and detect the very refined complexity of *"culture"*, in this case by searching and finding coherence between culture, language and education. Their work must have been a triggering factor for the 1990s when culture gained a different meaning in language teaching, especially in ELT (Kovács & Trentinné, 2016). According to Kramsch (1993, 2001) the shift in paradigm was due to a different approach where teaching culture tended to develop novel characteristic features, for instance, involving *"interculturality"*, *"interpersonal process"* and *"crossing disciplinary boundaries"* (1993, pp. 206-207).

Going on in the same path, Porto (2000) finds involving cultural features in language education especially important as cultural awareness, embedded in

language teaching, may result in a special approach to communication and helps to create the appropriate communication strategies that can be applied in varied socio-cultural settings. Thus, learners' cognitive and social development is also guaranteed along the linguistic path. At the same time, she sees that not every learner wants to undertake a new identity with a new language and its culture. In addition, learner's own identity can be fostered by widening it with new cultural roles.

As a basic tool of identity and culture is the language, Rédei (2007) also realises that the role of a common language cannot be neglected while discussing multiculturalism. She assumes that the spread of the English language made English-speaking countries (USA, Australia and Canada) especially popular among migrants.

Teaching culture in higher education has become a crucial issue as well. The question is *"Which culture to teach?"*. Thanasoulas (2001) makes a difference between culturalfacts, statistics and matter-of-fact information and cross-cultural psychology and anthropology. On the other hand, Serrano (2001) points out that there is a distorted shift in teaching between the culture of nations: for instance in English teaching the stress is on English (vs. e.g. Irish) culture, while in Spanish teaching the stress is on Spanish (vs. e.g. Latin American) culture. It is neither a linguistic nor an educational problem but the result of political attitude to these countries and nations.

Cultural policy: the three Ts / Ps

To understand the characteristic features of culture in Central and Eastern Europe in the political transition period of the early 1990s the basics of cultural policy have to be examined (Frang, 2019). In Hungary, for instance, the post-war period can be described as the era of the three Ts. It covers three categories whose name begin with the letter *'T'*, i.e. *'támogatott'*, *'tűrt, 'tiltott'*, which can be interpreted in English with three words beginning with a *'P'*, i.e. *'promoted'*, *'permitted'* and *'prohibited'*. According to the naming these labels were attached to cultural products, such as books, films, musical and artistic pieces. Categorisation, which noticeably means a very severe censorship, was made by the cultural ministry of the omnipotent state. Education, as a vital sector of transmitting culture, was also the field of restrictions: the subject materials of humanities (literature, history and languages) were strictly under control.

As far as languages were concerned, not only subject materials, but also languages themselves got the different labels. While Russian was obligatory to study for 10 years (4 years in primary, 4 years in secondary schools and 2 years in higher education), Western languages were taught in limited numbers of lessons. If they were taught at all, their contents were prescribed and teachers' freedom was curtailed. The newspapers of the communist parties of the given countries served as foreign language information channels. Therefore, Pravda,

Volksstimme or l'Unità became the accepted (*'promoted'*) media of languages like Russian, German or Italian.

While the country was well provided with Russian teachers, there was a severe selection among those who wanted to major in English language and literature at teacher training colleges or universities. When Russian, after 40 years of its obligatory status, ceased to be a compulsory language at schools from September 1989, foreign language teaching in Central and Eastern Europe had to face enormous challenges. In Hungary, *"the shortfall [of English and German teachers] was in the order of 10,000"* (Malderez & Medgyes, 1996, p.2), while in Poland 20,000 teachers of English were missing (Mountford & Wadham-Smith, 2000). Both countries tried to solve the problem with special intense language training: in Hungary CETT (Centre for English Teacher Training) in Budapest was established, while in Poland 40 new teacher training colleges were founded (Kolodziejczik et al., 2000). In both countries the British Council played a vital role in pre- and in-service training of English teachers.

Culture in Foreign Language Teaching (FLT)

In FLT teaching culture was also shaping into a new way both in naming and its contents. While before 1989 it was called *'Civilisation'* (English), *'Landeskunde'* (German), civilisation (French), *'civilt'* (Italian), from 1989 gradually, especially in ELT (English Language Teaching) the subject started to become *'British Studies'* → *'British Cultural Studies'* → *'Cross-cultural Studies'* → *'Intercultural Studies'*. The difference between the starting point and the outcome can be noticed in the following summary (Table 1).

Table 1. The difference between Civilisation and Intercultural Studies
(Based on Byram, 2000, p. 95)

Civilisation	Intercultural Studies
geography & history	theories of culture
structure and functions of institutions	interdisciplinarity (sociology, anthropology)

It can be seen that the shift is moving from monoculturalism to interculturalism, thus, the ethos of the monocultural speaker is replaced by the so-called *"intercultural speaker"* (Byram, 2000, p. 95) who, while learning a foreign language, becomes more and more familiar with a foreign culture (Furcsa, 2018). This cannot only be doubled or tripled with the cultural phenomena of different countries (especially in the case of English), but he/she also acquires an attitude, an approach which makes him/her able to think about

culture (his / her own plus the *"learned"* culture/s) in a complex and integrated way.

To achieve this, within the frame of new ELT methodology, students needed new skills. The most important ones in teaching and learning Intercultural Studies were as follows:

- interrogating texts
- unpeeling culturally loaded texts
- drawing conclusions and avoiding overgeneralisations (stereotypes)

New types of texts proved to be useful and new questions about these texts had to be formed, e.g. "Why has it been written? What makes the text difficult to understand from the perspective of a learner from another culture?" (Andrews, 2000, p. 105)

Soon a new pattern was developed. By the early 2000s, Central and Eastern European countries, with the professional help of the British Council, were ready to revisit their cultural programmes and materials. In Poland, a conference at Wroclaw University titled *'Poland in British Culture – Britain in Polish Culture'* and in Hungary an intercultural course book and teacher's book titled *'Zoom in on Britain and Hungary'* (Swan Communications, 2001) meant a significant breakthrough.

The contents of *'Zoom in'* were carefully compiled by an international team of English teachers at secondary and tertiary level. After a comprehensive theoretical training at the British Council, they paid a visit to the United Kingdom, where they made an ethnographic field trip on the basis of which the book was written. At that time the course book was considered to be a real progress which had several novel features (Table 2).

Table 2. The novel features in *'Zoom in on Britain and Hungary'*
(Based on Kitzinger, 2001, pp. 337-339)

· personal
· interactive
· up-to-date
· breaks down stereotypes
· involves a cross-cultural approach
· develops learner autonomy
· is not exam-centred but exam helping

In the book, culture and literature both with capital and small *'C'* and *'L'* can

be found. Literary texts were selected with special care putting McRae's definition into limelight. According to this, literature involves "any text whose imaginative content will stimulate reaction and response in the receiver" (McRae, 1991, p. vii). Therefore, a wide range of literary texts were shown, the educational aims of which were to examine both referential and representational uses of the language while practising the *"fifth skill of language learning"* (McRae, 1991, p. 5), i.e. thinking in English. All of this is done via an intercultural approach where an integrated teaching of language, literature and culture is consistently emphasised.

Acculturation strategies

All the above-mentioned products and events in Central and Eastern Europe were following a path toward the direction of internationalisation. Before arriving at this important station of modern European education, it is advisable to examine what happens when cultures meet, because this is a basic background to cultural and educational visits, too.

Acculturation comes into question when people leave their home and move to another place, often abroad. With the encounter of the cultures, personal attitude (rooted in history, traditions and customs or outside circumstances) will determine how the individual adapts himself or herself to a new culture (Kitzinger, 2009). The term, *'acculturation strategies'* was first used by Berry (1997), who alternated his own previous term, *'acculturation attitudes'* (Berry, 1980). Acculturation basically depends on two key factors: how the individual approaches his or her own culture, and what his or her relation to the majority culture is like. On the combination of these factors the following pattern will emerge (Table 3):

Table 3. Acculturation strategies
(Based on Berry, 2008)

	High value on one's own culture +	**Rejecting one's own culture –**
High value on majority culture +	integration	assimilation
Rejecting majority culture –	segregation / separation	marginalization

Integration (Kitzinger, 2009) is the process when immigrants manage to accept the majority culture while preserving their own. There is an ideal balance

between immigrants' own culture and that of the receiving country. This balance, however, is fragile and there are usually anomalies either toward one's own culture or towards the culture of the majority. By integration Rédei (2007) means the adjustment and fusion of a small part into a large unit emphasising that in sociology it indicates the integration of the minorities into the majority society.

Integration (Feischmidt, 1997) at the same time is a bi-directional process which produces a new culture which is represented in the state, especially in state institutions and in education. However, in the private sphere there is still the opportunity of maintaining one's own culture. Integration (Fleras & Elliot, 1997) was initiated by liberal democratic societies whose aim was to cancel racist laws and segregation, for instance, with the abolition of colour bars in schools (in Ontario it happened only in 1964). Integration, despite assimilation, is a dual-way process where a new unity is born from major and minor cultures and societies, for instance, with the help of intermarriages and education.

When the individual cannot detach from his or her own culture and completely rejects majority culture, he / she separates (Kitzinger, 2009). In this case the immigrant is not able to accept the values of the receiving country, which means an isolating from the society he / she lives in. It is a common phenomenon which could be called *'forced emigration'* (2009, p. 27). It can be noticed in the cases where the individual does not leave his / her homeland voluntarily. Separation and segregation complete each other as they are on the sides of the same coin, states Wetzel (2011). While separation belongs to the strategies of ethnocultural groups, segregation refers to the strategy of the larger society (Berry, 2008). In segregation (Fleras & Elliot, 1997), the society is split into dominant and subordinate groups, which live in social, cultural and legal divisions and where there is no transit between the two groups.

Reasons for separation can be various, e.g. war, revolution or economic difficulties. Similar reasons can be noticed in connection with assimilation (Kitzinger, 2009), too, but individual reaction is just the opposite of the reaction in the case of separation: the individual tries to exclude the country left behind. At the same time, assimilation may be the result of fear: parents want their children to grow up in a new world forgetting their parents' roots, traditions and culture. During assimilation the individual or the group partially or entirely lose their own language, customs, and values, while taking over those of the host society. Despite multiculturalism in which diversity is a value which is worth maintaining, assimilation is based on homogeneity.

Marginalization (Kitzinger, 2009) is a relatively rare and the most problematic phenomenon. It might happen especially under circumstances where religious and cultural differences are considerable. In this case, individual excludes him- or herself from both cultures. Marginalised children, while rejecting their parents' culture, cannot completely accept the culture of the host country either. They often find themselves on the margin of the society.

Internationalisation in education: a mini survey

The above-mentioned strategies will be followed, either consciously or unconsciously, by students and teachers who visit foreign countries. Today, the system of exchange visits is well elaborated among European countries. One of the most widespread programmes is the Erasmus programme. Behind the name of the famous Dutch Renaissance humanist, Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536) the naming also involves the acronym of *"EuRopean Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students"*. The programme started in 1987 (before the Central and Eastern European changes) and its aims have not changed considerably since Baker and Jones's (1998) description (Table 4).

Table 4. The aims and goals of internationalisation in education (Baker and Jones, 1998, p. 625)

"To help students acquire an authentic **multicultural, multilingual experience.**
To break down barriers of language and culture, **reduce prejudice and increase understanding** and awareness of people from other countries.
To increase an awareness of **the variety of histories, geographies, cultures, politics and economics** in different areas of the world.
To encourage an interest in and improve competence in **another language.**
To provide a **first-hand experience of bilingualism and biculturalism** and promote positive attitudes to bilingualism and biculturalism."

The increasing number of exchange students in Europe gave me the idea to make a mini survey while visiting Queen Maud University College in Trondheim, Norway in April 2017. As a method I chose the focus group interview because I believed students shared a common knowledge that has accumulated, and discussing it together was not only a relevant experience or summary but also a stimulus for their personal and professional development. The group interview was made with five students and it was based on a pre-planned set of questions in English. As the type of the interview was semi-structured, students were given the chance to reflect on each other's thoughts by adding their own experience, thus it made the process more natural and spontaneous. The interview guide contained 26 items with questions about bio data, languages and language learning, motivation for an exchange, acculturation and evaluation (Appendix 1).

After transcription and content analysis the following results emerged from the texts:

1. All the five students study early childhood education as their major and they are from Greece, Ireland, Spain, South Africa and Hungary. (Here their

pseudonyms are used in the following way: Marta – from Greece, Amy – from Ireland, Elsa – from Sapin, Rosalind – from The Republic of South Africa, Adél – from Hungary.)

2. Students were brought up in monolingual families with one mother tongue (English, Greek, Hungarian), except for Elsa, whose family is Spanish–Catalan bilingual. Her sociolinguistic background mirrors the status of a minority language, namely Catalan in Spain. Her parents use mostly Catalan now, but her grandparents use Spanish because in their youth Catalan was not allowed to use. Elsa's first language is Catalan, and she started to study Spanish at school at the age of three. English is two students' mother tongue, while the English command of non-native English speakers is at advanced level (B2-C1). All of them use English as a lingua franca for their studies and daily communication with their fellow students. Moreover, English is also used in shops and in the city, which shows that Trondheim is an international university town where people are prepared to use English as their second language with foreigners in everyday situations. Besides, the interviewees also do general pedagogy courses in English at QMUC (Queen Maud University College). It is also the language of the kindergarten where trainees spend 6,5 hours a day. Adél, however, can also use her German and even Hungarian in the kindergarten because some children in her kindergarten came from Germany and Hungary and they gladly receive mother tongue support.

Amy and Elsa are studying Norwegian as well. Amy does it for the sake of her kindergarten activities, and Elsa is planning to stay and work in Norway for two more years. Therefore, she is preparing for the so-called *'Bergenstest'*, which is required for a non-native Norwegian speaker to work in the country. Other students have also picked up some basic Norwegian from children in the kindergarten, but they do not want to learn the language as they do not have long-term plans in the country. It was mentioned above, English proves to be a sufficient tool of communication in Norway. Yet, the level of English (together with accent and vocabulary) does not seem to be identical with the English spoken in native-English areas. Amy's remarkable answer draws attention to a phenomenon that seems to have been overlooked up to now, i.e. the English language command of a native English speaker in a foreign country: *"My English, I think, exactly got worse. And now it takes me longer to think in English, the things I want to say. I'm around people in my barnehage [pre-school] and a lot of my friends in town and shops we speak ... not low level, but basic English. And I'm just slower to use it. I'm also trying to learn a bit more Norwegian in my barnehage, so when I'm talking to kids I'm speaking Norwegian. So, I just feel like I'm not as good in English as I would've been."* (Amy, Ireland)

3. Only one student had visited Norway before they came here to study. According to Elsa, her Norwegian trip with her family influenced her later decision of coming back to the Nordic country. Before choosing Norway, students had the geographic and historical stereotypes of the country about fjords, mountains and Vikings, which were gradually replaced by personal

experience of living in this culture day by day. Amy mentioned the result of a recent survey according to which this is the happiest country in the world[2]. Yet, it would be interesting to examine from whose aspect (Norwegians or / and foreigners with different expectations) this statement is valid.

4. For most students this is the longest period they spend far from home, except for Elsa (Spain), who spent a gap year in Ireland to improve her English. By now she has experience how to develop a foreign language, and she makes benefit from it in the case of Norwegian, too. Examining similarities between Norway and students' place of residence, students appreciate that *"people are eager to help you"* (Marta, Greece) and from professional point of view they find considerable similarities between their own early childhood methods and those in the Norwegian kindergartens (e.g. Waldorf and Montessori Methods or *"learning by playing"* as Adél mentions). Rosalind, on the other hand, cannot mention any similarities between South African and Norwegian life and workplaces.

In the interview, especially Elsa (Spain) and Rosalind (South Africa) mention their culture shock. Elsa experienced it especially in everyday communication in the society: *"They are very cold as well. They keep the distance, and it's very different from my country. We kiss, we hug, we are always outside, we go for drinks. You know, we like this kind of environment, and here people stay at home a lot."* (Elsa, Spain) She also remembers a special situation which may have been shocking for a young student from the south of Europe: "The way we dance in Spain is so different as well, the music and everything. So, when I was in a club, I was dancing Latin music, the way we dance in Spain... not loose, but flexible, the movements, you know. And some people..., well, I heard a lot of bad opinions about that. Like being too provocative... because they are not used to that. If I dance with a boy, it does not mean anything in Spain." (Elsa, Spain)

Rosalind includes *"language barrier"*, too, as a serious obstacle in her daily work: "The language is a barrier for me. I use English but the kids look at me strangely because I can't communicate with them. So, I feel alienated at times, because they look at me as an adult and they run to me when they have a problem, but I'm not able to respond to them, and then they walk away disappointed and it's like a big barrier. So, I might have preferred to go to a fully English-speaking country" (Rosalind, South Africa)

Students must have come with different expectations, because not everybody finds barriers so formidable. Adél (Hungary), for instance finds people friendly and she thinks there are a lot of common things even in the conversation topics. She admits that "Norway is special for me because of the experience."

2 See more at https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/03/why-norway-is-now-the-worlds-happiest-country

The sentence is very personal and shows that often it is students' attitude that helps to overcome the difficulties.

5. Students in their answers agree that their exchange visit to Norway is a "life-changing" (Marta),"once-in-a-lifetime" (Adél) experience professionally, linguistically and culturally as well. What they emphasise is their developing independence, language commands, professional and personal relations. They can mean positive changes in young people's life; however, they may cause difficulties as well. For instance, to Rosalind, who had never been away from home before and who had to face the most challenges because of the distance, the different social attitudes and circumstances and because she could not find the proper place to practise her religion (Buddhism) in Norway.

Most students have learnt how to behave in unexpected linguistic, social and professional situations and they enjoy their newly gained autonomy. Besides getting to know more about the world by travelling and working in a foreign country, their self-knowledge has developed tremendously: *"the world is not that big"* (Adél), *"I can integrate myself in a class of international students"* (Rosalind), *"you are not on the top of the earth"* (Elsa).

Whether the experience is positive or negative, students agree that they do benefit from this exchange: Marta wants to deal with immigrants when she returns to Greece, Amy is proud of herself to have managed to become much more independent than at home, Elsa is planning to stay a few more years in Norway, Rosalind appreciates the good organisation in the Norwegian educational system and she intends to make workshops and write a blog on her experience, and Adél will use her experience in her BA thesis and tries to implant what she has learnt here to her future workplace, especially in environmental education.

The major conclusion can be summarised with the Irish student's words according to which *"everywhere is different and if you come in with respect and open mind you'll get as much as you can out of it"* (Amy).

Conclusions

Teaching and understanding culture after the socio-political changes of the early 1990s must have been more difficult in the eastern than in other parts of Europe. A long way led from *'prohibited'* to *'promoted'*, especially in ELT. The article intended to show the theoretical background through discussing the concept of culture, the role of culture in education and acculturation strategies. Besides, it introduced a cross-cultural course book written in Hungary with effective international cooperation and the present situation of cultural-educational exchanges via a focus group interview with university students in northern Europe.

Although a lot have been done in order to make language learning and teaching more and more intercultural, a great number of teachers still share the feeling

of the paradoxical situation described by Medgyes (1994) in such a graphic way: "We have a less reliable knowledge of the English language than NESTs [native English speaking teacher]. In addition, we are likely to have relatively scanty information about the culture, or rather cultures, of English speaking countries. Yet in the classroom we have to appear to be well-informed sources in both respects. [...] With some exaggeration, I would say we behave in the classroom (and sometimes even in ourprivate lives) like plasticine Brits or Americans. We have two characters, both of them sham; we display signs of *'schizophrenia'*." (Medgyes, 1994, p. 38)

Modern information technology might mitigate our fears as today we have more access to authentic texts than ever before. Yet, transmitting the values of different culture(s) in an intercultural way remains a challenge. At the same time, undertaking it as an everyday task should give us more pleasure than difficulties. Additionally, it improves not only our and our students' cognitive skills, but it makes us possible to see the world from different aspects while enriching our personality and developing empathy.

