

Role Play in the Focus of the Cultural-Historical Scientific School: Developing the Ideas of L.S. Vygotsky

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The article is devoted to the analysis of the most well-known concepts of preschoolers' role-play, elaborated in the Russian scientific tradition. All these concepts underlie the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky and the followers of the Cultural-Historical scientific school, who argue that play as the leading activity of preschool age determines the development of the key new formations. The article studies the approach of S.L. Novoselova and E.V. Zvorygina; N.Ya. Mikhailenko and N.A. Korotkova; E.O. Smirnova; G.G. Kravtsov and E.E. Kravtsova; M. Bredikyte and P. Hakkarainen. The criteria, taken for the analysis of the scientific approaches in the article, include: theoretical basis, the criterion of the developed form of the play, position of the adult, object-developing environment, conditions/principles of play development. In all of the concepts the general tendency is traced to avoid a directive position of the adult in play with the child as well as not to impose play activity on the child neither by the adult, nor by the environment itself. This means that in Russian scientific tradition there is a shift towards supporting the child's independence and initiative in play.

Keywords: role-play, comparison of approaches, position of the adult, object-developing environment, play criterion, preschooler.

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Сюжетно-ролевая игра в фокусе культурно-исторической научной школы: развивая идеи Л.С. Выготского

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Статья посвящена анализу наиболее известных концепций сюжетно-ролевой игры детей дошкольного возраста, сложившихся в российской практике. Все они развивают представления Л.С. Выготского и сторонников культурно-исторического подхода о том, что игра, как ведущая деятельность в дошкольном возрасте, определяет развитие основных возрастных новообразований. Рассматриваются подходы С.Л. Новоселовой, Е.В. Зворыгиной; Н.Я. Михайленко, Н.А. Коротковой; Е.О. Смирновой; Г.Г. Кравцова, Е.Е. Кравцовой; М. Бредиките, П. Хаккарайнен. В качестве критериев анализа подходов выделяется: теоретическая основа подхода, критерий развитой формы игры, позиция взрослого, предметно-развивающая среда, условия/принципы развития игры. Во всех обозначенных концепциях прослеживается общая тенденция отказа от директивной позиции взрослого в игре с ребенком, а также не навязывания игровой деятельности ребенку ни взрослым, ни посредством предметной среды, т. е. очевиден сдвиг в сторону самостоятельности и инициативности ребенка в игре.

Ключевые слова: сюжетно-ролевая игра, сравнение подходов, позиция взрослого, предметно-развивающая среда, критерий игры, дошкольник.

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Russian pedagogical tradition usually assigned the key role to the adult, who organizes and guides children's activities. According to the materials of the website of the Federal Institute of the development of education the majority of complex programs for preschoolers are educational programs increment. In contrast to the foreign pedagogical tradition of which emphasizes the independence and initiative of the child. The specifics was also underlined by E.O. Smirnova [29]. At the same time when it comes to the value of preschoolers play both Russian and European specialists are unanimous. In Russian psychological and educational practice if you role-play concepts have been created. All of them underlie the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky and the followers of the cultural historical scientific approach according to which play as the leading activity of preschool age determines the development of the key new formations of this age period. The breadth of views of L.S. Vygotsky allowed his followers to develop his ideas in the context of the rule concepts of theories of a child play. In the return of the theories of L.S. Vygotsky followers are elaborated in contemporary concepts of role-play which emerged in Russian scientific tradition. Therefore, it is interesting to consider and compare the most well-known concepts including:

- the approach of S.L. Novoselova, E.V. Zvorygina;
- the approach of N.Y. Mikhailenko, N.A. Korotkova;
- the approach of E.O. Smirnova;
- the approach of G.G. Kravtsova, E.E. Kravtsova;
- the approach of M. Bredikyte, P. Hakkarainen.

For the analysis the following criteria were considered:

- theoretical basis;
- the criterion of the developed form of the play;
- adult's position;
- object developing environment;
- conditions/principles of play development.

The approach of S.L. Novoselova, E.V. Zvorygina

The criteria of play in the framework of the approach by S.L. Novoselova, E.V. Zvorygina is the motive in accordance with A.N. Leontiev activity theory. In contrast with the other types of activity the motive of play is connected not who is the result, but rather was a very process of play, in the content of the actions. The approach by S.L. Novoselova and E.V. Zvorygina is based on the principle of amplification of child's development that was stated by A.V. Zaporozhets and according to which the play develops to its transition in the form of the child's independence. The authors of the approach elaborated and described a complex method of pedagogical support of independent play [1; 4; 7]. This method includes the following conditions:

1. The enrichment of children's real experience in their activity;
2. The enrichment of children's play experience in joint games with the adult and with the better playing children;
3. Organization and transformation of the object play environment;
4. Activating interaction of the adult which the children.