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Appendix

1. ***Bio data***
   (Sample Questions: 2. Where are you from? 3. What do you study and where? /What is your major?)

2. ***Languages and language learning***
   (Sample Questions: 1. What is your mother tongue? 5. Is there anyone who was brought up in a bilingual family? - If yes, which languages did you use at home? 6. Have you ever attended a bilingual school? - If yes, where and how long? 7. How is your English improving here? (lessons, students) 8. Where/When do you use English out of university? 9. In your kindergarten practice which language do you use? 10. What language educational methods do you use with children? 12. Are you learning any Norwegian while you are here? 13. Did you start learning a foreign language while here (e.g. Sami)?)

3. ***Motivation for a Norwegian exchange***
   (Sample Questions: 1. Why did you choose Norway? (any "magnet" effect) 3. Do you think Norway is a special place? - Why? Why not?)

4. ***Acculturation***
   (Sample Questions: 1. Which was the longest period you have spent abroad? 2. What is similar to your home country in Norway? 3. What was very different from your country in Norway? ("culture shock") 4. What nationalities of students do you keep in touch with here?)

5. ***Evaluation***
   (Sample Questions: 1. How do you evaluate this period of your life on a 1 to 10 scale? Why? 2. What did you learn here about: a) the world/Europe? b) languages? (English, Norwegian, etc.) c) people? d) yourself? 3. How do you want to profit from your Erasmus visit in Norway? (any "dissemination plan" when you go home?)

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IDENTITY DISTRIBUTION IN THE CROATIAN CHILDREN'S NOVEL[3]

Abstract

Identity formation and development has been a fundamental goal of the all-around educational work from children's very early age. The importance of a curriculum founded on a value system in which identity as a value occupies one of the most significant places has been recognized in the Croatian national curriculum at all levels, especially in early and pre-school education and in the primary school. In the development of identity, literature plays a particular role, encouraging the reader to identify with the characters, and then to assume their attitudes, values, behaviour - in short, to imitate the identities of literary heroes. The paper acknowledges the importance of the Croatian children's novel, which, by its rich identity distribution, becomes an encouragement and inspiration to young readers.

Introduction

Children develop their personality and identity in the context of educational institutions and families, which are, among other things, strongly characterized by the value system as the starting point and goals of educational efforts. In education, values represent the foundation and landmark of the teacher's activity. They permeate the overall content of the work, mirror themselves in the methods and procedures of the teacher, determine the atmosphere and culture of the educational institution, and create a framework for the child's identity formation. The strategic documents of the Republic of Croatia relating to the educational system insist on the need to define a national curriculum which will be based on values. The National Curriculum Framework (2016) highlights the core socio-cultural values which are promoted by the curriculum proposal and on which it rests: *"dignity of human being, freedom, equality, justice, patriotism, social equality, dialogue and tolerance, work, honesty, peace, conservation of nature and the environment and other democratic values"* (National Curriculum Framework, 2016, p. 12). The following values are particularly emphasized in the national curriculum: knowledge, solidarity, identity and responsibility. Knowledge as a value trains us to understand better ourselves, others and everything created around us and enables critical thinking and successful

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functioning in life and work. Solidarity develops in children sensitivity to others, especially to the less well-off, the weaker and those deprived of their rights. Elaborating on the value of identity, the authors of the national curriculum say: *"Education contributes to the building of an individual's personality, cultural and national identity. Today, in the age of globalization, in which there is a potent mix of different cultures, worldviews and religions, one should become a citizen of the world while preserving his national identity, his culture, social, moral and spiritual heritage. In doing so, it is particularly essential to preserve and develop the Croatian language and to ensure that it is appropriately used. Upbringing and education should arouse, foster and develop personal identity and at the same time connect it with respect for diversity"* (National Curriculum Framework, 2016, p. 12).

Responsibility requires the person's active involvement in and personal contribution to the common social and natural good, and honest relationship between his freedom and the freedom of others, as well as responsible action and behaviour. The foundation of the curriculum on values is pointed out at all levels of the educational system. The values proclaimed in the National Curriculum Framework have found their place in the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education, as well as in the National Curriculum for Primary Education. The National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education (2016) promotes the following values: knowledge, identity, humanism and tolerance, responsibility, autonomy and creativity. These values enable and stimulate the development of the whole personality of children, i.e. their cognitive, physical, speech, psychomotor and socio-emotional development. The formation of a child's identity continues strongly throughout primary education. The entire primary school curriculum is imbued with some core values, which will ultimately contribute to the development of awareness and self-image of every student. The proposal of the National Curriculum for Primary Education puts forward the following ideas. *"The fundamental values of primary education come from the orientation of Croatian educational policy, which aims at an integral development of students, the preservation of cultural, national, material and natural heritage and, if need be, to harmonize the local and national with the world and global development"* (National Curriculum for Elementary Education, 2016, p. 5).

Fundamental values include knowledge, resourcefulness, identity, respect, responsibility, solidarity, health and integrity. The formation of a child's identity is inseparable from the creation of his self-image, self-understanding and self-esteem. The development of a child's identity is not a static process, but a continuous and dynamic process facilitated by numerous interactions of the child with the social environment. While some aspects of identity are unique and individual, there is also the so-called group identity which denotes belonging to some group. Group identity allows some common layers of identity to be shared between members of the same group. As they mature and grow up, children enrich and develop their individual and group identity. Children develop a sense of their self in contact with the valuable works of Croatian literature. Literary works contain examples of numerous identities

with which children identify, whose values they take on, and by which they model their behaviour. The following text will illustrate the distribution of identity in some examples of children's novels in Croatian literature. When it comes to the Croatian children's novel, we have a real wealth of identities because the characters in a novel, and children's books, likewise, are the bearers of the plot and contribute to the dynamics of the events in the novel. It is the Croatian children's novel that abounds in the incredible dynamics of identity distribution, and therefore, the diversity and richness of identity images. The paper will aim to show in the examples of selected novels how this identity image has changed - from the beginning (Lovrak's novels), through Kušan and Matošec to Gavran. It can be pointed out that in the realistic part of Croatian children's literature, characterization of characters was always in line with social reality. Perhaps the figures of the founder of the Croatian children's novel Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić Čudnovate zgode šegrta Hlapića (The Strange Adventures of Hlapich the Apprentice, 1913.) are, by some fairy tale polarization, excessively defined as black and white. Such are, e.g. Hlapić vs. Dark Man, Košarač (Basket Weaver) vs. Owner of the Circus, but constant polarization may also be found in Lovrak although his structure is not that of a fairy tale but is deeply rooted in realistic motivation. Although his structure is not fairy tale, Lovrak is firmly rooted in realistic motivation. He wrote his novels at the time when the so-called modernist objectivism had settled down in Croatian literature. This is how this phase was called by literary critic Ljubomir Maraković in his article Modern objectivism /an Attempt to Characterize a New Period in the Development of Novel (published in the Hrvatsko kolo in 1930). Therefore, it was when *"good old realism "prevailed over the avant-garde and when Croatian literature turned to the problems of society with a socially engaged note. Miroslav Šicel singles out this interval of Croatian interwar literature as "a period of synthetic realism (1928-1941)"* and points out that it is filled with *"a strong penetration of social themes and a return to the stylistic features of realistic expression."* (Šicel, 2009, p. 5) Hranjec, however, in his discussion of Lovrak's character development, points out precisely this: *"Lovrak cannot be denied the skill in modelling children's characters (...) Nevertheless, they were created by a socially engaged writer who transferred aspirations from adult into children's literature. Besides, he was a teacher, and his children are bent down by the burden of their "roles"* (Hranjec, 1998, p. 41). So, in character modelling, that is, in the creation of individual identities, he shows specific class starting points or social stratification. Pero vs. Divljak or Ljuban vs. Pero: *"Such polarization or comparative characterization (character parallelism) in literary context (...) also serves to highlight the social polarization of characters (which, in fact, generates character polarization!). Thus, the positive character Ljuban is the son of poor parents; the villain Pero comes from a rich family. Class relationships are passed on to children: Pero is naughty and spoiled because he comes from a well-off family!"* (Hranjec, 2006, p. 74)

Such polarization is schematic also in Družba Pere Kvržice (Pero the Lump's Gang). Pero is the son of a poor peasant, and Divljak (The Savage), like Pero,

in Vlak u snijegu (A Train in the Snow) is the son of a rich peasant. Everything related to wealth is negative. Divljak (The Savage), unlike the rest of the gang, carries with him a big lunch which he does not want to divide, but upon request he shares it: *"The Savage eats a large piece of cheese and egg pie. Pero keeps looking, is silent and waiting. Then he stands before him and tells him: "Be a man!..."* (Lovrak, 1964, p. 12).

According to this projection of Lovrak' s, poverty is modesty, non-extravagance, and this identity is, by Lovrak, one that the reader has to identify with. Behind this modesty, stands the wit, which is not wasted but used with purpose, reasonably and advantageously in the fight for the common good. It looks as if Lovrak suggests that this little man when he grows up, will lead the nation to a better life. He will do it with his virtues such as altruism, a born leader, most informed, caring for the group and everyone, togetherness, cooperation, etc. He gives examples from his childhood of how to behave in the future. Another identity or character parallelism is found in the Savage: wealth equals stinginess, savagery, neglect for the group, false leadership, blackmail, lying, obstruction, not understanding the true values, no struggle for the common good, but one's own promotion, lack of care for one's neighbour. As Hranjec points out: *"The most common model is a tightly organized collective with a leader, as well as a number of individuals - reliable deputies, opponents, villains, cowards. Lovrak transfers to them the class opposites of the grown-ups. In dividing the poor and the rich, the author is openly inclined towards the former, who are then both clever and character-wise superior. The interpolation of class relations led Lovrak, somewhere less, elsewhere more evidently, to the black-and-white line-up of the characters"* (Hranjec, 1998, p. 45).

In this gallery of opposing characters, especially in the Pero the Lump's Gang, a real wealth of characters emerges. *"Medo and Šilo are true friends and good workers, Milo Dijete (The Little Darling) physically the weakest - with a strong desire to contribute to a common goal (some features reminiscent of Ferenc Molnár Nemeček) (...)"* (Hranjec, 2006, p. 75). However, from this wealth stands out the identity of Pero, Divljak's opposite, but also when compared with others: *"Above all, the character of a leader, the boy with a 'lump', dominates, as Crnković called him. He is a boy about the age of eleven, superior to the rest in everything, an organizer, righteous, honest"* (Hranjec, 1998, p. 45).

Lovrak indicates Pero's superiority from the very beginning, such as when they jumped and fled after they picked the master Marko's cherries. They ran across the field and in an instant, they are in the meadow. Pero stopped them: *"Stop! No one is chasing us! Come here, let us get together to see if we are all alive? We are! Legs in place? What's broken? Ha! Ha! Only the noses are not in order! A little bloody! Little, that's nothing!"* (Lovrak, 1964, p. 14). The following is an episode in which Pero forms the gang, and here he stands out as a leader: *"Pero is proud. He stands upright at the window. His face is up. She speaks ecstatically. – Boys! Imagine this! Let's say: The mill is ours! The gang does not understand him and says nothing. Pero goes on. – It's clear. You're dumbfounded. And I haven't told*

you yet what I think. I won't be too hasty. I've been thinking hard there days. While I'm thinking it up, I'll suggest something to you" (Lovrak, 1964, p. 17).

As it has been pointed out in literary-historical reviews, his opposite is Divljak (The Savage), and Divjak's character traits are somewhat different, as his name says: *"Don't be angry with them. They revealed a secret to us about two little mirrors. – The Savage remains a real savage! He would also sell his birth father for some bright thing – Medo ridicules him"* (Lovrak, 1964, p. 77). On the other hand, Pero is calm, and at the moment when others would give in, he manages to keep the secret: *"Isn't everything over now? Šilo asked. – Let them come. They can grind. We can hand them over the mill! – No! No! It's not over yet. Please keep it a secret for a few more days. I figure out how to make it all happen, so while I think of it, we won't be sorry"* (Lovrak, 1964, p. 89). We could also call it the preservation of autonomous space, as Berislav Majhut points out in his novel about children's gangs. He says, *"The main problem is not a movement in space but securing one part of space as autonomous. Securing hiding places, shelters, areas not governed by adult laws but by children"* (2005, p. 257).

Pero, in a way, continues this preservation of the oasis, as Majhut calls it, and that brave confrontation with the Savage when, like a true leader, he gets even with the negative hero: *"The Savage has stopped. Run back! He's turning into the cornfield! Someone is chasing after him. Who? Pero in person! Šilo hurried to help. He was not needed because behold, Pero pushed the Savage forward. He tied his hands with his belt from behind, at the back"* (Lovrak, 1964, p. 95). This is what we could call the character of a real or born leader:*"Pero is an outstanding leader, especially distinguished in the gang. And his nickname is in the service of characterization of the character, although at first, it seems casual, quite abstract. Pero is a boy with an idea - the right idea at the right time. His ideas are materialized in an auditory manner, in a lump because when a brilliant idea comes to him, he exclaims: Lump!"* (Težak, 1993, p. 31).

A collective identity prevails here, and it is the leader who is responsible for the collective. Although, as Dubravka Zima points out in later Lovrak's publications Devetorica hrabrih (The Courageous Nine), we will find children whose *"achievement (...) is less ambitious"* (Zima, 2011, p. 95) In this novel also, Lovrak does not abandon his conception of collectivism. He is separating from a wider collective (teacher Matić's class) nine honours students, while the authority embodied again in the teacher's name, the unnamed Matić, stands out from the school collective by many positive characteristics which he also transfers to his students (Zima, 2011, p. 95). But this paradigm changes in the new the typology of children's novel - in a character novel and a family novel in the 1990s (Vrcić-Mataija, 2014, p. 220).

Identity images in the novel Strah u Ulici lipa (Fear on Lime-Tree Street) by Milivoj Matošec

The technique for building an identity in Matošec Strah u Ulici lipa (Fear on Lime -Tree Street) is slightly different. Here, identity is stratified; at the beginning of the novel, a false identity is given, and the true identity comes to light at the end. In a way, it is a search for identity, or the writer eventually discovers the real one. Unlike Lovrak and Kušan (Kušan, in his first novel Uzbuna na Zelenom Vrhu (The Mystery Of Green Hill) from 1956, locates the shop on the outskirts of the city, in the suburbs, and later traces his characters exclusively in the city area), Matošec creates an urban identity, in other words, he places his characters in an urban environment with all the attributes that it carries. These are city streets, cars, blocks of flats and parks, but there is also the influence of home reading, the Wild West legends, westerns, crime films and thrillers. Such is the product and identity of Mungos Nevada as well. There are also city gangs, such as the one from Mungos' street, which immediately ambushed Veslonožac as he was investigating where Mungos was going. He first sneaks into Lime-Tree Street in a western hero style, like in a series of films in which, e.g. Clint Eastwood starred. However, is a comparable *"guy"* character to a series of American films characters, a villain played by Humprey Bogart, or unspeakably important roles of the character of a criminal but the unfortunate wretch, the Utopian James Cagney. However, the arrival of Mungos Nevada is special as he comes in the style of a western hero: *"A long-legged boy appeared at the end of the street. A big boy. Taller than Praporac and Velonožac. (...) So, the long-legged boy coming down the street either had done a lot of riding or was going to do it. Even a blind man would see that things were just like that. (...) The boy did not want to be surprised by anyone. Lowered down to the hips, his arms slightly swayed while he was walking, but they were ready. Ready for what? Ready for anything. For grabbing a pistol and with clenched fists awaiting an attack"* (Matošec, 2005, p. 6).

Moreover, to put it colloquially, as such, *"he got into the legend"*: *"His steps were long, soft and quiet. If someone judged a man by his walking, he should have concluded: resolute, cautious, dexterous."* (Matošec, 2005, p. 6). Pointing out these western-features, Matošec also sticks on this boy's back a mask of criminal acts. He forces the naive Šapica (Little Paw) to buy a worthless lottery ticket that had been used and won nothing, in the style of Cagney and other characters from the movie screen: *"Whether it's worth or not is completely unimportant now. I paid four dinars for the lottery, and this is what matters."* (Matošec, 2005, p. 20).

Šapica naively answers to his words, because of the wolf›s skin into which the character of the long-legged boy slipped - Mungos Nevada does not give in: *"Find someone else - he says to Mungos briefly - I don't need that lottery. I know – Mungos nodded gravely – no one needs it. But if I decide who needs less, you know what conclusion I will come to. And don't forget, I'm the one who decides"* (Matošec, 2005, pp. 20-21). The play between the naive Šapica and the mighty Mungos continues because Mungos intimidates and threatens Šapica: *"By a careless*

gesture, as if he is not doing it wilfully, he is touching that swollen pocket with his hand. Pistol. Šapica feels cold again" (Matošec, 2005, p. 21). Even now he does not realize his position, so he is trying to bargain with Mungos, who is brusque and who wants to sell the worthless lottery ticket: *"Listen, kid – he said softly, threatening – I have put up enough with your showing off. You may be brave, but you are certainly not brave enough to scare me. And because of that, don't try to order me anymore. (...) He pushed him away from himself, and Šapica staggered."* (Matošec, 2005, p. 21) Mungos without any reservations takes from Šapica almost all year's savings: *"Šapica takes four red banknotes, puts the box on the cupboard and gives the money to Mungos – You're a good person! His long-legged mocked him. – You can make good deals!"* (Matošec, 2005, p. 22). Besides, Mungos assures him that he will falsely testify that he gave him money for a pistol and not for a lottery ticket a fortune and will tell his mother about it (Matošec, 2005, p. 22). However, after this conversation at Šapic's flat, Mungos fully controls Šapica and, with threats, orders him to listen to him in the future and to assist him whenever he needs and when he asks for it. A character-novel, is already present here and, as it is pointed out in literature: *"The narrative pattern of the character novel presupposes the predominance of the inner reliving of the characters who independently go through the Romanesque plot, building their identity on a kind of the state of child›s loneliness"* (Vrcić-Mataija: 2011, p. 149).

Mungos's hiding and running away from home changes, and he breaks down: *"Another, different Mungos – revealing that his real name is Darko - is himself misunderstood and unloved. The core sentence, in this sense, is precisely the boy's honest statement: - Nobody likes me. No one!"* (Hranjec, 1998, p. 65) Even though the author's idea that parents leave their son loaded with two make-up exams and go to the seaside (!) is unconvincing, the lesson told through Veliki Tom is clear and logical. It's up to a person whether they will make a friendship and win the affection of other people (Hranjec, 1998, pp. 64-65). Šapica is indecisive because of the fear of Mungos Nevada, so Mum returned, he does not have the heart or courage to tell her what had happened to him in the conflict with the long-legged. He constructed the whole scenario in his head, but he did not say a word: *"– A boy came to our street. Big, evil. He forced me to bring him here. (..) – He had a revolver. He threatened me. He took four dinars from me. He didn't take it. He forced me to buy an expired lottery ticket. And so, he got his money."* (Matošec, 2005, p. 52). Latica (Petal), Šapica's sister, is troubled with this truth, and with the problem left to her brother by Mungos. She goes to Veliki Tom (Big Tom) (this is also a citation name), her uncle to lament about the problem the boys, and especially her brother, have had since the long-legged boy arrived at Lime Street. But the boys organize themselves and follow Mungos and want to find out who Mungos Nevada is. Velonožac does not succeed in finding it out, because the boys standing in front of the house he went in did not know anyone by that name, but they did not particularly like it:*"What does this Mungos look like? Or maybe you're talking about mungos which catch mice and snakes? – No. I'm talking about Mungos Nevada. - Mungos*

Nevada? – one said awe-struck. – Awesome nickname! Come on, describe him! - Sneakers, jeans, a white T-shirt. Tall. Short-cut hair" (Matošec, 2005, p. 66).