For the development of the child's play all these conditions have to be respected at every age period. However, the importance of each of them changes. In early childhood, when the play is at the stage of formation, the enrichment of children's play experience (educative games with the introduction of more complex play materials) as well as interaction which boosts the communication with the adult become extremely important. These have to be used for the systematization of the knowledge the children gain about the surrounding environment and the practical possibilities of using or applying them in play [2; 5; 19; 22]. That is the main goal of addictive games is considered is the possibility of all introducing a real-life experience of children into the play plan. It is also highlighted that even educative games should represent a joint play activity of the child and adult. The transfer of the play experience from the adults to the children has to be made and impulsively should not be imposed on the child in a direct way. The authors highlight that direct teaching of play actions are leads to the formation of stereotypes of play behavior while non-direct guiding methods contribute to the development of creativity and child's initiative. A means of non-direct guiding is the method of the play problem situation [2; 7; 22]. While using this method the adult does not give a pattern authority solution, but rather stimulates the child to look to search for a solution on the road which contributes to the development of initiative.

In older preschool age non-direct methods of pedagogical support of play acquire particular significance. The enrichment of children's ideas or concept about the surrounding environment and organization and transformation of the object developing environment. Knowledge which are children gain from different sources and determine the content of play tasks and the play plot.

Timely change and complication of the object environment significance influence the development of play. Object development environment has to include such elements as various role markers, elements of clothes and particular objects, objects substitute, craft supplies [5; 6; 7; 20; 21]. The constellation of these elements of the object developing environment allows the child to act both in the imaginary plan as well as using an object / a picture / an artifact which contributes to broadening the framework of play.

The approach by N.Y. Mikhailenko and N.A. Korotkova

The approach of N.A. Korotkova and N.Ya. Mikhailenko is based on the classical understanding of the play by D.B. Elkonin, where role is regarded as the criterion of play. In a later works of N.A. Korotkova we can trace the dynamics of the development of her ideas about role-play. The key factor in play N.A. Korotkova regards an event which catches the child's attention [10; 11]. When the role moves to the backstage and becomes one of the ways of expressing the event. The term role-play, or in Russian at his role plot a game, is litters substituted simply by plot play which represents a particular kind of the child is story narrative about an event with the help of substitutional actions [10; 11]. The events can be introduced in three forms:

- Functional projection (an event is expressed in an activity);
- Role projections (event is expressed via a wrong or a character);
- Spatial projection (when the event is conducted with the help of space).

The adult position in the framework of supporting the play is limited or has to be limited or exclusively by creating conditions for boosting children's play. N.A. Korotkova and N.Ya. Mikhailenko regard play skills are is the lead is the child leading way of constructing play and potential possibility of using various means of action [18]. Therefore, the goal of educational influence in relation to the play becomes the formation of play skills which contribute for independent creative play, where children introduce different content according to their desires and freely interact with their arrangements. Therefore, the authors systemized the means of constructing the play on different age stages (without strict connection to particular age period):

- 2–3 years – the formation of conditional play action;
- 3–5 years – the formation of role behavior;
- 5–7 years – the formation of means of creative narratives

As far as the significance of the object developing environment is concerned in the framework of this approach its importance for the development of children's play is not less important than the adult's role. In early preschool and early school-age object developing environment is the basis for organizing children's independent play. Wealthy children of older preschool age are more oriented on their inner ideas. Therefore, it is important to highlights of the environment histamine the principles of poly functionality and variability [8; 9]. For organizing merit of a narrative game in the framework of this approach three principles are elaborated:

- In order does the children acquire play skills the adult has to play with the children. The position of the adult is indicated as "playing partner". It is highlighted that the child in play should not feel the pressure on behalf of the adult, but to whom here/she has to obey, but rather feel free and equal part of participant of the play [11; 18].

- At each stage the play should be constructed in the way sort of the children discover and acquire new more complex means of it's a construction. An important place here is the development of the child's play skills without which the "play continues to be constructed according to the acquired learn schemes and in the best of luggage of the child while rich knowledge and ideas remain passive in the child" [11, p. 106].

- While developing play skills it is important to draw the child's attention to completing the play action and to explaining the partners (adult or age-mate) the sense of the play actions. This principle or contribute to the development of role dialogue to the construction of various role connections in play [18].