The discovery of the real Mungos of Nevada comes only after his disturbing dream in Alcibiades' basement: *"He is running down the street. A large bundle is swaying on his back. A mighty heavy bundle. It's full of stones. Mungos is being chased. A boy chases him on a two-wheeler, a smiling girl and a boy with a black revolver in his hand."* (Matošec, 2005, p. 69). What he hides in the real world, his goodness and weakness and a desire for the warmth of home and parental love happen in a dream! *"Everything in that dream is awfully clear, almost transparent. The bundle and the revolver, and the boy on the two-wheeler. One thing is not clear though. Who was calling my mom? Him? Nonsense. Mungos isn't a baby! No, no one called my mom"* (Matošec, 2005, p. 70).

Maybe to figure out Mungos Nevada's identity, Big Tom's word matters: *"He kept trying to find friends. Only, he didn't choose the right way. Come on, hurry up now! It's time for him to wake up, if he's not already woken up"* (Matošec, 2005, p. 134). Despite all the brusqueness and showing off his strength to the boys of Lime Street, Mungos is timid, and he shows it when Tugoljub I. comes to his hiding place in Alchibiade's basement. At first, Mungos thinks he is a ghost, but this phenomenon occurs to him with voice and laughter, and he concludes that he is not a ghost because ghosts do not speak.

His defense is filmlike and he grabs a revolver: *"Mungos bends down and feels it. The revolver is still there. And that's what matters! He tightens the grip of the weapon. (...) As the tiny flame grew, Mungos bounced to the side and pulled the revolver in a rapid movement. (...) – I'm going to shoot! He threatened insecurely (...)"* (Matošec, 2005, p. 94). But this rapid movement of Mungos or his threat did not confuse Tugoljub, but made him life laugh: *"- Ha, ha, ha! The man laughed. - You gonna shoot? And how are you going to shoot? This revolver wouldn't go off if you begged it on your knees! Even if there were bullets in it, this revolver wouldn't shoot. And there are no bullets in it, I know well that there are none, because I've checked it from all sides"* (Matošec, 2005, p. 94).

Now, the intruder is finally revealed. Tugoljub I. is actually an elderly man from a nursing home who escaped from the home: *"Well, it's nice in the nursing home, but the old people are very boring. Alas, stunt boring! I keep looking at them, and when I can no longer look at them, I run away."* (Matošec, 2005, p. 96). And Mungos immediately liked Tugoljub I. because he was no longer alone in the basement, and he sincerely wanted his friendship. In this relationship, Dubravka Zima finds a *"narrative axis"* which: *"on the one hand, includes a possible interpretation of childhood as a privileged period in human life, given the stereotype of children's intuitive perceptions of the world and community, which allows for a stronger connection with the old age that is also in a privileged position considering the gained experience that enables the elderly to form a judgement in a relaxed and relativistic manner"* (Zima, 2011, p. 160).

So, to his words that they were two lonely wolves, Tugoljub reacted in his own style, but this also invokes that original identity starting point – reading and movie: *"Ha, ha, ha! Two lone wolves! One him, and the other me! Where did you read that, boy? What kind of crazy book did you find that crazy statement in?"* (Matošec, 2005, p. 99). But Mungos, in the basement, takes care of Tugoljub, so when the old man woke up feeling ill, Mungos gives him some water, takes care of him, shows attention and love, and calls him Grandpa Tugoljub and eventually goes to see Big Tom, the doctor. He did not want to leave Tugoljub for a moment, but he ran back to the basement, and this is when Mungos changes: *"He tried to convince himself that he could really leave Tugoljub I. but was already hurrying down the stairs. It is as if out of one Mungos there were two. One, who decided to run away and the other who returned to fulfill his promise. The latter won"* (Matošec, 2005, p. 109).

Obviously, an awareness of similarity with others prevailed in Mungos; one identity prevails, and that is humanity. Evidently, this Copernican turn in Mungos was driven by interaction with others. Namely, Mungos was constantly running away from people (running away from home and running away from his street) due to a lack of interaction with others, or simply because of failing to adapt to a new environment. The way Mungos tried to affirm himself among the weaker ones (Šapica, Veslonožac, Latica) also reflected in his speech with Tugoljub about two wolves. He did not stand for long wearing a wolf's skin but taught about humanity by Veliki Tom, he, as we have said, embarked on the night of great changes, or in the contact with humanity, an identity changes and a new one is created, i.e. it returns to its original state. Matosec grades, and Mungos is gradually changing: *"This thought accompanied him to the door of the doctor's house. He heard the cheerful voice of Veliki Tom from the house and felt some strange warmth. Didn't he just start liking another man? Who knows?"* (Matošec, 2005, p. 118). And then moral traits are awakening in Mungos himself and his actions; at first it is honesty, so he confesses to Veliki Tom what happened. In fact, he first lied that his parents left him alone in the house, and then admits, *"I should explain it to you in more detail. I've got one makeup exam. No, I have two exams. A son of a daddy's friend too. Dad agreed with his friend that I and this little son of his study together."* (Matošec, 2005, p. 119). In his confession, he gradually reveals the reason why he moved away from his street; because the gang there didn't like him (and he only lived there for six or seven months, as the novel points out): *"Once, having just moved in, they stopped me in front of the house. – Do you have a name? – one of them asked me. – He must have one – laughed the other. And I was angry that they made fun of me, so I just walked past them"* (Matošec, 2005, p. 121).

After that, Veliki Tom encourages him to take the makeup exams (since they were only three weeks away), but even then Mungos has not yet revealed all the secrets that bother him. There is one left and he decides to reveal it, i.e. he spent his parents' money for food and he eventually reveals his true identity, He turns from Mungos into boy Darko: *"Give me that envelope, Mungos! Or you don't want me to call you that? – Why not – Tugoljub I. raised his voice. – I've only*

just memorised his nickname and you'd like him to give it up! My name is Darko – Mungos said. I don't want either of you to give me money. It's my own fault that I took the money" (Matošec, 2005, p. 127).

Here along with honesty, there is another moral trait: responsibility. This also comes from Western and crime films: a built identity so that he could prove himself to others because he simply did not know how to approach them. Now Darko gets the qualities which build one new identity, the identity of being responsible, honest and careful towards others, especially towards the elderly (this also includes Tugoljub). Matošec's message is clear, as Hranjec points out: *"(...) in terms of the consequences of too much reading and swallowing 'a pile of colourful volumes' (...), and actually one has to be natural, try to understand and love fellow people."* (Hranjec, 1998, p. 65). He also points out that Mungos, in fact, Darko, served Matošec: *"In this sense, this character is the bearer of the author's assumption, because the author, through him, at the children's reception level, depicts the mixing of the literary and life reality, emphasising, on the closing pages, the need for genuine friendship and understanding"* (Hranjec, 1998, p. 65).

Identity images in the novel Sretni dani (Happy Days) by Miro Gavran

In contrast to previous publications, the contemporary children's novel is moving from adventure to social-psychological topics (Vrcić-Mataija, 2011, p. 147). It also deals with problem situations, and it is emphasised that *"Children emancipation, treating children's social status with respect through a clearly expressed child identity, which is best evidenced in the novels through the narrative focalization of the character, are the basic sociological criteria that cause the transition from the traditional to the modern, and consequently postmodern type of children's novel"* (Vrcić-Mataija, 2011, p. 147).

Now, we have not set any ambitious goals in line with the postmodern tradition, but the ordinary life realities and characters of children who solve problem situations from their everyday life. In classifying the novel Miro Gavran's Sretni dani (Happy Days) into a *"family novel with the image of a contemporary patriarchal family"* (Vrcić-Mataija, 2018, p. 215). Pero and Jurica, are atypical heroes of children's novels, because they do not aspire to a great achievement, a goal that is usually set by children's gangs. Instead, they aim to change the position of their families (Jurica's mother walked out on his father and is now living in Argentina with her new husband and Jurica hears from her very rarely. She *"just sends a Christmas card"*. And for his birthday, not even that - in a sad voice, Jurica commented on the behaviour of his mother, who in the distant world forgot about her son (Gavran, 2000, p. 16). On the other hand, Pero's father has died. The whole idea is how to bring the two families together? Pero's mother cooks well, and Jurica's father is not a great cook: *"Indeed, Jurica was a little angry that his dad was constantly making Italian dishes and he was already fed up with that kind of food. His dad tried to defend himself by saying that*

he had not cooked spaghetti for three days and it was not his fault he was not a perfect cook." (Gavran, 2000, p. 16).

The novel begins with a get-acquainted meeting of Pero and Jurica, two fifth-class students. And then the author simply follows in a diary three levels of events: events in the family, Pero with his mother and Jurica with his father and he also follows Jurica and Pero at play and generally all that makes childhood, as well as their school life. Their family life is incomplete because, as we said, each misses a parent. According to some data, 174,518 mothers with children and 33,345 fathers with children live in Croatia (2018 data). Thus, it can be said that Gavran analyses in the 1990s, when the novel was written, a contemporary social issue that is still relevant today. Both families are highly educated people. Pero's mother Marija is a lawyer, and Jurica's father Božidar is a mechanical engineer. Marija is a young woman and mother of only thirty-three. In an important conversation, Jurica and Pero conclude that friends should not keep secrets, and then confess to each other what troubles them. Pero is tormented by a lack of male companionship, Jurica goes with his father to watch games, is interested in sports, and Pero can never get an upper hand of his mum and complains *"She didn't even let me go in for karate because she as a woman thinks it's a stupid sport"* (Gavran, 2000, p. 24). Pero complains to Jurica that he needs a dad: *"– She has no idea I want a father and a brother. Let's say one brother like you who loves sports and life. Do you understand? – So, tell your mum. – Huh, fat chance. She constantly talks against men, how stupid, insensitive, and half-educated they are, and that it's a good thing that she hasn't married a second time"* (Gavran, 2000, p. 25).

Jurica comes to the idea that Pero's father might be Uncle Ivo, the plumber from his building, because he is sure that Ivo is a good man and loves children. They engineered a plan for Pero to break the tap and then call a plumber. But to their great disappointment *"Master Ivo walked into our flat swaying, struggling to maintain his balance. With him, a strong smell of bad brandy hung in the hall. (...) All afternoon he messed up with the faucet, smoking one cigarette after another, and drinking his mom's homemade plum brandy which she kept for rare guests all the time"* (Gavran, 2000, p. 30.) Eventually, there is a complete collapse of Pero's idea: *"And it was not until nine o'clock in the evening that Master Ivo finished repairing the tap. On leaving he charged them so much that his mum nearly fainted away. - It's a rip off! said Mum. - Well, my lady, all of you would like to have your repairs done free of charge. Well, you can't have it anymore. It's capitalism now and workers must be the first to be respected"* (Gavran, 2000, pp. 30-31).

The second attempt again agreed upon by the two boys was with an advertisement *"looking for a husband"*. And this insistence on a father can be related to what we can point out about changing identities, that is, this kind of novel moves away from the previous themes of children's realistic novels: *"from a markedly adventurous it turns into a social and psychological novel and the topics of modern novels are various forms of existential problems, children's fears, traumas, disease*

and the death of loved ones or various problems within the family" (Vrcić-Mataija 2011, p. 147).

Jurica and Pero agree on the contents of the ad, but work independently and on their own initiative because they do not ask mum for permission: *"– What if your mum doesn't allow it? - I won't even ask her. I'll put an advertisement, and only when it comes out, will I tell her: "the point is that I want a father, I want a brother, please invite those who answer the ad to talk to you so that we could choose the best one"* (Gavran, 2000, p. 34). Not only did they decide how they would pay for the ad (by collecting old paper), but also choose an ad that is most suitable for their purpose already published in the Večernji list: A young widow, through no fault of hers, with long dark hair, big eyes, of a gentle disposition, comfortably off, no commitments, seeks a man, sports lover for the sake of marriage (Gavran, 2000, p. 35). Certainly, Pero did not tell his mother about the ad until Saturday. Mother was very angry, and Pero told her that he had just done it because she'd been very nervous lately. And this is where all the difficulties of modern life are revealed. She is nervous because there are problems at work.

The men interested in the ad started arriving on Sunday, and Zvonko says that the advertisement is not credible because it does not mention that she has a son. *"You probably did not mention him for strategic reasons"* (Gavran, 2000, p. 40). When Pero's mother says she is thirty-three, the candidate answers: *"You're a chicken. I'm over fifty"*. (Gavran, 2000, p. 43). When she asks him what his occupation is, he vaguely says he is in a car sale. *"Nothing special. Mainly second–hand cars. Do you get the point? I'm not interested where the cars come from as I just act as a middleman; my job is to sell them well and not to ask too many questions."* (Gavran, 2000, p. 44). But this middleman is bothered by Marija's having a son so he ran away as fast as his legs could carry him. The conclusion of another suitor sounds even funnier as he touches the *'comfortably off'* claim: *"Do you think that a woman who has a 58-square-metre flat on Rendić Street, and nothing else, has the right to say that she is comfortably off?"* (Gavran, 2000, p. 41). And his greeting on leaving was also peculiar: *"Anyway, today I've got interviews with two more debauchees and one widow."* (Gavran, 2000, p. 41). In the whole kaleidoscope of suitors and potential candidates, various social types that are taken from our daily lives can be found.

What stands out in literary theory as a starting point in the shaping of a contemporary character novel equally relates to the formation of the identity of children and the above-mentioned pattern of family novel. *"In the types of a modern and post-modern structured character novel, which, in a chosen time section, are significantly more numerous than the previous ones, the image of contemporary urban childhood and the character of a child and teenager who builds his identity on the dominant influence of contemporary forms of popular culture or is extremely excluded from it"* (Vrcić-Mataija, 2011, p. 150).

Reading the novel, in the section dealing with school and the environment, this is especially emphasised in a number of motives: Jurica's father Božidar

is a computer expert, so he teaches them computer games (and Pero cannot use the computer). This was very popular during this period (the 90s of the 20th century), which Gavran refers to in the novel: *"And then uncle Božidar set up a computer game called The Prince of Persia, which is a really great game, that prince escaping from a Turkish prison. He showed me what I had to do, and after a few minutes I could play without help"* (Gavran, 2000, p. 17). Not only is Uncle Božidar reproductive but is also creative, so he offers them a new game that, according to Pero, is better and more beautiful than The Prince of Persia. The same reflection of that urban identity are also school parties when their form master allows them to start a disco, providing their parents watch over. We can say that different identity features prevail in this contemporary novel, in other words *"we interpret the manner in which a juvenile identity is built and shaped in the context of love, family, but also existential determinants, less often the trend ones"* (Vrcić-Mataija, 2011, p. 150). Eventually, it all ends up after *"several appointments and a few 'spontaneous encounters' in one boy getting a father, and the other a mother"* (Hranjec, 2006, p. 247).

Instead of conclusion

In these few examples, we see how identity distribution or the identity paradigm in the Croatian children's novel is changing, from the leader of a children's gang Pero in the novel from a rural community, through the character of Mungos Nevada in the novel from urban space in which reading and film dominate as an identity starting point and identity search with all the lessons / messages of Matošec, to the identity in the contemporary Croatian novel, which is formed on the basis of urban childhood, contemporary culture, family relationships, but also life-existential determinants. In the analysed works, the literary-pedagogical function of these novels is complex. Readers get to know individual characters as living persons with their specific characteristics and actions. Their virtues or shortcomings lead them to reflect on their own personal and group identities. Recipients can consciously, but also unconsciously, search in the characters for the similarities of their traits and behaviour. The read contents are internalised, *"adopted"*, and continue to be upgraded on the internal mental plan of the reader.

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László Varga

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – "EVERYBODY CAN DO SOMETHING, NOBODY CAN DO EVERYTHING"

Abstract

"An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory..." (J. Dewey, 1922). Cooperative learning is considered a new development in effective learning; it has its roots in the 1920s. In a classroom using cooperative learning, children work on activities in small groups and they receive rewards or recognition based on the overall group performance. Working together, looking at things from a different perspective, being able to really listen to each other, communicating and informing, accepting changes and dealing with these changes in a flexible way, thinking and acting in a creative manner, making use of the possibilities of each individual... These are just some of the skills developed within cooperative learning.

Introduction

Teaching and learning are challenging because a teacher never knows where his influence stops and when his learners achieve their purpose. There are many ways of teaching children: whole class, cooperative learning and individual study. Cooperative learning is based on the idea that children can learn in groups with the help of the teacher. We believe that cooperative learning is one of the most effective ways of learning because it develops children's personalities in many different ways (Intelligence Quotient, Emotional Quotient, Social Quotient) and makes for a positive learning environment. It creates the best conditions for learning through practice (Operational Intelligence). Constructivism learning theory says that children generate knowledge from their experiences and construct knowledge for themselves, that is children build themselves up, so we can talk about *'self – made children'*. Each member of a group is responsible not only for learning what is taught, but also for helping each other learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement. The essential components of cooperation are positive

interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual and group accountability, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing (Varga & Kissné Zsámboki, 2015).

In this essay, I would like to focus on the characteristics of a successful group and some problems that can arise when working in a group as well. Firstly, I will try to give an overview of learning styles. In the first part I will present how young children learn and what cooperative learning means. I will suggest some theories and approaches regarding these two topics. Next, in the second part, I will examine the effectiveness and importance of groupwork, the advantages of grouping and the teacher's role in working in groups. Finally, I would like to outline some problems that might emerge when doing groupwork and suggest some solutions as well.

How do children learn?

Every child is different. Children in the classroom may learn in many different ways. Individuals may exhibit diverse styles of learning due to the differences in their cognitive, affective, social and physiological development. Identifying a single preferred educational style is possible, however, it is not desirable since individuals differ so markedly in their learning styles. Learning strategies are the techniques individual students use to help themselves learn. Classroom research has identified three main types of strategies (Littlejohn and Hicks, 1996):

- Meta-cognitive strategies, such as planning, self-evaluating, self-monitoring language use and beliefs about others.
- Cognitive strategies used in actually 'doing the learning', such as guessing words, repeating, learning through rote memorization and working out rules.
- Social strategies, such as working with others, asking for help and so on.

All children come to their lessons with their own learning strategies. Learning strategies are very personal – what works for one person may not work for another. Since the strategies children use are influenced by teaching and by others, learners may not be using the best strategies for themselves.

Research shows that there are at least three areas that contribute to each child's individual learning style (Sadker, 2013):

- **COGNITIVE AREA**
  Individuals have different modes of perception and organisation. Some children prefer to learn by reading and looking at material (VISUAL), while others need to listen and hear information spoken aloud (AUDITORY), still others learn by body movement and participation (KINESTHETIC).

Some learners focus attention narrowly or with great intensity. Others pay attention to many things at once. While some learners are quick to respond, others rely on a more slowly paced approach.

- **AFFECTIVE AREA**
  Individuals bring different levels of motivation and drive to learning challenges and the intensity of this motivation is a critical determiner of learning style.

- **PHYSIOLOGICAL AREA**
  A child who is hungry and tired will not learn as effectively as a well-nourished and rested child. Some children can sit still for long periods of time, while others need to get up and move around. Light, sounds and temperature are yet other factors to which pupils respond differently based on their physiological development. These factors contribute to different learning styles.

Social interactionism

There are many alternative theories which attempt to describe the learning process. According to my topic, the most important model of the learning processes is the social constructivist theory, which strongly suggests the importance of learning the social context and of interaction with others. The most influential theorist on this theory was L. S. Vygotsky (1978), the remarkable Russian psychologist. Some features of social constructivist model:

- The learners are active and social.
- Teaching and learning occur through experience, interaction and support.
- The children take part in activities such as discussion and problem-solving within a group.

Vygotsky emphasised (Williams, 1997) the importance of learning by interacting with people. Children are born into a social world and learning occurs through interaction with others. Children learn a language through using that language to interact meaningfully with other people. *"In the early stages of ontogenesis, the child is completely dependent on other people, usually the parents, who initiate the child's acting by instructing the child in what to do, how to do it, and what not to do"* (Lantolf and Appel, 1995, p. 9).

Social constructivist theory provided for a new model of effective practice which lies within the social interaction between two or more people with different levels of knowledge and skill. Vygotsky (1978) developed a concept which he called the 'zone of proximal development' (the ZPD). This was defined as the difference between what a child could do independently and what he could do with the support of another person who was more skilled. *"It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent*

problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Lantolf and Appel, 1995, p. 10).

Social interactionism emphasises that teachers and learners interact with each other and the learner plays a central role in this theory. Williams identifies (1997) four important factors which influence the learning process: learner, teacher, task, context (environments). Lantolf and Appel say (1995) that there is a mechanism which is relevant to social interactionism. The scaffolding concept, created by Bruner, states that persons with different levels of knowledge can help each other. The scaffolded help theory has six features (Lantolf and Appel, 1995, p. 41): (1) recruiting, (2) simplifying, (3) maintaining, (4) marking, (5) controlling, (6) demonstrating. These features help children solve problems with a scaffolded mechanism that promotes the novice's learning through the grades.

John Dewey's theory

In this section, it is necessary to write about Dewey and his progressive education. Completing the literature review, I intend to present Dewey's philosophy, which is relevant to my topic. Dewey was committed to learning by doing. Dewey was one of the most influential educators of the twentieth century. Progressive education included several components. It meant broadening the school program to include family and community life. Progressivism included applying new research in psychology and the social sciences to classroom practices. This suggested a more democratic educational approach, accepting the interests and needs of an increasingly diverse child population. The focus of Dewey's program was to build on child-centered interests and needs rather than traditional subjects presented by the teacher (Sadker, 2013; Kissné Zsámboki, 2018).

In this model of education, learning activities would be developed from children's interests on the assumption that children learn best if they are interested and directly involved. Passive listening to the teacher, according to the progressive movement, is not the most effective learning strategy. The role of the teacher in a progressive classroom is to identify student needs and interests and provide an educational environment that builds upon them. Dewey believed that the purpose of education is to assist the growth of individuals and to help children understand and control their environment. He was committed to child-centered education, to learning by doing and to the importance of experience. Dewey suggested that teachers should focus on learning through the senses, beginning with concrete experiences. Everything that happens with children in the classroom should start from there. Sadker M. and D. Sadker say that *"Dewey's philosophy helped to open schools to change and innovation and to integrate education with the world outside the school"* (Sadker, 1991, p. 302).

In the previous sections, I have presented the importance of progressive education and the role of social interactionism in children's learning. Consequently, groupwork can be an effective way of teaching because it creates good environment for learning through practice. The purpose of the next sections is to introduce some ways of teaching young children. My intention is to summarise ideas about workforms.

Child groupings

Littlejohn and Hick say (1996) that the teaching of young children poses some of the greatest and most rewarding challenges. There are four main headings:

- Aims (the purposes of the course)
- Syllabus (what the children will be learning about)
- Methodology (describes types of activity)
- Evaluation (how learning will be assessed)

In this essay, I would like to focus on methodology according to my topic. All classes are 'mixed-ability' classes. All classes consist of individual children with different personalities and interests. Each child also has mixed abilities. For example, some learners may find writing or reading easier than speaking. For this reason, teachers need to adopt a flexible methodology that allows for a variety of learning styles and abilities. Workforms are the most important aspects of class management. There are at least three main types of workforms:

WORKFORMS			
WHOLE CLASS	COOPERATIVE LEARNING		INDIVIDUAL STUDY
	PAIRWORK	GROUPWORK	

Whole class is the traditional teaching situation, where a teacher-controlled session is taking place. Children are working with the teacher, and all the children work on the same activity with the same rhythm and pace. The children have little chance to practise or to talk. It involves too much teaching and too little learning. Whole class always goes at the wrong speed. Either the teacher is too slow for the strong learners or the lesson is too fast for the weak children. This does not mean, however, that we should abandon this workform completely.

Individual study means that children work on their own level, at their own pace. Reading and writing work can be the focus for individual study. Stronger, average and weaker learners can be given completely different tasks at different levels of difficulty, or children can be given tasks on the same topic at varying levels of difficulty. It allows them to respond at their own level of ability and

to develop more freely without being restricted by the tasks themselves. Children and their work, however, cannot always be easily managed through individual study (Harmer, 1991).

We have seen that there are a lot of advantages and disadvantages of whole class and individual study. The teacher must take these factors into account when planning a lesson. Littlejohn shows (1996) that effective classroom managers are nearly always good planners. Good managers also carefully arrange their classrooms to minimise disturbances and make sure that instruction can proceed efficiently.

The better classroom managers are thinking ahead. While maintaining a pleasant classroom atmosphere, these teachers keep planning how to organise, manage and control activities to facilitate instruction. Effective teachers must be more than good classroom managers, however, they must also be good organizers of academic content and instruction. Ralph Waldo Emerson said that, *"The man who can make hard things easy is the educator."* The main aim of this section was to define and evaluate the three main types of workforms. Comparing the viewpoints, I found that there is no ideal way of teaching young children.

Cooperative learning

The purpose of this section is to introduce cooperative learning. This section will highlight aspects of cooperative learning: its advantage over individual learning, the role of the teacher, and the features that teachers should consider when planning groupwork. We have mentioned earlier that there are two forms of cooperation: pairwork and groupwork. Firstly, cooperative learning is considered a new development in effective teaching; it has its roots in the 1920s.

In a classroom using cooperative learning, children work on activities in small groups and they receive rewards or recognition based on the overall group performance. Sometimes, classrooms are set up according to an individualistic reward structure, such as independent study or learning contracts. In these cases, learners work by themselves to reach learning goals that have no relationship to those of other children. But a cooperative learning structure differs from more traditional approaches in that children depend on one another and work together to reach shared goals. Since face-to-face interaction is important, the groups should be circular to permit easy conversation.

Next, cooperative learning programs highlight the role of the teacher as instructional leader. Children have more positive attitudes about learning and their ability to learn. Teachers have more positive attitudes toward teaching and higher expectations for their children. Williams shows (1997) that effective teachers have strong interpersonal skills. They accept, respect and empathise with, and care about their children. They create an atmosphere of group

cohesiveness and cooperation in their classroom. Cooperative learning has a positive effect on achievement as long as it reflects two essential features:

The group must work together with positive interdependence to earn rewards.

There must be individual accountability, since the group's success depends on the individual learning of each group member.

Cooperative learning increases not only achievement, but also friendships in the classroom, and also helps mainstreamed handicapped children gain social acceptance by their classmates.

In conclusion, cooperative learning gives teachers lots of possibilities to educate the whole person according to the child's personality. Williams stresses the importance of developing the whole person.

"Education is concerned not just with theories of instruction, but with learning to learn, developing skills and strategies to continue to learn, with making learning experiences meaningful and relevant to the individual, with developing and growing as a whole person" (Williams, 1997, p. 45). To sum up, the main aim of this chapter was to describe how children learn and what cooperative learning means.

Characteristics of groupwork

In many activities, children work in small groups. This way of working has many advantages in that it gives children a chance to work at their own pace, to ask each other for help, to share ideas and to get more practice. Groups can run the danger, though, of learners wasting their time together as they become distracted, talk about or do things other than requested, or produce work which is full of errors. However, a cohesive group works efficiently and productively. A positive group atmosphere can have a beneficial effect on the morale, motivation and self-image of its members and significantly affect their learning by developing in them a positive attitude about the subject being learned, the learning process, and themselves as learners. One has to select three sections:

- forming
- maintaining
- ending (feedback)

GROUPS

Firstly, forming a group is relatively easy: the initial stage of group life is usually harmonious as children get to know each other and begin to work together. But getting young children to work together is not an easy task because children at this age are usually very *"self-centered"*. Scott and Ytreberg say that *"Particularly*

five- and six-year olds are often happiest working alone and are not yet willing to cooperate and share" (Scott and Ytreberg, 1990, p. 15).

Next, maintaining a cohesive group over the long term is far more difficult. A frequent problem in groups is that not all members participate equally. Every group has dominant members and as well as those that are often willing to just follow along, or sometimes not participate at all

Galton and Patrick (1990) observed a great deal of groupwork at classrooms. Seating and working were recorded and compared. Their research showed that in the junior study children sat in groups but worked individually. Galton and Williamson give an account of their research. *"For example, although for 56 percent of the time children were seated in groups they were expected to work as a group for only 5 percent of the time during which they were observed.(...) In contrast, although children were seated at individual desks or tables for only 7.5 per cent of the time they worked individually during 81 percent of all observations"* (Galton and Williamson, 1994, p. 12). The research shows that young children work IN groups, but not AS groups. As we have mentioned, maintaining a group is very difficult.

Finally, evaluation is an important part of groupwork. In learning, one of the most important factors is a feeling that you are getting somewhere. Learning at school can seem like an endless activity, in which children move from one task to the next. It is important, therefore, that children receive feedback on what they have done. Allowing time for groups to show their work to each other can allow them an opportunity to have pride in their work, ask questions about things and share ideas. Galton and Williamson (1994) classified the different grouping arrangements in the classroom. They list four different types of groupforms.

- seating groups
- working groups
- cooperative groups
- collaborative groups

Seating group means that children work on a similar theme, but they have a separate task. Learners sit in groups, but do not work as a group. Second, there is the kind of group where children have the same task and work with some cooperation. Pupils complete the same assignment independently and may check each other's answers. The third kind of grouping is the cooperative group where pupils work on the same task, but each have individual assignments which are put together to form a joint result.

Finally, collaborative groupwork means that each pupil has the same task. This involves problem-solving activities where children debate a problem and produce an agreed solution. In this essay, I focus on cooperative groups because this can be used in the primary classroom with good results. The gradual progress is very important, so we may start with the seating group, followed

by working groups. Galton and Williamson (1994) explain the groupwork as a two-stage process. There is an initial stage which is followed by a subsequent, different strategy. It has been suggested that groupwork might be approached in stages, leading gradually from simple, brief activities with a narrow focus to more generalised problem-solving activities. One of the biggest problems is the selection of group members. There are many ways to organize groups. At the beginning of a course, a sociogram may help teachers form groups. There are many ways to set up groups:

- children's interests,
- the nature of the task,
- pupils' choice,
- teacher-determined criteria,
- mixture of pupil choice and teacher criteria.

Why groupwork is good for young children

Groupwork seems to be an extremely attractive idea for a number of reasons. Vygotsky stresses (Lantolf and Appel, 1995) the importance of the social situation in learning and argues that what a child can do today in cooperation, tomorrow he will be able to do on his own. Cooperative groupwork is not a single form of classroom organisation but encompasses different approaches with children working in different ways. The main objective is always, however, that children should work cooperatively together. Activities have to be coordinated and it is possible that a group leader will emerge or could be selected in order to create the necessary organisation. The teacher wants the children to work together, to help each other, to be aware of what others are doing and how they are working. Vale and Feunteun stress the importance of group-formation activities. *"They are activities that require, for example, the individuals within the group to work co-operatively, to act together, to support each other, to make physical contact with each other, to lend and receive trust – in highly enjoyable, non-competitive situations"* (Vale and Feunteun, 1995, p. 22). In this way, groupwork is more dynamic, there is a greater possibility of discussion and it allows children to do different things in the same classroom.

What does a successful group look like?

Most teachers have children seated in groups and talking in groups, but it is mistaken to think that this represents cooperative learning. Groupwork allows children with different levels of ability to work on the same topic and additional support is provided for classes with mixed abilities. This encourages children to use their knowledge creatively, and to contribute their own ideas and experiences. As Harmer says (1991), there are many advantages of groupwork:

- The group is cohesive and members have a definite sense of themselves as a group.
- Groupwork may have a positive, supportive atmosphere.
- The members of the group are able to compromise.
- Group members can interact happily with all members of the group.
- Members of the group listen to each other and take turns.
- Group members may be interested in each other.
- The group is tolerant of all its members.
- Members cooperate in the performing of tasks and are able to work together productively.
- Children trust each other.
- They understand each other's points of view even if they do not share them.
- Learners are open-minded, flexible and receptive to new ideas.
- The group has a positive attitude about themselves as learners and to the learning experience.

We can see that cooperative groupwork develops not only children's knowledge, but their social and affective attitudes.

Children's strategies in language learning

There are two ways of learning language: acquisition and learning. Gaálné and Sárosdyné say (1994, p. 23) that *"English is the language of communication in the classroom..."* Researchers agree that there are common characteristics between learning the first language and learning to use a second language. Generally similar patterns have been found when children are learning English as a second language as when younger children are acquiring English as their first language. They suggest that children gradually reconstruct rules for a second language, by improving rules from their first language. The responses they receive from teachers usually help them to recognise that the rules are different. Young children who are learning a second language in school will need support. For example, teachers encourage children to talk, are prepared

to listen and give them time to complete what they are trying to say and use gestures to help children understand what they are trying to communicate (Kitzinger, 2001).

If children are given enough support during the early years in school, learning takes place quickly. In this way, the learner is moved towards recognising rules that underlie the language used. Groupwork supports and encourages children to think of their own ways of learning foreign language.

In conclusion, learning language (e.g. grammatical structure) is very important and cooperative groupwork gives young children lots of possibilities to acquire and learn English (Kitzinger, 2001).

The group can provide similar language support and guidance for each other as the teacher. If all the decisions about language learning are always made by the teacher, the children will not have the opportunity to decide things for themselves. This means that they will not develop the ability to learn by themselves or to work out what works best for them as individuals.

Learning a foreign language may be approached in two main ways (Littlejohn, 1996): deductively, in which children are given a rule which they then practise, that is they use other people's deductions about the language, or inductively, in which they work out rules for themselves. Inductive language learning can involve children more fully in understanding the language as they work out different rules for forming and using English. To sum up, children will have lots of their own ideas about how English works.

Problems of working in groups

Firstly, forming a group is a very important part of classroom and behaviour management. Despite this, teachers do not usually use group-formation activities, which would be the first step of working in group. It is surprising because many books deal with the importance of groupwork and the positive relationships among children that form at the beginning of learning. As Galton says (1989), there are four problems of working in groups:

- Many teachers see that cooperative work is *"more trouble than it is worth"*. Teachers do not usually like this kind of work because it is noisy. Children cannot learn in such circumstances.
- Teachers observed that children often hurt and insult each other. For this reason, working in groups can be unproductive.
- Young children are not able to discuss with each other.
- Finally, *"children are generally intolerant of each other's views"*. Therefore, many teachers omit groupwork altogether.

Galton concluded that these problems, which are not essential, hinder the teacher's effort. Galton and Williamson (1994) outline what the main problem

is. Teachers do not usually give children a definite purpose and do not usually outline the task. Therefore, children do not know what they have to do when cooperating together. Another problem is that teachers concentrate on the task only and that learners finish the task as quickly as possible.

The group problems can be divided into three classes:

PROBLEMS

TEACHER	ORGANIZATION	CHILDREN
personality	task (INPUT)	mother tongue
qualifications	gradation	gender
attitude	extra support	personality
techniques	time, size	behaviour
relationships	planning	relationships
	feedback (OUTPUT)	
	maintaining	
	classroom arrangement	

Considering the limitations of my essay, I will focus on two important problems: the task and the use of mother tongue. In learning, the task is used in the same way as exercise, to refer to any structured learning procedure. The task will include everything from a gap-filling exercise to a poetry-writing activity. The task may be *"small"* and may only take a few minutes, or *"large"* which may take a whole lesson or more. Teaching through tasks is the most effective method since learners can learn through natural processes of acquisition just as in a natural environment, and it also helps children learn in an instructional setting. Many tasks require the learners to think things through not only in relation to the structure of the subject, but also by drawing on their knowledge to help understand new situations.

Groupwork tasks need to have a clear, concrete focus. Teachers have to give the children a time limit so that they know when they have to finish. Closed tasks and open-ended tasks are useful in teaching. Open-ended tasks are where there is not a single correct answer or where a variety of answers are possible. Where children are working in groups, closed tasks can force the children to discuss more in order to find the correct answer. Open-ended tasks, however,

are also very valuable. Since there is no single correct answer, the children can often answer at the level of their ability. So, classroom work will be richer and there will be a variety of ideas that are shared.

Next, the use of mother tongue. In learning, the mother tongue plays an important role. Firstly, children think about the structure of their language and compare it with English. Secondly, when children are learning, they always try to make sense of 'what is new' by comparing it with what they already know. At the beginning of the course, much of the instruction about classroom activities will need to be given in the mother tongue to make sure that children know what they are expected to do. Children may also use the mother tongue if they feel embarrassed about speaking English in front of the class. If the teacher feels the children use too much of the mother tongue in groupwork, he or she will need to consider why this situation is arising and what can be done. It may be that the task is too difficult for them, not interesting enough, not clear to them or too unstructured. The teacher should give clear examples of what the children have to do or ask for suggestions from them.

Implementation

Firstly, before setting children to work in groups, the teacher has to check that they understand fully what they are going to do. Next, while children are working, the teacher should go around the class and check whether they are having any problems, check the work they have done and give extra support where necessary. While going around the class, the teacher can also take notes on common errors and spend a short time at the end of the lesson going through a few of these. The teacher can also make a note of which children seem to be working well together and which seem to be having problems. Finally, after working in groups, children can be cross-grouped. In their cross-groups, they can compare their own ideas with the help of the teacher.

- Teachers should set up their classrooms according to the following principles:
- Teachers should always be able to see all children. Pupils' desks should be arranged so that the teacher can see everybody from any area where one may be working.
- Teaching materials and supplies should be readily available.
- High-traffic areas should be free of congestion.
- Children should be able to see instructional presentations.

Finally, teachers need the opportunity to reflect on teaching, to talk about it and to visit one another's classes and give each other feedback. Teachers usually describe their job as a calling, a mission to help and nurture children. A teacher has to possess love and knowledge and has to use this combined with passion. I am going to finish this essay with Schmuck's idea that emphasizes the

importance of cooperation: *"Why have we humans been so successful as a species? We are not strong like tigers, big like elephants, protectively coloured like lizards, or swift like gazelles. We are intelligent, but an intelligent human alone in the forest would not survive for long"* (Dunne and Bennett, 1996, p. 3).

Conclusion

In this essay I have described a way of working that can be successfully used with young children. I have also attempted to outline some of the theoretical considerations regarding this topic. I have stressed that working together in groups must be an important part of schooling. Cooperation is very useful for young children because it provides a supportive environment where learners work actively in the learning process. Groupwork improves the relationships between children and the teacher. Where groupwork is increasingly the norm, harmonious relationships within the classroom have become fundamental to the success of learning. Learning processes that do not include groupwork may be less effective for the learners. In this way, I may hope to build a more comprehensive theory of how groups can function effectively in the primary classroom, but every teacher should find his or her own way of teaching.