For realization of these principles of the formation of play skills they don't have to help children with constructing the plot of the play from one topic to multiple topic play with a big variety of different characters.

Following these principles of organizing a role-play step-by-step allows us to develop children's Free Play in accordance with their desires and interests. At every age period pedagogical influence includes two aspects the formation of play skills and children in the process of joints play, where is the adult keeps the position of playing partner, and creating of conditions for stimulating children's Free Play. The better all of the means of constructing role-play are presented in the child's activity, broader is the repertoire of they play skills and the more various topic content the child can include into the play, which means they have more freedom and self-realisation.

The approach by E.O. Smirnova

According to D.B. Elkonin's idea the period of the formation or development of initiative is preschool E.O. Smirnova regards play is the key form of showing initiative and self-realization of preschoolers. Following L.S. Vygotsky, E.O. Smirnova considers the difference between the imaginary and the real situation is the main criterion of role-play [31].

E.O. Smirnova argues that the object developing environment should not impose particular topics or plots on children, but has to be on the contrary transformative full of open and polyfunctional materials that could stimulate initiative and independency play. Moreover, she stresses the need to divide the space in zones as well stresses the importance of free space for the organization of children's joint play. She also argues that it is important that freed the children have enough free time to construct the plot. Among the elements of the object developing environments E.O. Smirnova base particular attention to toys and objects substitutes that are defined as "objects which allow the child to get beyond the real situation" [31, p. 65]. Toys and objects substitute role markers which help children to stick to the play situation and the accepted role shut stimulates the child for free play and for fulfilment of his or her idea. Therefore, an important characteristic of toys is the possibility of using them in different ways and combinations. In

Smirnova's approach a number of conditions for a successful play are indicated:

1. The open of educative program;
2. Inadequate object developing environment;
3. Play competence of the adult which requires or means and nondirective guidance of the play.

E.O. Smirnova highlights many times did support of children's initiative does not imply that the adult is included it from children or their activity. On the contrary the adult should stimulate independence activity and initiative of children not guide, not require, not give instructions, but rather stimulate children for independent activity [25; 26; 27].

The approach by G.G. Kravtsova and E.E. Kravtsova

The approach to the interpretation of play elaborated by G.G. Kravtsov and E.E. Kravtsova is based on the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky according to whom play regarded as the zone of proximal development of the child. The main criterion of the play in the framework of this concept is the imaginary situation. The main characteristic of children's play is its double subjectivity, when the child is in the play and out of the play [12; 14]. For the formation of the role-play the child has to move through five stages:

1. The acquaintance of the child with the objects and events that will be reflected in the game;
2. Joint plot reflecting play;
3. Joined play-dramatization;
4. None mediated games with the child are (each time constructed in a new way);
5. Play with an imaginary partner or toy.

For organizing step-by-step movement to these stages by the child the authors of the approach indicate three conditions:

- equating a child with different spheres of activity;
- a specific process of our teaching how to play as a form of transfer of the play experience;
- toys, adequate for the child's imagination.

In order for the child's activity to be launched from the child's idea and intention, rather than from a concrete toy, E.E. Kravtsova suggests to use in the framework of the object developing environment free materials and stationery [12]. The use of such materials and toys can become the basis for an imaginary play of the child. It is was emergence of imagination of the authors of the concept link the play an independent activity of the player [13].

The position of the adult in the framework of the concept dependently tasks which need to be solved. Apart from the classic roles of the adults which are indicated in the framework of this approach as roles "above" and "near", the authors also in the gate the adult partner position, when the child and adult play as if they were equal. Development of this position is linked with the development of collective forms of play as well as a collective productive activity. Position of demonstrative detachment is regarded as a potential resource for

launching and stimulating the child's communication in all the positions accessible to the child. And it is very important for the development for the role-play that the child demonstrates the roan involvement that the child becomes the source of the play and does the main task of the adult in the play is to hamper the child to play, that is, to create problems situations allowing the play to move beyond the habitual patterns and stereotypes [16].

The approach by M. Bredikyte and P. Hakkarainen

In the framework of the narrative pedagogy M. Bredikyte and P. Hakkarainen elaborated an approach to understanding narrative play activity. The theoretical basis of this approach underlie the ideas of J. Bruner, M. Cole, J. Dewey, M. Donaldson, M. Donald, K. Egan, G. Lindqvist, T. Ribot, G.G. Shpet, L.S. Vygotsky, D.B. Elkonin, B.D. Elkonin, V.V. Davydov, V.P. Zinchenko, V.T. Kudryavtsev, G.A. Zuckerman, L.I. Ekoninova, E.O. Smirnova.