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Marta Licardo

IMPLEMENTING GOOD PRACTICES WITH MIGRANT CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN SLOVENIA

Abstract

In most EU countries, educational systems face the problem of inclusion of migrant children. Pedagogical practices and competences of preschool teachers are key for successful integration and inclusion of these children. The purpose of the study was to analyze how well preschool teachers follow the guidelines for working with migrant children. The participants in the study were preschool teachers and preschool assistants (n = 435) from various regions from Slovenia. The results indicate that preschool teachers reported that they most often promoted tolerance and understanding of customs and practices of other cultures, and often they respected children's primary culture in daily activities. Results show that improvements should be made in use of bilingual reading material, preparation of individual education plans for migrant children, preparation of compensatory activities and in the use of special teaching methods for migrant children. Results are important for early years' educational practice and policy regarding migrant children.

Introduction

EU member states have been faced with many challenges of migration, especially since the migration crisis in the past few years. The yearly number of first-time asylum seekers in the EU countries has increased from 153,000 in 2008 to 1,26 million in 2016. Approximately 21% of asylum seekers in 2015/2016 were minors below age 14. The number of unaccompanied children seeking EU asylum in 2015 was 96,000 (Eurostat, 2017). This unprecedented inflow of children and youth have challenged the provisions of education institutions in many EU member states and have renewed the attention given to the role of education in the integration/inclusion process. With no doubt, the education system is the key component in integration/inclusion process of migrant children and youth (Dustman et al., 2012). To prevent social exclusion, xenophobia, radicalisation, insecurity, violence in education, early school leaving and other issues, we should focus on key factors that promote success in education. Early intervention, support strategies and learning in

the safe environment are such factors (Flisi et al., 2016), so it is important to ensure these characteristics are present in our kindergartens.

Part of Slovenian integration policy has been the successful inclusion of migrant children in the education system (MIZŠ, 2017; Smernice za vključevanje otrok priseljecev v vrtce in šole/Guidelines for inclusion of migrant children in kindergartens and schools, 2012). The concept of inclusive schools includes the principle of intercultural education. However, it is up to each kindergarten whether it will be able to establish an intercultural, integrative and possibly also an inclusive school environment. This is essential because the development of an inclusive educational environment requires a carefully planned, targeted and systematic efforts from all stakeholders. Children coming from other cultural backgrounds are among the vulnerable groups; therefore, they need special care and attention when entering kindergarten, even before integration. Even more attention should be paid to them during the school year (Licardo & Golob, 2017). School legislation in Slovenia allows migrant children to attend education under the same conditions as Slovenian citizens (Zakon o tujcih/Foreigners Act, 2011). After immigration, migrant children are included in regular school programs and receive some forms of support. However, in practice, they often lack equal opportunities for optimal development. The greatest challenge for teachers is children who immigrated to Slovenia is that these children are unfamiliar with the Slovene language and culture (Čančar & Drljić, 2015). Due to the lack of Slovene language proficiency, migrant children find it difficult to follow lessons, and teachers have difficulties communicating with parents, which often results in frustrations.

Teachers are the key persons in educational environment, whose role is to encourage children to acquire knowledge and objective judgement. The attitude of the teacher towards the migrant children is crucial for their integration and the development of the child's identity (Collinson, 2012; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005;). In addition, the responsibility of teachers is to adapt educational activities to the needs of each child and to strive for their integration into the class and school. This is not easy, since the teaching students with a different language background, various experiences and socio-economic backgrounds requires complex skills from teachers that usually have lack of special education and experience. Most OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries include intercultural education for teachers during their preparation coursework, yet, it has been noted that teachers are not sufficiently trained to work with migrants (Eurydice, 2014).

In Slovenian initial education for preschool teachers, intercultural education is rare. For example, research in Slovenia has indicated that 76.4% of teachers reported they did not learn subjects related to working with migrant children during their preparation coursework. This may explain inadequate professional competence, because they encounter the problem of working with migrant children only in the classroom. Teachers also expressed that in order to create intercultural environment and inclusion, they need additional education and

training, especially in the field of professional knowledge, knowledge of the language of the migrants and the understanding of their culture and attitudes (Čančar & Drljič, 2015).

Good practices for migrant children in preschool education

In Slovenia, many good practices related to the education of migrant children are included in legislation. In addition, preschool teachers have developed principles related to an inclusive approach to the implementation of the rights of migrant children which are presented in the Guidelines for the inclusion of migrant children in kindergartens and schools (Smernice za vključevanje otrok priseljecev v vrtce in šole, 2012). According to these Guidelines when performing classroom tasks, such as guided activities, eating, daily routines, preschool teachers should respect the child's primary culture. In everyday communication, teachers should develop multilingualism and interculturality in a playful way. Preschool teachers should set the foundation for learning the Slovene language, while at the same time encouraging the use of the primary language of children. Currently, additional technical assistance for teaching Slovene is not provided in kindergartens (MIZŠ, 2017).

Parents are advised to enrol their child in kindergarten for at least two years before entering elementary school. In terms of migrant children who are refugees, they have the priority of enrolling in pre-school before other children. Parents are encouraged to become acquainted with the rules of kindergarten, arrival and departure of children, and they are expected to discuss special chartacteristics of their child with the teacher. Particular emphasis should be placed on the discussion about the diverse cultures, about possible reservations regarding the celebration of customs and other habits that are present in the immigrant children's family.

When the child is included in kindergarten, it is a special period for each child. The new environment requires a child's adaptation. In the case of migrant children, these changes are even greater because they are from another country. It can be assumed that the child's sense of security is reduced, and much depends on the past experience that the child has with separations from important adults. Children in the group need to be acquainted with the integration of the migrant child. In doing so, the educator can use maps, present children with the basic characteristics of the country from where migrant children come and possible specialities (Guidelines, 2012). Children in the group should become aware of the fact that the migrant child does not speak the Slovene language yet. It is good to present fundamental cultural and social characteristics of the country of children newcomers to the peers, to provide an excellent opportunity for learning about the wider social environment and intercultural education. Where appropriate, assistance may be provided by the newcomer child or by one of his family members. The

preparation of children in the group should not be overly focused on the migrant child, but as part of a regular curriculum in which other children share about their place of residence, culture, habits and language. Children need to be encouraged to respect differences, encourage friendship among migrants and other children, and ensure that the migrant child in the group feels safe and accepted (Bahovec et al., 1999).

Preschool teachers should prepare an image and word dictionary for daily routines and the basic needs of the child, such as food, drink, games, socializing, hygiene needs, needs for nearby adults, etc to encourage pre-literacy skills in both languages. The expression of a child in the mother tongue should be encouraged. Preschool teachers should provide with children's literature such as stories, fairy tales, fables, etc.in child' mother tongue or in two languages.

It is also good to create profile of family and child, which includes cultural background, family dynamics and language skills. Teachers should ensure that rules, instructions, and expectations are clearly displayed. They should speak clearly and use visual aids. Throughout the entire educational process, they should ensure that the child has the opportunity to express his preferences (what he wants, likes) and encourage him to express himself, for example, to tell a favourite story, song, favourite food, sports activities, etc. Preschool teachers should motivate the child to participate in activities by planning several possibilities in which he/she can actively participate and enable him/her to select various activities. Guided activities should be adapted so that the words are easier to understand, if necessary, instructions should be prepared by visual material and bilingual. Activities should be planned by anticipating how the migrant child who does not understand the Slovenian language will be able to follow them. When assessing that a child is not able to follow the planned activity in the group, a substitute activity must be prepared. The child's active participation should be promoted by including his strong areas and opportunities to express himself in a way that suits him (Bahovec et al., 1999; Palmer et al., 2013). In order to adapt educational work, it is also necessary to create a professional team and prepare an individual program for the child in which they monitor the child's progress and set goals (Guidelilnes, 2012). Goals are set according to the expected progress of children in a particular school year or semester.

The purpose of this study is to analyze how well preschool teachers follow the Guidelines (2012) and other good practices and methods for working with migrant children. Two research questions guided the study: a) How well do preschool teachers in Slovenia report following the good practices for migrant children? b) Are there any differences in implementation of good practices according to location of the kindergarten? The results are important, because they reveal strong areas and weeknesses of integration/inclusion processes which occurs in Slovenian kindergartens.

Method

PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the study were preschool teachers and preschool assistants (n = 435) from various regions from Slovenia. Participants' gender was reported as 97,1% females and 2,9% males. Regarding job position, 52.8% were preschool teachers, 43.6% were preschool assistants, 3,6% had other job positions, such as preschool counsellors or preschool special education teachers. Education level of participants included the following: 42,7% had upper secondary school, 30,3% had higher professional education, 26% had master's degree in education and 1% had a doctoral degree. The participants had various teaching experience: 21% had 0 to 5 years of work experience, 29% had 6 to 10 years, 15,1% had 11 to 15 years, 10,4% had 16 to 20 years, 4,3% had 21 to 25 years, 5,3% had 25 to 30 years and 14,9% ha1 and more years of work experience. participants worked at different location: 7,6% of them in kindergartens in rural area, villages etc., 25,2% in smaller towns and 67,3% in cities. Although, this is according to Slovenian geographical and population parameters, where the biggest three cities have population from 38,000 to 279,000, while small town population can be from 4,000 to 10,000.

INSTRUMENT

The survey instrument, which was developed for the purpose of the study, included different variables (e.g., support of the environment, teachers' values, teachers' emotional competences). Data presented in this paper are just one part of the survey, and only one segment of analysis is presented. Data presented are related to question: *"What is the frequency of use of specific good practices related to work with migrant children?"* This question was rated on a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5 (1 – never, 2 – rarely, 3 – sometimes, 4 – very often, 5 – always). The questionnaire was pilot tested on a smaller sample of preschool teachers in two kindergartens. After pilot testing some suggestions for improvements in terms of the clarity and length of the instrument were included and the final version of the instrument was prepared as an e-version and paper version.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection was done using the e-version of the instrument with the collaboration of the research team from the Faculty of Education at the University of Maribor. Data were collected in collaboration with kindergartens that participated in the study. The data collection was anonymous. The whole data collection process was carried out during March and April 2018.

In the analysis, we present descriptive statistics related to use of good practices in work with migrant children in kindergartens and differences between preschool staff in use of good practices regarding the location of the kindergarten (village, small town and city). To analyse the differences by location, variance analysis (ANOVA) was used.

RESULTS

In the result section, we present descriptive statistics which shows how often preschool staff reported implementing good practices related to work with migrant children and what are the differences among practices by location of the kindergarten.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of implementation of good practices with migrant children in the kindergartens in Slovenia

Variables		Never	Rarely	Some-times	Very often	Always	Mean	Std. dev.
	N	f%	f%	f%	f%	f%	M	SD
In the group, I promote tolerance and understanding for customs and practices of other cultures.	411	0,5	0,7	8,8	32,9	57,1	4,46	0,72
In the playroom and in the wardrobe, we have bilingual inscriptions.	434	67,3	18,4	7,8	5,1	1,4	1,54	0,93
In the daily routine and guided activities, I respect child's primary culture.	435	0,9	3,9	16,3	34,7	44,1	4,17	0,90
I know family circumstances of the migrant child very well.	429	12,6	36,1	26,1	19,3	5,8	2,67	1,09
I use teaching methods for decreasing prejudices and stereotypes.	433	7,6	10,4	24,9	29,6	27,5	3,58	1,21

I use picture or word dictionary for migrant children.	429	19,6	18,6	28,4	32,1	10,3	2,85	1,26
I use bilingual picture books.	421	37,6	28,8	23,0	9,0	1,6	2,08	1,05
I have prepared compensatory activities when migrant children can't follow activities in the group.	432	13,9	24,3	27,3	20,6	3,9	2,76	1,05
I write individual education plans for migrant children.	428	30,4	28,3	23,6	13,1	4,7	2,33	1,17
I include parents of migrant children in the group activities.	432	9,5	20,4	32,9	22,7	14,6	3,12	1,17
I use special teaching methods for migrant children.	433	11,5	28,6	40,6	15,9	3,2	2,71	0,97
I know legal requirements of how to work with migrant children very well.	408	16,4	24,8	30,1	20,1	8,6	2,79	1,18

The results presented in Table 1 show that preschool teachers reported *"most often"* promoting tolerance and understanding for customs and practices of other cultures (M = 4,46; SD = 0,72), *"often"* respect children's primary culture in daily activities (M = 4,17; SD = 0,90) and use teaching methods for decreasing prejudices and stereotypes (M = 3,58; SD = 1,21). Only 6,5% of respondents reported the use of bilingual (or multilingual) inscriptions in playroom or wardrobe. The use of individual education plan (IP) was reported being used *"frequently"*, by 4,7% of teachers. Almost 75% of teachers reported *"sometimes"*, *"rarely"* or *"never"* know a child's family circumstances very well. , 65,5% of teachers *"never"*, *"rarely"* or *"sometimes"* prepare compensatory activities when migrant children cannot follow activities in the group, 40,1% of teacher *"never"* or *"rarely"* use special teaching methods for migrant children. These are all practices, which are related to competences of the teacher and little environment support is needed.

The results also showed that there is probably lack of quality reading material available, because 66,6% of teachers report they *"never"*, *"rarely"* or only *"sometimes"* use picture or word dictionary for migrant children (M = 2,85; SD = 1,26), 89% of them *"never"*, *"rarely"* or *"sometimes"* use bilingual picture books

(M = 2,08; SD = 1,05). The value of standard deviation in 8 out of 12 variables is >1, which indicates that practices are different among individual teachers; some teachers' practices are way above or below the average.

Table 2: Differences in competences of preschool teachers in work with migrant children by location of kindergarten in Slovenia – variance analysis (ANOVA)

Variables	Location	Nr.	Mean	Std. dev.	Levene's test		Variance analysis	
		N	M	SD	F	p	F	p
In the group, I promote tolerance and understanding for customs and practices of other cultures.	village	30	4,30	0,88	0,20	0,82	0,79	0,46
	town	100	4,48	0,72				
	city	309	4,47	0,70				
In the playroom and in the wardrobe, we have bilingual inscriptions.	village	30	1,73	0,94	1,10	0,33	0,70	0,50
	town	100	1,51	0,91				
	city	302	1,54	0,93				
In the daily routine and guided activities, I respect child's primary culture.	village	30	3,93	1,05	0,13	0,88	1,14	0,32
	town	100	4,21	0,87				
	city	303	4,18	0,90				
I know family circumstances of the migrant child very well.	village	26	2,58	1,30	2,00	0,14	0,19	0,83
	town	99	2,73	1,14				
	city	302	2,70	1,07				
I use teaching methods for decreasing prejudices and stereotypes.	village	29	3,45	1,30	1,41	0,24	0,39	0,68
	town	101	3,66	1,11				
	city	301	3,58	1,23				
I use picture or word dictionary for migrant children.	village	29	3,17	1,49	1,21	0,30	6,40	0,68
	town	100	3,19	1,22				
	city	298	2,71	1,23				
I use bilingual picture books.	village	29	2,62	1,15	2,37	0,10	11,21	<.001
	town	99	2,37	1,07				
	city	301	1,93	1,01				
I have prepared compensatory activities when migrant children can't follow activities in the group.	village	28	2,75	0,97	1,47	0,23	1,97	0,14
	town	101	2,94	1,05				
	city	301	2,70	1,06				

I write individual education plan for migrant children.	village	27	2,41	1,01	4,65	0,01	5,25	0,01
	town	101	2,65	1,32				
	city	298	2,22	1,12				
I include parents of migrant children in the group activities.	village	29	2,97	1,12	0,68	0,51	0,73	0,48
	town	100	3,23	1,12				
	city	301	3,10	1,20				
I use special teaching methods for migrant children.	village	29	2,76	0,95	0,10	0,91	5,54	<.001
	town	101	2,98	1,04				
	city	301	2,61	0,94				
I know legal requirements how to work with migrant children very well.	village	28	2,93	1,05	1,35	0,26	0,27	0,76
	town	94	2,83	1,17				
	city	284	2,77	1,21				

Variance analysis in Table 2 indicated statistically significant results regarding location of the kindergarten in use of special teaching methods for migrant children (F = 5.54, p < .005). Preschool teachers who work in towns reports the highest level of use of special methods for migrant children (M = 2.98; SD = 1.04), CWWS score decreases to preschool teachers who work in town kindergartens (M = 2,98; SD = 1.04) to preschool teachers who work in village kindergartens (M = 2.76; SD = 0.95) to preschool teachers who work in city kindergartens (M = 2,61; SD = 0,94).

There are also statistically significant results regarding location of the kindergarten in use of bilingual books in work with migrant children (F = 11.21, p < .005). CWWS score decreases from preschool teachers who work in village kindergartens (M = 2.62; SD =1.15) to preschool teachers who work in town kindergartens (M = 2,37; SD = 1.07) to preschool teacher in city kindergartens (M = 1.93; SD = 1.01). The overall use of bilingual books is very low.

Another important result are significant differences in preparation of individual education plans (IEP) for migrant children (F= 5.25, p < .01). Preschool teachers who work in town kindergartens, prepare IEPs most often (M = 2.65; SD = 1.32). CWWS score decreases to preschool teachers who work in town kindergartens to preschool teachers who work in village kindergartens (M = 2,41; SD = 1.01) to those who work in city kindergartens (M = 2.22; SD = 1.12)

The results also indicated that preschool teachers who work in town kindergartens have the highest CWWS scores in 9 out of 12 variables for good practices and preschool teachers who work in village kindergartens have the highest CWWS scores in 3 out of 12 variables for good practices. Maybe this indicates that integration and inclusion process of migrant children is better

in towns and villages than in the cities, although further research is needed to confirm this assumption.

Discussion and conclusion

To implement good practices in preschool education is key to successful inclusion of migrant children. From results we can conclude that preschool teachers think that they promote tolerance and understanding, and that they respect children's primary culture in daily activities. However, there is a reported lack of specific practices, which would show that this is really the case. Preschool teachers should more often use bilingual or multilingual materials (e.g. children books, inscriptions in playroom), they should prepare IEP for every migrant child, as this would enable teachers and parents to follow and monitor child's progress more closely and intervene if necessary. Teachers should be better informed about family circumstances of the migrant children, and, they should always prepare compensatory activities for migrant children when they cannot follow activities in the group.

These findings raise questions, such as why preschool teachers do not report implementing good practices more often? The underlying reasons might be that they are not educated enough about necessary good practices, or nobody ask them to implement specific practices, or maybe some of them are not sensitive enough to become more proactive and change their pedagogical and teaching routine because of migrant children. The results also indicate that individual preschool teacher more often use good practices, as values of standard deviation indicates that practices among teachers are way above (or below) average. We might conclude that the successful inclusion of the child might correlate with individual preschool teacher's pedagogical practice, his/her competences and sensitivity toward migrant children and inclusion.

From these results, we can also conclude that the location of the kindergarten might play a significant role in child's chances for inclusion, if we consider the use of good practices. Namely, preschool teachers who work in town and village kindergartens more often use good practices for migrant children than preschool teachers who work in cities, however the results also show high levels of standard deviation, which means that practices vary a lot between kindergartens in all three locations.

These findings also support the notion from the introduction that it is up to each kindergarten or school whether it will be able to establish an intercultural, integrative and possibly also an inclusive environment, because the development of an inclusive educational environment requires a carefully planned, targeted and systematic work of all who are involved.