The basis of the developing education in the framework of the narrative approach is the creation of Playworld, based on the motives of a famous fairytales. Fairytales become the starting point the plot, that children can use for a free and spontaneous improvisation and recreation of events and situations which are important for the participants of the play [38]. In the framework of the narrative approach the criterion of the developed form of play is the plot, which is constructed jointly. As well as the ability to act according to a certain role. It is also important, that the play is based on the ideas of children and is rather the ideas of the adults. Children interpret events or stories of fairytales according to the own experience, "pereghivanie", imagination and fantasy. In the framework of the narrative approach the following stages of play organization are indicated:

1. Probing the play topic (observing children are finding the topics, that interest children through children's favorite plots);
2. Trying to create a new story (trying on play actions and events);
3. Joint step-by-step elaboration of the Playworld (preparation of the Playworld — creating and observance of rituals, spontaneous FreePlay without a plan, a play event without an end);
4. Reflection about joint experience of other children or a team (discussing through painting playing with children planning a new adventure);
5. Reflection of children in the form of a free play (when adults observe children's play and think about the following narrative adventure).

Thus, the play which is created or constructed jointly creates the zone of proximal development for all the participants of play, including adults, who are involved in the creative process and for each of the participants are unique narrative is created [38].

The role of the adult in the framework of organizing narrative play consists in participating as an observer, a play partner or a character in play. Observing children's

play the adult indicates play skills and needs of each child and helps him or her to choose a suitable role. The adult is the play partner consist and supporting assisting in the process of play: the adult is to motivate to stimulate the development of the plot, the same time not to impose their own ideas; the adult has also to explain the sense of what is going on in the play; to assist the child to controls their emotions and play, but is to provide emotional safety [37; 39; 40]. Thus, the key task of the adult in the framework of the narrative approach consists in motivating children for active participation in narrative a kind of activity, as well as showing initiative and creativity [38].

An important criterion of playing environment is it's variety. The authors of the approach suggest organize the play not simply in a particular closed space, flat, rooms, but also outdoors, including all of the elements of the surrounding world into the play environment. Indoors children also should have access to furniture, boxes, sticks, blocks, that is to everything, that they can use for constructing the play environment and "safe" places,

such as houses, caves, underground and someone. It is very important to pay attention to the construction of the process of entering the game. It can be some kind of portal, or magical door, or whatever. This entrance will allow to divide to the Playworld from the real world, where the child can be back to any time, when he or she starts off feeling uncomfortable [40]. Apart from that are among the elements of the object environment there should be a big variety of different materials that children can use according to their ideas and desires [37; 40]. The use of the various role markers contributes to the child excepting the chosen role position. Therefore, children should have access to various bathrobes, capes, raincoats, hats, etc. Used materials the authors of the approach regard of the most suitable for play, since the child would not have the fear to break or spoil anything in the process of play, and does the freedom of the child's actions would not be limited in the process of play.

The presented analysis of the existing concepts of role-play in the framework of the Russian practice is briefly given in Table 1.

Table 1

The comparison of role-play concepts in the framework of the Russian tradition

	The approach by Novoselova S.L., Zvorygina E.V.	The approach by Mikhaïlenko N.Ya., Korotkova N.A.	The approach by Smirnova E.O.	The approach by Kravtsov G.G., Kravtsova E.E.	The approach by Bredikyte M., Hakkarainen P.
Theoretical basis	Leontiev A.N., Zaporozhets A.V.	Elkonin D.B.	Elkonin D.B., Vygotsky L.S.	Vygotsky L.S.	Bruner J., Cole M., Dewey J., Donaldson M., Donald M., Egan K., Lindqvist G., Ribot T., Shpet G.G., Vygotsky L.S., and etc.
The criterion of the developed form of play	Motive	Role / Event (later N.A. Korotkova)	Imaginary situation	Imaginary situation	The plot, which is constructed jointly, the ability to act from a role
The position of the adult	Non-directive, non-direct guidance	Play partner	Non-directive	Dependently tasks which need to be solved	Play partner, observer, character in play
Object developing environment	Multifunctional, variety	Multifunctional, variety	Transformative, variety, open, time to play	Multifunctional, variety	Multifunctional, variety, time to play
Conditions or principles of play development	1. The enrichment of a children's real experience in their activity; 2. The enrichment of children's play experience in joint games with the adult and with the better playing children; 3. Organization and transformation of the object play environment; 4. Activating interaction of the adult which the children.	1. The position of the adult is indicated as "playing partner". 2. At each stage the play should be constructed in the way sort of the children discover and acquire new more complex means of it's a construction. 3. To oriental the child at completing the play action and at explaining the partners the sense of the play actions to the adult or to the age mate.	1. The open of educative program; 2. Inadequate object developing environment; 3. Play competence of the adult which requires or means and nondirective guidance of the play.	1. Equating a child with different spheres of activity; 2. A specific process of our teaching how to play as a form of transfer of the play experience; 3. Toys, adequate for the child's imagination.	1. Probing the play topic; 2. Trying to create a new story; 3. Joint step-by-step elaboration of the Playworld; 4. Reflection about joint experience of other children or a team; 5. Reflection of children in the form of a free play.