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SYNERGY BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEACHERS – JOINT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT[4]

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to describe the aspects of synergy between primary school teachers and parents with a focus on situations in which these two groups experience identical or different advantages (or disadvantages) in their mutual communication. This issue is of special importance because the teacher-parent synergy can be used to support the inclusive environment as declared in the amendment to the Education Act as of 1 September 2016. The first part of the paper outlines the theoretical background as defined by various authors and research studies by both domestic and foreign professionals, where selected research outcomes are accepted by the Czech scientific community. The second part presents the results of a research study on the issue, which was performed by means of a questionnaire. The respondents were primary school teachers, parents, and an additional category of respondents, whose reflections were rather hypothetical. The responses were analysed by respondent categories.

Paradigms of family-school synergy

The objective of the paper is to outline the development of cooperation and communication between families and schools in the Czech environment. This development is based on modelling of teacher-parent relationships and on the role of the school in a historical context.

In addition to other functions, teachers and parents provide for education, upbringing and socialization of the child. They do not have educational self-rule and autonomy, but their functions are closely linked. Parents influence

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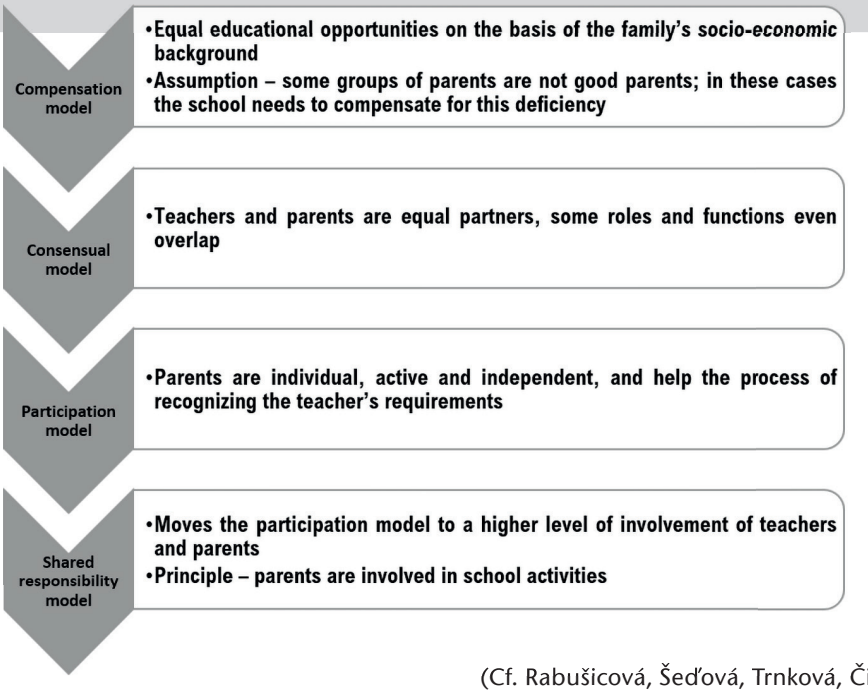
the process of education through their own attitudes about the school. This also influences the child's attitude about the school and societal values (Janiš, 2001). Primary school is a specific environment because in most cases the classroom teacher leads all subjects and, for the child, is the main representative of the school. For a primary school child, the teacher equals the school.

V. Krejčová (2005) claims that the child's attitude about the school is much more positive provided that the parent cooperates with the teacher. There are programmes in place that involve the family in the life of the school. This involvement increases parental self-esteem. Watching their child in school may also improve their understanding of various issues of child development, provide a realistic perspective of educational possibilities and limitations, and improve their understanding of the school and class environment as well as the demanding nature of the teaching profession. According to J. Průcha (2006), many teachers claim that youth education is impossible without good relationships and cooperation between the parents and the school.

Development of family – school relationships in a historical context

The need for the development of cooperation between parents and teachers is a relatively recent issue in the system of Czech education. In the past, it was believed that the roles of parents and schools were two separate activities. The role of the school is education while the role of the family is upbringing. D. Matýsková (2005) claims that teacher-parent communication was used to convey information and to give advice from the teacher to the parent. This began to change only in the 1980s. According to M. Rabušicová, K. Šeďová, K. Trnková and V. Čiháček (2004), teachers and parents started to meet on a more frequent and systematic basis. At first, this related to information about testing results, but gradually parents had an opportunity to be constructively involved in educational activities and to have informal discussions with teachers. The process of shaping the teacher-parent relationships has evolved into a state of responsible synergy. In the following decade school relationships have been democratised. According to this approach, the teacher is accountable to the state and the parents, and the school has changed into a more open institution. The ways and degree of cooperation between teachers and parents can be characterized by the following models:

Diagram 1: Modelling the development of the teacher-parent relationship



(Cf. Rabušicová, Šeďová, Trnková, Čiháček, 2004)

The shared responsibility model seems to be the best option, however in reality, it is not always practiced. This is caused by several factors: – attitudes, opinions and prejudices of parents and the general public against a specific school or teacher, different educational styles applied in families, position of school education on the value ladder of families, etc. A significant aspect of this model seems to be the effort to jointly cooperate in achieving the same objective – the development of the child.

Problems can arise however, from the different expectations of both environments in which children grow and we should look at these specific perspectives.

What kind of school do parents want and what kind of parents do schools want?

Based on research studies by R. Mecnerová (In Pedagogika III., 1996), we will look at the author's first question – What kind of school do parents want? At the beginning of the reform, parents started to explore the idea of pluralism in education. A significant shift in parents' interest in schools followed the transformation of Czech education. The results of a research study carried out by the Association for Independent Social Analysis (AISA) suggested that 34%

of parents (identified as generally liberal) reacted to any major transformations of the educational system in a positive way and supported them, although most respondents in this group had a tolerant attitude toward contemporary education. 16% of respondents (identified as radically liberal) clearly supported a radical transformation of Czech education and at the same time strongly criticized contemporary schools for suppressing the child's personality and individuality. Three quarters of respondents in this group also suggested a need to have a greater influence on the education of their children in school. Half of respondents were against decentralisation of education and supported the traditional system of education. The OECD performed a research study focusing on parents' expectations concerning the areas that should be developed in their children by schools. Eventually, they defined a total of 8 areas. The following table presents the results:

Table 1: According to parents, which qualities and abilities should schools develop? (Source: Průcha, 2009)

Quality/Ability	Percentage of respondents who consider a specific quality/ability crucial or very important (%)	
	OECD countries average	CR
Pupils' self-confidence	88	76
Ability to live with people of different classes	81	56
Understanding life in other countries	64	37
Healthy lifestyle	75	40
Ability to be a good citizen	75	56
Ability required for further study	81	80

The second question to analyse is: What kind of parents do schools want? It should be noted first that the system of primary education has been transformed at most levels, both externally and internally. One of the important aspects of the transformation is the existence and gradual increase in innovative elements in education and alternative types of schools. Each type of school brings different requirements for parents. R. Mecnerová (In Pedagogika III., 1996) quotes K. Rýdl, who states that accepting parents' right to information is the first step towards successful cooperation. This can be classified into four stages:

- The right to be informed;
- The right to involvement and participation in school events (meetings, conferences discussions about educational issues);
- The right to participation and shared responsibility;
- The right to autonomy and self-determination (which, so far, is an exception in this country).

This is the basic level of parental involvement on school organization. The quality and extent of involvement at each level depends on the concept of each school, the director's approach, and especially the type of each school.

A study that focused on the relationships between parents and primary school teachers was published by K. Šeďová (2009), who described teachers' opinions about parents' engagement in school life. According to the author, *"appropriate"* relationships between teachers and parents include the so-called *"silent partnership"* in which parents understand expectations from teachers and consider them obligations.

Tasks and roles of the school and the family following the development of the parent-teacher relationship

The stimulating nature of the teacher-parent cooperation is indisputable. This is since the school (represented by the teacher) provides comprehensive, institution-controlled education based on school policy of each country. In addition to traditional functions of the school, new functions and tasks emerge in response to current developments in society. These were defined by Husén et al. (1992):

- The school contributes to overall development of an individual – provides knowledge and special skills that are impossible to acquire through mere experience outside school;
- The school is a protective facility – it protects against bad examples of adults, guarantees a favourable environment for children until they are able to stand on their own feet;
- The school shapes the human being – it shapes the young generation according to certain norms and values;
- The school is a social policy tool – it prepares children for future functioning in the labour market, provides continuing professional education, suppresses unhealthy social phenomena such as smoking, drugs, etc.;
- The school is part of the environment – children mostly spend 11 to 13 years at school, which means that needs to be a high-quality environment for their development.

The development of every person is affected by three primary factors – inheritance, education, and environment. These factors are defined by two social institutions – the school and the family. While the school is the secondary environment in this context, the family is the primary environment. On the other hand, the school uses meaningful and deliberate actions to affect the development of an individual. In order to develop a child in this specific area in the best possible way, we should seek an acceptable middle ground between the school and the family (Provázková Stolinská, Rašková, 2015).

V. Krejčová (2005) states that from the teachers' perspective, informal communication with parents represents a source of information about the child's development. On the basis of their own observations and information gained from parents, primary school teachers can adjust the conditions in order to suit the needs of pupils and thus individualize their education. Teacher-parent cooperation can also be a means of developing a positive public image of education. Studies suggest that parental involvement also has a positive effect on children and their attitudes toward learning (cf. Campbell, 1992; Docking, 1990, Henderson, 1987). The results of research also suggest that good teacher-parent cooperation also has a significant influence on the development of a relationship between the child, parent and teacher. Although these arguments are in favour of cooperation between parents and teachers, and at the same time is a widely acknowledged fact, the specific form and content may vary considerably in practice (Katrňák, 2004). This is also since parents are a diverse group with many interests. They tend to be disorganized and the nature of their desire or effort to cooperate with the school is based on individually defined expectations concerning the school (Rabušicová, Emmerová, LIII/2003).

Despite a large number of differences, professionals distinguish between 4 basic alternatives of parental roles in relation to the school (this classification is used in both domestic and international resources: international authors include for example M. G. Wyness, 1996; J. Docking, 1990 ad.; domestic authors are for example M. Rabušicová et al., 2004; S. Štech, 1997, etc.) The classification includes the following roles:

1. Parent as a customer;
2. Parent as a problem (independent, badly behaved);
3. Parent as a partner (educational and social);
4. Parent as a citizen.

The order reflects the frequency of the roles in the results of research studies (Rabušicová, Emmerová, LIII/2003). The relationship between parents and teachers can sometimes be problematic. According to K. Círová (2012), these problems may result from misunderstanding. In contacting the school, parents are affected by memories of their own childhood, but the Czech system of education has changed considerably over the past 30 years. It is important for

parents to be facilitated by teachers in understanding reality – this not only supports the development of good relationships, but also provides grounds for understanding the significance of child education. M. Rabušicová, K. Šeďová, K. Trnková and V. Čiháček (2004) performed a research study investigating the ways teachers (and the school) engage in contacts with parents. They analysed both one-way and interactive methods of communication. The one-way methods included the following:

- Information presented at the beginning of the school year;
- Records in the pupil's books;
- Children's worksheets and examples of their work;
- Noticeboards for parents at the school entrance;
- Magazines, bulletins, information leaflets, newsletters;
- Written reports including an assessment of the child's results, effort and behaviour;
- Video of teaching in a specific class.

The interactive methods included the following:

- Parents' evening;
- Readiness of the school to provide parents with information on request at any time;
- Teachers' office hours;
- Open days;
- Office hours of the school managers;
- Presence of parents in classes;
- Surveys for parents aimed at their opinions about the functioning of the school.

The results of the research suggest that schools are more active in traditional areas – parents' evenings, office hours, information at the beginning of the school year; etc. They are less in favour of activities that require greater openness of the school.

Whether the parent or the teacher is considered a significant factor in the development of primary school children, the process of communication should focus on mutual responsibility. It is assumed that this can support the development of an inclusive environment, which is one of the current educational strategies in the Czech Republic. The research study focused on the application of the shared responsibility model (see above) as it offers the best opportunity for the development of primary school children.

Design and results of the research study

The objective of the research study was to describe the aspects of synergy between primary school teachers and parents with a focus on situations in which these two groups experience identical or different advantages (or disadvantages) in their mutual communication. The basic sample of the research study included inhabitants of the Czech Republic recruited by means of random sampling. The respondents were divided into three categories – two basic categories – primary school teachers and parents. The third category was comprised of respondents not included in either of the two previous categories. The total number of respondents was 114.

The research method was a questionnaire. The selection of the method was motivated by an effort to recruit a greater number of respondents without demographic influences (Chráska, 2007). The responses were then coded so the results of the analysis were nominal data. This type of data can be analysed for value equality or inequality, and only those statistical methods that work with frequencies can be used. For this reason, statistical processing was performed by means of a non-parametric correlation test – Pearson's chi-squared test according to the following formula (Hendl, 2009).

Results of the research study

The purpose of the research study performed by D. Provázková Stolinská (2018) was to describe the aspects of synergy between primary school teachers and parents with a focus on situations in which these two groups experience identical or different advantages (or disadvantages) in their mutual communication.

A research problem was defined, which is characterized by the following research question: What is the relationship between the opinions of primary school teachers and parents concerning their communication and desire for mutual contact (with a view of developing the child)? In which situations is their approach to cooperation identical and in which different? The data was obtained by means of the research questions mentioned below, the purpose of which was to describe the communication processes between primary school teachers and parents including the following:

- Methods of communication with a focus on the preference of personal or distance communication, involvement of the child in problem solving, and searching for mutual contact between primary school teachers and parents;
- Reasons for mutual communication with a focus on motivation to communicate in the case of formal contact – parents' evening, school events, parents' visits to classes, or teachers' visits to families;

- Boundaries in communication that should not be trespassed by any of the categories of respondents in communication; and
- Importance of communication with a focus on the interest of primary school teachers and parents in the joint pupil development strategy – respect for the educational style and joint development of the educational concept of the class.

Research question No. 1: Which methods of communication do primary school teachers and parents prefer? The results of the research study suggest that ways of communication differ by motive. The first result was surprising. Although both teachers and parents were aware of the benefits of personal meetings, they preferred distance communication. This strategy deviates from expert recommendations, which highlight the advantages of personal contact for the development of the relationship between the teacher, parent and subsequently the child. In problem solving situations, both decide for personal meeting. In the case of problem solving, they also preferred inclusion of the child.

Research question No. 2: What are the reasons for communication between primary school teachers and parents? The responses to this research question were related to the motivation for selected activities generally or exceptionally provided by the school.

The basic activity was parents' evening, which is considered a formal way of communicating – an opportunity to inform about the pupil and about what happens in the school. The respondents believe in the effectiveness of linear interpersonal communication that enables one-way transfer of information. Acceptable duration is up to one hour with a follow-up consultation, during which parents are provided with specific information about their child. This involves elements of the transactional model[5], which is considered a sophisticated process crucial to teacher-parent synergy.

Another frequent opportunity for contact between teachers and parents is school events. Similarly, the results of the research study suggest a formal acceptance with a single reason – being informed about pupils and their development.

The research study also focused on rare contact opportunities – parents' visits to classes and teachers' visits to families. Although the respondents were aware of the benefits, they did not show interest in any of the cases.

5 The transactional model means that each person acts as a speaker and listener at the same time. When sending out our communications, we also receive the reactions of the communication partner. This approach is desirable and should be used as frequently as possible between primary school teachers and parents.

Considering the role of parents, the present research study characterizes two basic categories[6] – parent as a customer and parent as a problem (from the perspective of both).

Research question No. 3: Where do primary school teachers and parents see the boundaries of mutual communication? With a reference to the current trend of teacher-parent cooperation, there is a degree of uncertainty in the responses. Teachers are aware of their limited opportunities to communicate with parents and parents have concerns about communication with teachers. This uncertainty may result from unclear rules of communication between the school and the family. This leads us to one of the prerequisites for synergy between the family and the school that should be guaranteed by the school management. Both parties agree on mutual respect and politeness in communication. They are against the power-control motive for communication[7].

Research question No. 4: What is the significance of mutual communication according to primary school teachers and parents? Both primary school teachers and parents are aware of the opportunities that mutual communication and cooperation brings. Teachers are more open and show more effort in establishing contacts with parents, they can appreciate and are interested in mutual communication.

Parents do not reject this strategy, however, looking at specific methods of communication in a modern school, their acceptance is limited. This related, for example, to parents' engagement in the development of the educational concept of the class, or mutual respect to educational approaches. In both cases, there were some positive responses, but only theoretical ones. In terms of practical implementation, both social institutions formally adhere to their family and school competences. This corresponds with the compensation model of the parent-teacher relationship, which is the basic type. At this point, we are not even close to the concept of shared responsibility[8].

Research question No. 5: What is the correlation between the significance of communication (as seen by primary school teachers and parents) and the form of its implementation? The answer to this research question is that both teachers and parents are aware of the possibilities that communication brings. The respondents showed hypothetical interest in various communication trends and cooperation between the family and the school. On the other hand,

6 Despite a large number of differences, professionals distinguish between 4 basic alternatives of parental roles in relation to school (for details see above) – parent as a customer, parent as a problem (independent, bad, diligent), parent as a partner (educational and social), parent as a citizen (Rabušicová, Emmerová, LIII/2003).

7 The following types of motives for communication are known: constant-relationship communication motive, power-control communication motive, cognitive communication motive, relaxation communication motive, and presentation communication motive.

8 The family-school relationship has the following models: compensation, consensual, participation and shared responsibility.

they consider these to be experiments that cannot be generally applied in practice. They prefer stereotypical and conservative strategies and a traditional approach to the classification of functions – education in the school, upbringing in the family. The reason for this might be shyness, distrust, or an unclear formal setting. These opinions were expressed by both teachers and parents.

Conclusion

The objective of the present paper was to outline the current concept of family-school (parent-teacher) cooperation. The shared responsibility model is considered a very important tool regarding the several years' effort to develop an inclusive environment in Czech schools. This paper also presents the results of a research study suggesting that both teachers and parents are aware of the benefits of this approach but seem not to be interested in it. This approach requires an interest in mutual communication. Both parties tend to adhere to the previous and long-term approach of separate social institutions in the development of the child. It will be very difficult to replace this model as it is based on tradition and is well-known to both teachers and parents.

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Janja Batič

INCORPORATING ARTWORKS INTO ART LESSONS

Abstract

This paper presents the results of a survey, the objective of which was to discover what students of primary education thought of a selected set of artworks differing in their artistic expression (traditional forms of expression vs. contemporary art practices). We introduced the students to the following artworks: The Goldfish (Henri Matisse, 1911), Klangwand (Sound Wall) (Peter Vogel, 1980), Risbe (Drawings) (Petra Varl, 2009), and Brez naslova (Untitled) (Nataša Prosenc Stearns, 2016). Our questionnaire was based on a five-point scale with 13 statements under each artwork, for which the students had to specify their level of agreement or disagreement. The data was analysed at the level of descriptive statistics. The results indicate that the respondents find the artwork by Henri Matisse the easiest to incorporate into art lessons, while they feel that contemporary forms of expression would present some difficulties.

Introduction

In primary school art classes, while discovering new terms related to art theory, art techniques and materials, pupils are also introduced to artworks by various artists. Tacol (2003, p. 9) argues that learning manual skills is not sufficient, not even at the early learning stage, as introducing children to materials and tools alone does not contribute to comprehensive artistic development. Lancaster, who formed the ultimate objectives of art lessons, shares the same opinion (1990), claiming (op.cit., p. 15 – 16) *"/... / that in teaching art at primary level we should aim to /... / provide opportunities for studies of an art historical and cultural nature so that children develop appreciation skills associated with the examination of works of art and achievements of artists, craftspersons, architects and designers."* A special role which artworks play in art lessons is also highlighted in the Slovenian Curriculum (Učni načrt, Likovna vzgoja, 2011, p. 4): *"In art classes, students learn, experience, and evaluate visual arts heritage along with objects of contemporary visual and art culture. Art education is a school subject that follows and encourages different forms of artistic and visual creations, while remaining open to changes and innovation brought about by the modern age."* Shulman Herz (2010, p. 8) notes: *"/... / there at least two important reasons to look at art in the classroom. The first is that art is an important form of communication and therefore communicates important information about people, times, and places. The second is that art teaches us about the imagination, a critical human ability."*

Eckhoff (2007) highlights the importance of art viewing experiences in early childhood art education, noting that viewing original artworks could to some extent be replaced by high-quality reproductions. Furthermore, she notes (Eckhoff, 2007, p. 471) that *"/.../the use of high-quality reproductions can be a regular part of everyday classroom experience and, thus can provide young students a way to enter into viewing experiences. Having reproductions of a variety of artworks available to young students in the classroom can create the opportunity for art-based dialog that may not be present in a production-focused classroom."*

Notwithstanding the recognised importance which discussing artworks has on comprehensive artistic development of students and in spite of the operative goals of the curriculum which highlights a tight correlation between learning art notions and getting to know artworks by various artists, it has been generally noted that teachers in lower grades of primary school rarely showcase artworks in class. *"In early childhood arts educaftion, art viewing or art appreciation experiences are often non-existent or a minor component of children's interactions with the visual arts."* (Epstein and Trimis, 2002; Colbert and Taunton, 1992; from Eckhoff, 2007, p. 463). A question this gives rise to is whether primary school teachers are sufficiently qualified to incorporate artworks into art lessons and to discuss them with their students. In a survey (Hudson and Hudson, 2007) which involved 87 final-year preservice teachers at the conclusion of their Bachelor of Education programme, the survey team tried to decipher whether university students were sufficiently prepared for teaching art. They discovered that *"over 90% of these preservice teachers agreed or strongly agreed they could provide opportunities for students to: view different kinds of artworks, make artworks about real experience /.../However, only 64% indicated that they could discuss how artistic intentions affect the choices artists make /.../."* (Hudson & Hudson, 2007, p. 10)

Garvis and Pendergast (2011, pp. 6 - 10) conducted a small-scale survey in which they focused on the perceived self-efficacy of 21 teachers teaching younger students. The teachers that were included in their survey assessed their own self-efficacy on a 9-point scale, providing much lower ratings for art compared to their self-ratings for mother tongue and mathematics. One half of the respondents rated their knowledge of all arts (visual arts, music, dance, etc.) extremely low. Garvis and Pendergast (2011, p. 10) note that *"[C]ontent knowledge is an important source of teacher self-efficacy. If teachers have stronger content knowledge in subject areas, they are more likely to engage in teaching the subject in the classroom /.../"*. They further note that *"nearly half of all participants concluded their content knowledge was very low for each of the arts strands."* As practice-based experience shows, teachers who do incorporate artworks into art lessons, most frequently choose more traditional art forms (drawing, painting) which they find easier to discuss with students. Regarding teaching children to think about reasons in art, Newton and Newton note (2005, p. 316): *"The problem is that some teachers lack confidence when it comes to talking about reasons. In effect, they avoid what Carlsen has called 'conversational risk', that is, they do not go where they feel uncertain themselves."*

Younger students normally encounter modern art only in galleries or museums which they visit with particularly enthusiastic teachers when there are adequate opportunities (e.g. vicinity of a gallery). For most younger students, contemporary art is something foreign and unusual and primary teachers are normally insufficiently equipped to incorporate contemporary works of art into art lessons.

Methodology

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Artworks only rarely make their way into art lessons in the lower grades of primary school. When they do, it is most commonly one of the traditional art forms. The underlying goal of our survey was to discover what students of primary education feel about artworks with relation to their expression forms (traditional art forms vs. contemporary art practices). We were particularly interested in finding the answers to the following questions:

Could the students of primary education showcase the artworks introduced in our survey to younger children (pupils in the first cycle of basic school and the first two grades of the second cycle of basic school) and discuss them without difficulties?

Do the students feel that the artworks included in our survey are part of standard practice (i.e. it is easy to find correlations with curriculum goals, children can relate to them)?

What is the attitude of students to the artworks included in the survey (i.e. did they find them interesting; would they like to know more about them; would they include them in the classes, etc.)?

SURVEY SAMPLE

The survey involved university students of the first cycle (third and fourth year) and the second cycle of Elementary Education programme at the Faculty of Education of the University of Maribor. Our survey questionnaire and a request for participation were sent to 213 students' emails (77 students in the third year of the first-cycle degree programme, 88 students in the fourth year of the first-cycle degree programme, and 48 students in the first year of the second-cycle degree programme). One hundred students decided to participate in the survey, of which 44% were students in the third year of the first-cycle degree programme, 22% were students in the fourth year of the first-cycle degree programme, and 34% were students in the first year of the second-cycle degree programme. 96% of the respondents were female and 4% male. It needs to be said that not all the respondents who started to fill out the questionnaire

completed it. For this reason, the number of responses is not the same for all sets of questions.

DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSING

In April 2019, we designed a questionnaire which focused on seven artworks and included a five-point Likert scale.

The analysis includes four of the seven works, which are introduced further. The artworks differ mainly in the form of expression – two of them are traditional in form (a painting and a drawing) while the other two are contemporary (a sound installation and a video).

Henri Matisse, The Goldfish9, 1911. Henri Matisse (1869 – 1945) was a French artist who is one of the greatest artists of the 20th century. Crepaldi (1998, p. 57) described his paining The Goldfish as follows: *"The motif of a vase with red fish is in many paintings by Matisse almost always placed in the forefront. The reflections of fish in the water are surrounded and highlighted by sparkly colours of flowers and leaves in the garden. The entire composition plays with elliptical and circular movements, repeated through and reinforced by the round table."* This artwork is totally in line with the principles one needs to consider when selecting artworks, namely, quality, exemplarity, and lifelikeness. With this particular piece in front of them, children form the first to the fifth grade of primary school could easily discuss the art problems outlined in the curriculum (e.g. colour, colour relationships, bright and dark colours, warm and cold colours), the art technique (which material was used by the artist), and the motif (still-life with goldfish is a familiar motif from everyday life).

Peter Vogel, Klangwand10,1980. Peter Vogel (1937-2017) was a German artist whom Martin (2011, without pagination) described as follows: *"/.../at a time when many artists were pursuing the idea of the viewer as active participant, Vogel began to embrace interactivity as a major theme in his work. And all of this prompted him to move away from painting and start to create picture-like interactive objects."* As regards Vogel's work (op. cit.), Martin notes: *"This work incorporates dozens of photocells and electronic circuits and can be seen purely as a 'sculpture', but to be fully appreciated, the sounds need to be triggered through interaction with a viewer or performer. In this sense they are open works, which are 'completed' by the viewer who encounters them, typically in an art gallery."* This piece can thus be regarded as a sculpture (assemblage) or an interactive installation. This artwork could easily be used to discuss different sculpture terms (sculptor, sculpting materials, sculpting techniques, composing various materials, assemblage) with pupils from the first to the fifth grade of primary school. Due to its audio

9 Fotografija je dostopna na https://www.henrimatisse.org/goldfish.jsp (11. 7. 2019).

10 Video of the installation available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSvCHip3iiU&feature=youtu.be (11. 7. 2019).

component, this piece could be discussed cross-disciplinary, incorporating the goals of music education – e.g. pupils could listen and reflect on nature sounds and other sound phenomena and musical examples, thus learning to listen attentively (Učni načrt, Glasbena vzgoja, 2011).

Petra Varl, Risbe (Drawings)11, 2009. Petra Varl (1965) is a Slovenian female artist who *"/.../mostly devoted to exploring drawings and its minimalist, condescend expression, which retains the beautiful as its basic aesthetic value."* (Zrinski 2008, p. 159) Her works are an important part of the public space, as she *"/.../took over, occupied, settled in, appropriated almost all possible mediums and spaces of representation."* (Borčić 2008, p. 182) At the same time, the work by Petra Varl transcends the public space, entering the intimate atmosphere of the apartments of her friends and acquaintances (op. cit.). The piece which we used for our questionnaire is a drawing. The artist used a line drawing to depict two women writing the words *"crteži, vrlo jednostavni"* (very simple drawings) on the wall. The notions which pupils from the first to the fifth grade could discuss with this artwork are: line, drawing, drawing artist, size and shape of drawing surface, hard and liquid drawing media, drawing tools.

Nataša Prosenc Stearns, Brez naslova (Untitled)12, 2016. Nataša Prosenc Stearns (1966) is a Slovenian visual artist working and living both in Slovenia and abroad. Fonda (1995, no pagination) noted on her work: *"In her work, the artist asks herself questions linked to her existence in the world, the relationship of her body with the surrounding world and itself./.../Sometimes her works provoke anguish, apprehension, a sense of profound uncertainty, sensations which must be experienced and savoured, leading to the discovery of further parts of ourselves."* The selected video shows yellow shapes (female torso) against a black background. The contours of the torso are transparent, overlapping and moving almost wave-like to the rhythm of the background music. The sound accompanying the image resembles church bells and handbells. In the Slovenian arts education curriculum for the first five grades of primary school, there are hardly any reasonable operative goals which would relate to the specific art form, i.e. video, but there are general goals which could apply to this particular artwork, such as developing pupils' observation skills, developing artistic thinking, and developing artwork evaluation skills. Naturally, this video could be easily used with pupils in the fourth and fifth grades to discuss colour (shades), colour relationships (harmony, dark-light contrast), and the motif (recognised shape of the human torso).

We have designed our online questionnaire so that each photography or video is followed by thirteen statements and possible answers (Strongly disagree; Disagree; Do not know/Cannot decide; Agree; Strongly agree). The survey was

11 Photography available at http://www.petravarl.com/slo/aktualno.html (11. 7. 2019).

12 Video available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hv0gs09AKus&feature=youtu.be (11. 7. 2019).

conducted from April to June 2019. The participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous. The data was analysed at the level of descriptive statistics.

Results and discussion

According to the results (Table 1), the highest level of agreement with this particular statement was identified in relation to the paining The Goldfish by Henri Matisse (M=4.45, SD=0.53), which means that of the four showcased artworks, the students would feel most comfortable showing this particular one to pupils in the fourth and fifth grades.

Table 1: Descriptive statistic for the item: I could easily show this work to pupils in the 4th and 5th grades

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	3	5	4.46	0.53
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	5	2.87	1.06
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	1	5	3.88	0.96
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	5	2.57	1.01

The results are hardly surprising, as this is a traditional art form, which students are more familiar with compared to the more contemporary art forms. We arrived at some interesting findings as regards Klangwand, the installation by Peter Vogel and the video Brez naslova by Nataša Prosenc Stearns, as in both cases the standard deviation was greater than 1, which means that the opinions of the group of students that took part in the survey differed considerably, so these mean values need to be interpreted with caution. We assume that the reason behind the difference in opinions among the students lies in different levels of experience they have with contemporary i.e. untraditional art practices.

Table 2: Descriptive statistic for the item: I could easily show this artwork to pupils in the first cycle of basic school

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	2	5	4.36	0.683
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	5	2.37	0.921
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	1	5	3.67	1.133
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	5	2.13	0.866

The results indicate (Table 2) again that the highest level of agreement was identified for the painting by Henri Matisse (M=4.36, SD=0.866), which leads to the conclusion that the students find this artwork the easiest among the four artworks to introduce to children in the first cycle (first to third grades) of basic school. An interesting observation is that in the artwork by Petra Varl, the standard deviation exceeded 1, so the mean values need to be interpreted with caution. The reason for such difference in opinion might lie this particular artwork – a drawing which incorporates text. We can assume that for some students, the text included in the drawing represented an extra challenge regarding presenting the artwork to younger pupils.

Table 3: Descriptive statistic for the item: I could discuss this artwork with pupils in the fourth and fifth grades without difficulties

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	1	5	4.40	0.671
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	5	2.81	0.981
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	2	5	3.84	0.914
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	5	2.49	0.977

Table 3 clearly indicates that the artwork by Henri Matisse once again showed the highest level of agreement (M=4.40, SD= 0.671), while the lowest level of agreement was identified with the video by Nataša Prosenc Stearns (M=2.49, SD=0.977). The results are hardly surprising, as the students of primary education, taking into consideration their study programme, normally possess more knowledge of traditional than contemporary art forms.

Table 4: Descriptive statistic for the item: I could discuss this artwork with pupils in the first cycle of basic school without difficulties

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	1	5	4.29	0.740
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	5	2.30	0.891
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	1	5	3.49	1.092
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	5	2.11	0.877

As the results show (Table 4), the highest level of students' agreement with the statement was identified with the painting by Henri Matisse (M=4.29, SD=0.740), which indicates that the students would find this artwork the easiest to discuss with pupils in the first cycle of basic school. The outcome is totally expected, as there are several notions from the first-cycle arts education curriculum that could be discussed with this artwork (E.g. painting, colour, light and dark colours, colour mixing). As a point of interest, the standard deviation with the drawing by Petra Varl was again greater than 1, which indicates considerable difference in opinions within the group of students-respondents, and thus requires caution in the interpretation of the mean values. The drawing appears easy to read at first glance, but since it incorporates text in the Croatian language: »crteži, vrlo jednostavni« (Very simple drawings,), this might pose an issue for some of the students in planning a discussion with younger pupils.

Table 5: Descriptive statistic for the item: I can easily relate this artwork to the notions from first through fifth grade arts education curriculum

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	3	5	4.22	0.617
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	5	2.57	0.837
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	2	5	3.57	0.839
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	5	2.51	0.942

According to the results (Table 5), the highest level of agreement with this statement was identified with the artwork by Matisse (M=4.22, SD=0.617), which leads to the conclusion that The Goldfish is the artwork that is most easily relatable to the notions from the curriculum, followed by the artwork by Petra Varl (M=3.57, SD=0.839), the installation by Peter Vogel (M=4.57, SD=0.837), and finally the video by Nataša Prosenc Stearns (M=2.51, SD=0.942) which showed the lowest level of agreement. The results are totally expected, as the basic notions in the arts education curriculum for the primary school up to the fifth grade refer to traditional art forms (drawing, painting, etc.), whereas more contemporary approaches to art are not included explicitly. They only appear indirectly, as part of more general goals, such as developing skills for setting criteria and evaluating artworks and general art problems of the environment (Učni načrt, Likovna vzgoja, 2011, p. 5)

Table 6: Descriptive statistic for the item: Pupils in the first cycle of basic school could not relate to this artwork

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	1	5	2.01	0.960
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	5	3.70	0.944
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	1	5	2.67	1.021
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	5	3.70	0.919

According to the results (Table 6), the highest level of agreement with this statement was identified with the artworks by Peter Vogel (M=3.70, SD=0.944) and Nataša Prosenc Stearns (M=3.70, SD=0.919). We can assume, based on the students' opinion, that pupils in the first cycle of basic school could relate to these two artworks to a much lesser extent than to the painting by Matisse (M=2.01, SD=0.960). The responses are somewhat surprising, as younger pupils can generally relate to moving pictures (in our example a sound installation and a video) much more than to static images. The reason why the students responded as they did could lie in their own views on contemporary art practices. In the drawing by Petra Varl, the standard deviation was again greater than 1, which means that here also, the opinions within the group of students differed considerably. Accordingly, the mean values need to be interpreted with caution. We believe that the reason behind such variation in students' opinions lies in the nature of the artwork itself, as it includes some elements pupils can relate to (line drawing) and some elements they find unusual (text in a drawing).

Table 7: Descriptive statistic for the item: Pupils in the fourth and fifth grade could not relate to this artwork

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	1	4	1.86	0.785
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	5	3.22	0.958
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	1	4	2.48	0.927
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	5	3.44	0.904

Judging by the results (Table 7), the highest level of agreement with this statement was identified with the artwork by Nataša Prosenc Stearns (M=3.44, SD=0.904), while the artwork by Henri Matisse showed the lowest level of agreement. We can therefore assume that the pupils in the fourth and the fifth grades of primary school could more easily relate to the painting by Matisse than to the video by Nataša Prosenc Stearns. The reasons for this lie again in the art forms used and the students' conviction that the more familiar art forms are more easily recognised by closer to pupils than the less familiar ones.

Table 8: Descriptive statistic for the item: This piece is a regular example of an artwork that can be shown to pupils from the first to the fifth grade of basic school

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	1	5	4.05	0.788
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	4	2.14	0.644
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	1	5	3.30	0.985
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	4	2.05	0.740

The results (Table 8) indicate that the highest level of agreement was again reached with the Matisse's painting (M=4.05, SD=0.788), which leads to the conclusion that according to the respondents, this painting is a more common example of artwork that can be shown to pupils from the first to the fifth grades of basic school, compared to other artworks used in the survey. The video by Nataša Prosenc Stearns showed the lowest level of agreement (M=2.05, SD=0.740). The results are entirely expected, as the showcased painting is a perfect example of the artwork which is normally shown to younger pupils: a two-dimensional piece which allows pupils to observe colours, colour relationships, lines, texture, etc., while an installation or a video cannot be related that easily to the operative goals of the first through fifth grade arts education curriculum.

Table 9: Descriptive statistic for the item: I wish to learn more about this artwork

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	1	5	3.87	0.873
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	5	3.60	1.071
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	1	5	3.66	0.978
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	5	3.39	1.037

The results (Table 9) show that the highest level of agreement with this statement was identified with the painting by Matisse (M=3.87, SD=0.873), which leads to the assumption that the respondents are more interested in learning more about this particular artwork than other artworks involved in the survey. The standard deviation in the installation by Peter Vogel and the video by Nataša Prosenc Stearns was greater than 1, which means that the responses within the group of students differed considerably and the mean value should be interpreted with caution. We believe that the difference of opinions regarding both artworks stems from the students' insufficient knowledge of both pieces, which leaves the students relying solely on their aesthetic taste, which naturally differs significantly from one person to another.

Table 10: Descriptive statistic for the item: I find this artwork interesting, but I do not know how I could incorporate it in art class

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	1	4	2.00	0.853
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	5	3.51	1.148
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	1	5	2.61	0.984
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	5	3.41	0.955

Table 10 reveals that the highest level of agreement with the statement was identified with the video by Nataša Prosenc Stearns (M=3.41, SD=0.955). While the respondents agree that this artwork is interesting, they have no idea how to include it in an art lesson. The standard deviation in the responses regarding the installation by Peter Vogel is greater than 1, which again indicates significant differences among the students' opinions, which is why we need to interpret the mean values with caution. We believe that the different views arise from the diverse experiences of the respondents with the less traditional forms of expression.

Table 11: Descriptive statistic for the item: This artwork does not belong in the art class

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	1	4	1.55	0.767
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	5	2.59	0.909
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	1	4	2.03	0.921
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	5	2.61	0.862

The results (Table 11) show that the lowest level of agreement with the statement of the artwork not belonging in the art class was identified with the painting by Matisse (M=1.55, SD=0.767). The highest level of agreement, however, was identified with the video by Nataša Prosenc Stearns (M=2.61, SD=0.862). The results are in no way surprising, as we have a traditional approach on the one hand, and contemporary art practice on the other, and the latter is much less familiar to the students of primary education.