Conclusion

All of the approaches presented in the article are elaborated in the context of the cultural historical scientific school and activity approach. Thus, theory of play elaborated by D.B. Elkonin was further elaborated in the approaches of N.Y. Mikhailenko, N.A. Korotkova, G.G. Kravtsov, E.E. Kravtsova based their concept first of all on L.S. Vygotsky theory of play. The approach by S.L. Novoselova's and E.V. Zvorygina was elaborated in the context of A.N. Leontiev's activity approach. The approach by E.O. Smirnova underline the ideas of D.B. Elkonin and L.S. Vygotsky. Approach by M. Bredikyte and P. Hakkarainen is based on a wads number of the ideas of Russian and foreign followers of the cultural historical tradition. Each of the approaches emphasises one particular criterion of play activity. S.L. Novoselova, E.V. Zvorygina, following A.N. Leontiev, suggest to regard motive as a main criterion of play activity. N.Y. Mikhailenko and N.A. Korotkova in early works indicate role as the criteria of play activity, and later N.A. Korotkova also suggested to regard an event involving the child as the play criteria. E.O. Smirnova and G.G. Kravtsov, E.E. Kravtsova consider, that the criterion of play is the imaginary situation. M. Bredikyte and P. Hakkarainen argues, that play criterion is the plot, which is constructed jointly, as well as the ability to act according to a particular role.

Interestingly enough all of the indicated criteria were criticized in other scientific community. Thus, a number of authors state, that the motive which is regarded as a criterion, does not allow to distinguish between play and other non-productive creative types of activity. A plot which is constructed jointly in approach by M. Bredikyte and P. Hakkarainen does not make play play activity, but it's simply creates a context for its development. The role indicated by D.B. Elkonin according to a number of researchers are comparing to use to a formal playing of plot, when there is no play motive. An event, which interests the child, that was indicated in N.A. Korotkova's later works, can be actually realized in any type of creative activity which

is accessible to the child, while the imaginary situation is often replaced by a given scenario or topic. Therefore, the challenge of indicating the criteria of play activity still remains.

Among the indicated conditions and principles of the development of play, all of the authors of the discussed approaches, discuss the necessity of the presence of the adult is the bearer of the play culture, who is interacting with a child in joint play. Therefore, in all of the approaches directive guidance of the adult in relation to the child is denied. Thus, in the approach by S.L. Novoselova, E.V. Zvorygina, E.O. Smirnova, M. Bredikyte, and P. Hakkarainen, nondirect adult participation in play is emphasized, which is characterised by nondirective means of guidance and support of children's independent play. In the approach by N.Y. Mikhailenko, N.A. Korotkova, G.G. Kravtsov, and E.E. Kravtsova the accent is put on teaching children play activity and transferring the play experience.

The importance of multifunctional and of various developing object environment is anonymously indicated by all of the authors of the approaches, presented in the article. It is also important to highlight, that E.O. Smirnova, M. Bredikyte and P. Hakkarainen additionally points to the necessity of organizing time and space for constricted play activity. Thus, in all of the concepts presented in the article, there is a tendency of nondirective of avoiding directive imposing of play activity, neither by adult guidance, nor through the object environment.

There is we can state that in psychological and educational science, there is a movement in direction of supporting independent activity and initiative of the child and play. Unfortunately, despite the fact, that this issue is elaborated rather well and that they are practical recommendations about the organization of play activity, not all complex programs of a preschool education, set a goal of developing children's play activity. Thus, the majority of them are reduced to formal organization to the process of play, which does not fully meet the age tasks and needs of preschoolers.

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