Table 12: Descriptive statistic for the item: I would not include this artwork into the art class because I do not like it at all

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	1	4	1.59	0.692
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	4	2.43	0.893
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	1	4	1.99	0.879
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	5	2.66	0.911

One of the factors that can have an impact on the inclusion of artworks into the art class is the relationship a teacher has with a specific artwork. In regard to the statement that students would not include the artwork into the art class

for not liking it, the results show (Table 12) that the highest level of agreement with the statement was identified with the video of Nataša Prosenc Stearns (M=2.66, SD=0.911). The lowest level of agreement was identified with both traditional art forms, namely, the Matisse painting (M=1.59, SD=0.629) and drawing by Petra Varl (M=1.99, SD=0.879). We can assume that the artwork which the students are more familiar with are the ones they prefer and that the students are more inclined to include in art class.

Table 13: Descriptive statistic for the item: I think I understand what message the artwork is trying to convey

	Number of students	Minimum value	Maximum value	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation
	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Henri Matisse The Goldfish, 1911	78	1	5	3.23	0.882
Peter Vogel Klangwand, 1980	63	1	5	2.14	0.965
Petra Varl Risbe, 2009	67	1	5	2.81	0.892
Nataša Prosenc Stearns Brez naslova, 2016	61	1	4	2.34	0.873

Discerning the meaning in an artwork is a process which requires the viewer to observe the work in detail, trying to describe its form and theme (motif) as well as include the context of the work in its interpretation. According to the results (Table 13), the lowest level of agreement with the final statement was identified with the installation by Peter Vogel (M=2.14, SD=0.965). We assume that the message of this artwork is the one that the students understood the least. We believe that this results from the nature of this artwork which is the least familiar to the students, given that the installation incorporates sound and interactive elements.

Conclusion

As part of our survey, we showed various artworks to students of primary education. Our objective was to discover whether the students would introduce the selected artworks to younger pupils and discuss them in class, whether they could relate them to the curriculum goals without difficulty, and what they thought of the showcased artworks. The results, based on descriptive statistics for the statements provided in the survey, showed that the painting by Henri Matisse was the artwork they found the easiest to introduce to pupils and discuss in class, as well as relate to the goals of the curriculum. Furthermore,

the students consider this artwork to be a representative work of art which they find easier to incorporate in art lessons compared to other artworks included in the study. They also believe that they understand the message of this artwork much better than the messages which other artworks in the study are trying to convey. The respondents generally agree that pupils would not relate to the audio installation by Peter Vogel and the video by Nataša Prosenc Stearns as much as they would to the painting by Matisse. According to the respondents, the video is the one artwork they find the most challenging to incorporate in an art lesson, while their opinions regarding the audio installation are rather split. The results we obtained are hardly surprising, considering that over the course of their studies, the students of primary education focus more on traditional art forms and are less familiar with contemporary artistic approaches. As part of their study programme, students learn mostly about elementary art techniques and forms of expression, both through practical work and through lesson planning as part of their practical training.

Considering the results of our survey, we believe that prospective generalist teachers should be introduced, during their studies, to contemporary art practices. As regards further research, it should focus on studying the possibilities of incorporating contemporary art forms into art education in the lower grades of primary school. Children, unlike adults, have no restraints and are thus more spontaneous and open in their interactions with various art forms – contemporary as well as traditional art practices. Unfortunately, however, children can easily adopt a negative attitude towards contemporary art forms from adults, such as their parents or their teachers. It needs to be emphasized that contemporary art practices have the *"potential to make a significant contribution to the art curriculum, students' learning, social inclusion and the development of cultural identity."* (Page et al., 2006, p. 219)

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Réka Kissné Zsámboki

MATHEMATICAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Abstract

It is now well-known that the early years play a crucial role in the complex and harmonious development of personality, in early cognitive processes and in social learning. According to Tamás Varga, an internationally renowned Hungarian researcher and representative of mathematics teaching, a young child is a self-constructing personality, whose development requires favourable conditions in which movement, play, activity, curiosity and children's interest can play an essential role. In this process, the child will also gain rich mathematical experience and develop numerical skills and competences. The purpose of this study is to draw attention to the importance and necessity of mathematical education in early childhood, in the light of changes in children's thinking, numeracy, numerical discrimination, and scientific notions of mathematical competences in early childhood.

Introduction

"Mathematics is the creation of the human mind, at the same time the product of the evolution of the brain and culture,"[13] says Valéria Csépe, former deputy secretary general of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, research professor at the Academy's Brain Imaging Center. However, for centuries, the science of early childhood development and mathematics were very distant and incompatible concepts. Thanks to the emergence of the field of intelligence and mental processes, and the emergence of cognitive psychology - thanks to the scientific theories of Jean Piaget, Tamás Varga and György Pólya, we can now speak of mathematical discovery and experience from birth. Tamás Varga, a mathematics teacher, an internationally recognized and distinguished expert in mathematics, pointed out in his articles on Baby Mathematics and Kindergarten Mathematics published in Life and Science Magazine four decades ago (Dienes, 2014) that the baby's connection with its living and non-living environment through its senses, movements and sounds has elements can be considered to be mathematical. He believes that a young child's self-constructing personality - neither movement nor speech development should be rushed, pushed, directed - merely creates favourable conditions for natural

13 http://mipszi.hu/cikk/091212-szamolo-agy [2019.08.01.]

development in which movement, play, activity, curiosity interest in children can play a vital role. It is also possible to gain rich mathematical experience in this development. The visual and linguistic information related to the actions can have important mathematical elements and contents (Kissné, 2017).

However, to help the development of young children consciously, most often it does not require complex tasks and abstract concepts. From birth, children are ready to learn, naturally curious and motivated to explore the world around them. It is up to the people around them and the stimulating environment to preserve this natural curiosity in the future. Among the child's various activities, it is almost impossible to find one without any direct or indirect mathematical experience. They are unobtrusively acquired by children through experience as they explore the outside world. Thus, for them, the process of learning about mathematics is an interesting and exciting discovery, which in case of success is a good inspiration for further experimentation.

Changing views on the characteristics of early childhood development

There is rich national and international literature on the scientific approach to child development. The concept of biological maturation includes that development has a genetically determined characteristic of human nature. Contrary to the theory that emphasizes maturation dominance, the theory of learning states that development in a childhood personality and activity is appropriate in a good environment (Pléh, 2010). They believe that the individual is shaped by his or her environment throughout his or her life, through reward and punishment. Learning theory reflects a high degree of optimism in terms of teachability, but also conveys the hidden message that if the child's development is inadequate, then his or her environment may be responsible. (Pléh, 2010) The 21st century learning theories explain the need to provide the child with a stimulus-rich material environment suitable for exploration. We need to allow children to act independently, which helps them learn. According to the creator of social learning theory (Albert Bandura, a Canadian-born psychologist), observing the behaviour, emotions, and attitudes of others is an important form of children's learning. The active attention of the child during social learning is essential. It has been observed that children only imitate positive models that are important to them. Therefore, we must constantly strive to improve our behaviour, thinking, relationships, etc. to give good patterns for children to imitate (Pléh, 2010).

Perhaps the most interesting theories for the development and development of mathematical competences are the concepts of neuropedagogy, which emphasizes cognitive change and the new science of cognitive neuroscience. Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist, developed his theory that thinking is the cause of development through observation of his own children and many

developmental psychological experiments. At the heart of the theory is the child's worldview, a scheme that the child constructively builds with constant thinking. When they encounter a new phenomenon, they insert it into their previous knowledge (assimilation) or reshapes their worldview so that the new phenomenon can now be explained (accommodation). This continuous adaptation, that is, learning takes place throughout our lives.

Neurology, cognitive neuroscience, and nurture-based neuropedagogy teach that the basic structure of the brain is built through a long-term developmental process that begins in fetal life. Brain plasticity is highest in early childhood (the first 5-6 years). More specialized brains later find it increasingly difficult to adapt to very new or unexpected challenges (Schiller, 2010; Varga, 2015). Research from recent decades shows that we are all born with a *"programmed"* brain that is fundamentally personal and already possesses some basic information about the human and material world in infancy (Klingberg, 2012). Although a child's brain mass is four times smaller than that of an adult, a newborn child's mind contains almost all the neurons that they will use later in life. Growth is facilitated by the formation of a complex network of intercellular protrusions that require a great deal of individual experience. According to Donald Hebb's *"Fire Together - Wire Together"* theory, the effect of stimuli causes cells with similar functions to signal and begin to project to those that radiate their own signals at the same time. Based on the above, the network of neurons is not only random and not pre-programmed but is formed by experience. Of the synapses that occur, only those that are used regularly remain permanently, and the rest are lost through synaptic backlash (Keysers & Gazzola, 2014).

In addition to this basic knowledge, we are born with a very effective learning ability and a basic need for learning. In a sociocultural defined learning process, the children rely not only on their own observations and experiences, but also on the interaction with those around them (Kitzinger, 2009). Thus, the quality of human relationships is crucial for children's learning and development. Daniel N. Stern, a prominent figure in twentieth-century attachment theory, considers social relationships to be decisive in children's learning. Factors and components that determine a child's personality, such as the development of a positive self-image, a sense of confidence and security, and even self-reflection, are highly dependent on the positive or negative relationships and experiences that are experienced. Positive, credible, direct relationships with children have the power to promote their development in all areas. Thus, the experience gained in early childhood, the characteristics of family life, and the quality of environmental (pedagogical) stimulation clearly influence the healthy development of children and its cognitive, emotional, and social well-being (Stern, 2002).

The effect of gaining mathematical experience on the development of thinking

Due to the active lifestyle of the toddler in the stimulating environment, the cognitive processes, the observation and recognition reaches the level that by the end of the toddler's life he/she will be able to solve the problematic situations independently.

The child develops elements of learning that accompany him / her throughout his/her life. This is important from the point of view of mathematical education, because mathematical abilities are among the earliest manifesting abilities, and in order to develop they require all cognitive processes, perception - attention - memory - imagination - thinking. Therefore, mathematical education must pay attention to the development and improvement of these cognitive processes.

Developing such thinking in mathematics in early childhood is one of the most important goals of mathematics education at almost all ages. Mathematical knowledge would be self-contained and formal if not linked to by means of thinking. For this, however, the existence of a stimulating, inspirational and exploratory personal and material environment is indispensable. In addition, mapping early skills can be of paramount importance for the success of subsequent learning processes.

According to Stella Lourenco, a senior psychologist at the Children's Study Center at Emory University in Atlanta, United States, when you observe infants' spatial thinking and orientation, there is much to learn about their future/ emerging mathematical abilities. The signs of spatial thinking appear at the age of six months, which is clearly related to later mathematical intelligence. It has been found that the ability of spatial reasoning is strongly related to later mathematical performance (Kissné Zsámboki & Farnady Landerl, 2018).

Experience is the result of perception, memory, imagination, without affecting thinking. The process of gaining experience begins with perception. Even a one-year-old child can recognize repeatedly observed things. Recognition is the first form of remembering. In more complex situations it is harder to recognize, and in experiential situations it is easier to remember. Our memories are not always realistic reproductions of perception, but certain qualities are more pronounced in them, and a typical image may be produced by generalization, which reflects reality more deeply than direct perception. When memory/recollection breaks away from reality, we are talking about imaginary imagery, evocation of imagination. This is also the way to gain mathematical experience (Cole & Cole, 2006).

Jean Piaget realizes that the formation of the thinking structure begins with action. Thus, we can talk about thinking operations from an early age. The highest level of cognitive activity is thinking. It is necessary to solve problems that cannot be solved directly by perception, memory or imagination. The

problem is that there is a goal we want to achieve, but we do not know how to reach it. Through these cognitive functions, the toddler develops elements of learning that accompany him/her throughout his/her life. This is important for mathematical education because mathematical abilities are among the earliest manifestations and require all cognitive processes, perception - perception - attention - memory - imagination and thinking to develop. That is why mathematical education must pay attention to the development and development of these cognitive processes (Zsámboki, 2007).

Reviewing the development of thinking and conceptualization processes as a result of gaining experience can also be important because, in addition to developing a harmonious personality, gaining experience, educational work can greatly contribute to the development of problem-solving thinking and concepts in children. (For the foundation of both mathematical and non-mathematical concepts.) The description of the developmental stages of conceptualization is related to the name of György Pólya, a world-famous Hungarian mathematician. At the beginning of the developmental stages, gaining experience, gathering facts and information while manipulating objects is of paramount importance. At this stage, it is important that the essential features of a given concept are repeated and the non-essential ones change. Children should be able to participate in many sensory-movement experiences and manipulation with objects and toys appropriate to their age. During the second stage, the experiences, the memories, *"come together"*. Children now observe the typical features of the concept and are able to recognize shapes similar to the concept on the basis of their perceptions. In the third phase, during formalization, imagery becomes knowledge during thought operations (primarily abstraction and generalization). Knowledge is verbalised. Abandoned from all their other qualities, the shapes previously called similar now get the same generic name. This phase can be done later, at the end of kindergarten or early in school. In the final, assimilation phase of conceptualization, concepts are integrated into a coherent system that expands and possibly undergoes structural changes. The concept itself changes as the child becomes aware of his or her place in the given conceptual system and its relation to other systemic elements (Butterworth, 2005).

Investigations of early childhood numeracy and numerical abilities

As a result of scientific research, we now know that we have two primary mathematical abilities biologically. One is subitizing, that is, the ability to accurately identify and distinguish small quantities (1-3), and the other is the approximate less accurate comparative ability of larger quantities. Language and the environment are essential for the development of biologically secondary mathematical skills, such as mathematical reasoning and problem solving,

since without these factors children's development would not be able to progress (Márkus, 2007).

The development of the concept of the number in young children began in the 1980s by means of targeted research methods; one of which was the habituation method. Prentice Starkey and Robert G. Cooper (1980) studied infants aged 4-7 months. The babies sat on their mother's lap and watched a screen. The researchers looked at how long babies looked at projected images showing two black dots at different distances. After the children lost interest in the two-dot images, three dots suddenly appeared on the screen. This image was viewed by infants for significantly longer periods than the previous two dots. Thus, the three-point image was perceived as being different from the two-point image, which in turn was perceived as similar by infants.

Ranka Bijeljac-Babic, Josiane Bertoncini, and Jacques Mehler (1993) presented a series of three syllables without meaning to a few-day-old infants. After the babies became less interested in 3-syllable stimuli, the researchers gave two syllables to which the babies began to react more violently. The test results showed that the representation of the two and three numerical values is therefore independent of the mode of presentation of the stimulus and is distinguished by infants in the case of visual and auditory stimuli as well.

The validity of the results of the above experiments was questioned by other researchers in the late 1990. They claimed that it is almost impossible to design stimuli where only the number of elements is different in the two figures. Certain perceptual variables always change with cardinality. For example, when the number of elements changes, the total circumference of the elements, the area they fill, or the amount of light they reflect also changes. If researchers are interested in the number discrimination abilities of babies, they need to be sure that infants are responding to the cardinality rather than the perceptual variables that correlate with it (Clearfield-Mix, 1999). Most of the studies conducted after 1999 have attempted to control the effects of perceptual variables in many ways and have produced much more reliable results.

According to a study by David C. Geary, a renowned American cognitive development and evolutionary psychologist, in 1995, we have at least four biologically inherited numeric abilities: determining the morbidity of a small population (3-4 items), comparing sets without quantities, element counting ability and addition and subtraction up to 3 (Márkus, 2007). Counting as a serial ability is thus inherited. One sign of this is that children count before the age of two, even if they are not in the right order. Around the age of three, the acceleration of arithmetic abilities is observed, because children already understand that the names of each number correspond to a certain number. On the other hand, they are capable of distinguishing part whole. Several studies have shown that children already have the concept of addition and subtraction before the age of five (Desoete et al., 2009).

Mathematical competences in early childhood

Competence is defined by the ability to apply effectively in a variety of situations. It is based on knowledge, skills, experience, values and attitudes. But can we talk about the foundation and development of mathematical competence in early childhood? The basic purpose of mathematical education at all ages is to enrich and shape a child's personality and thinking. In accordance with the age-specific characteristics, playful activities, adherence to the principle of graduality, and the application of experience-based methods of cognition can bring mathematics, as a discipline, to the world of children who live in unity and wholeness. Mathematics can be discovered in the natural and social environment surrounding the child. With the help of appropriate methods, in the kindergarten they can begin to develop the ability to independently acquire knowledge, to develop problem-solving skills, creative thinking, to prepare, to base the number and operation concept, and to calculate skills. The complex view that mathematics is not only a stand-alone science but also a contributor to other sciences, part of our daily lives, part of humanity's cultural heritage, way of thinking, creative activity, the source of the joy of thinking and the representation of order and aesthetics in structures can be effectively grounded in samples. Thus, in the light of the above thoughts, we can safely answer yes to the question whether we can talk about the foundation and development of mathematical competences in kindergarten.

The three components of mathematical competence are mathematical knowledge, mathematical-specific skills, and abilities, and mathematical motivations and attitudes. Obviously, the importance of these three components is different in mathematical education. The acquisition and teaching of abstract mathematical knowledge and scientific concepts can no longer be the goal of early childhood education. Though it cannot be doubted that such activities are also present in children's activities, mostly indirectly. (e.g., knowledge of the circle, concept of the circle during the round games). The most important ability and skill components of mathematical competence are summarized in the following table:

Table 1: The most important skills and competence components of mathematical competence (Source: Fábián et al., 2004)

Skills	Thinking skills	Communication skills	Knowledge acquisition abilities	Learning abilities
Counting Calculation Quantitative inference Estimation Measurement Units of measurement Text task solution	Organizing Combinativity Deductive inference Inductive inference Probability inference Reasoning Proving	Relation vocabulary Comprehension Text interpretation Spatial vision, spatial relations Representation Presentation	Problem sensitivity (questions) Problem representation Originality, creativity Problem solving Metacognition	Attention Partial-whole perception Memory Task management Problem solving speed

One of the most important skills in mathematical competence is the ability to think, but it can be realized at the same time through a variety of abilities (e.g., systematization, combinativity, deductive and inductive inference, reasoning). Thus, the ability to think that was developed in kindergarten activities, should become applicable in many other areas of life.

Organizational ability means collecting and systematizing the information and data appearing in the task and the problem raised, and, the ability to integrate the newly acquired knowledge into the system of previous knowledge. The meaning of age-appropriate language development, comprehension, text interpretation, and relational vocabulary does not need to be interpreted, but it must be emphasized that its existence is indispensable for the recognition and understanding of mathematical texts. It is important whether the child has already acquired a knowledge at a skill level and, for example, can he / she solve a problem with on this knowledge in the head, and the amount of memory will play a role. A note of an action (formula) (during applications) indicates the child's associative memory. Intelligent memory can help you learn by understanding the relationships between things to remember. The most important component of early childhood education is the third component, that is, the formation of mathematical-related motives and attitudes, the maintenance of curiosity about mathematical content and experiences hidden in the outside world, the nurturing of interest and inner motivation by games are required (Skemp, 2005).

Conclusion

Mathematical education plays an important role in practicing thought activities, increasing the flexibility of thinking, developing constructive ability and creativity. According to Zoltán Dienes, an internationally renowned Hungarian mathematical professor (2014), children forget most of the mathematics they have learned, so we cannot simply aim at acquiring knowledge. The natural process of maturation and development should not be hastened but enriched. By the age of three, the combined sensory-motor ability of a healthy infant's perception and movement makes him / her able to handle his / her environment, discover himself / herself in his / her living space, discover and experience the narrower and wider human, natural and material environment and space. It is the responsibility of the family, educators, and educational institutions to provide activity-stimulating, play-inviting tools, and opportunities for children to systematize, expand, build on their mathematical approach, develop logic and problem-solving skills, and provide a supportive atmosphere for self-expression (Varga, 2015). Experiences and positive emotions associated with them will make the mathematical experience unforgettable and the children competent.

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