

**YOUNG RESEARCHERS  
IN CULTURAL-HISTORICAL PSYCHOLOGY**  
МОЛОДЫЕ ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛИ  
В КУЛЬТУРНО-ИСТОРИЧЕСКОЙ ПАРАДИГМЕ

## International Symposium: “Scientific School of L.S. Vygotsky: Traditions and Innovations” and International ISCAR Summer University for PhD Students

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The article represents a brief report on the work of the International Symposium: «Scientific School of L.S. Vygotsky: Traditions and Innovations» and VI th International ISCAR Summer University for PhD Students and young scholars, that were held in Moscow State University of Psychology & Education on June, 28 – July, 3 in 2016 in commemoration of the 120th anniversary of the great Russian psychologist L.S. Vygotsky. The main goals of the events organised by MSUPE include: analysis of the basic principles and the system of concepts of L.S. Vygotsky’s scientific school, discussion of the current state and the prospect for the development of the cultural-historical theory in Russia and abroad, integration of the ideas of the cultural-historical psychology and activity approach in various kinds of social and educational practices, as well as conducting research in the international scientific space. Symposium gathered the world’s leading experts and young scholars in the field of cultural-historical theory and activity approach from 19 countries, including United Kingdom, Australia, Switzerland, Greece, Brasil and USA.

**Key words:** cultural-historical psychology, activity approach, fundamental principles and the system of concepts of the cultural-historical scientific school, International Symposium, ISCAR Summer University, Russian brunch of ISCAR.

Scientific school of cultural-historical psychology, associated with the names of L.S. Vygotsky, A.N. Leontyev, A.R. Luria, A.V. Zaporozhets, D.B. Elkonin and V.V. Davydov currently attracts attention of many representatives of the international scientific community. Preservation and development of this tradition all over the world defines

several important directions of work, including elaboration of a unified system of concepts, support of joint projects and research in the field of professional training of specialists for the system of education and social sphere.

Despite more and more Russian and foreign scholars applying the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky in their research,

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interpretation and understanding of the theoretical and methodological basis of this scientific approach often remains incomplete. Thus, turning to the original texts of L.S. Vygotsky and his followers represents one of the priorities in international psychological studies. This trend determines the common interests of Russian and foreign researchers and creates the necessary basis for joint discussions and scientific projects.

On June 27-28 the International Symposium: "Scientific School of L.S. Vygotsky: Traditions and Innovations" was held in Moscow State University of Psychology & Education in commemoration of the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the great Russian psychologist L.S. Vygotsky. The main goal of the Symposium was to stimulate the discussion of the actual problems of cultural-historical psychology and activity theory in international scientific and educational community, as well as to spread the results of fundamental and applied research projects conducted in different parts of the world in order to facilitate the development of system of education and social practice on the basis of interdisciplinary approach to human learning, upbringing and development. The Symposium was organised under the auspices of UNESCO and supported by the International Society for Cultural-historical Activity Research (ISCAR).

The Symposium gathered members of the ISCAR Executive Committee, staff of Moscow State University of Psychology & Education and Psychological Institute of the Russian Academy of Education, scholars from various Russian institutions of higher education, Russian psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, practitioners and specialists, whose interests lie in the field of theoretical and practical problems of cultural-historical psychology and activity approach, as well as the world's leading experts and young scholars from 19 countries, including United Kingdom, Australia, Switzerland, Greece, Brasil and USA.

The opening ceremony of the Symposium was conducted by Rector of MSUPE, professor **Vitaly Rubtsov** and President of the Executive Committee of ISCAR, professor **Malcolm Reed**.

Among the world's leading experts in cultural-historical theory and activity approach, who took part in the Symposium, are: **Harry Daniels**, professor of Education in Oxford University, Head of Oxford Centre for Sociocultural and Activity Theory Research (OSAT) (United Kingdom), **Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont**, Honorary professor in the University of Neuchâtel, (Switzerland), **Manolis Dafermos**, professor in the University of Crete, Member of the Executive Committee of ISCAR (Greece), **Nikolay Veresov**, professor of Education in Monash University, Member of the Executive Committee of ISCAR (Australia).

The first day of the Symposium was devoted to the discussion of contemporary trends and tendencies in research, conducted in the framework of the cultural-historical scientific school. The panel session was opened by the keynote speech "Cultural-historical theory: the issues that Vygotsky brought up" given by **Vitaly Rubtsov**, professor, Rector of MSUPE, Head of the International UNESCO Chair "Cultural-historical Psychology of Childhood".

In the report V. Rubtsov highlighted the fundamentals and the key concepts of the cultural-historical scientific school, particularly the notions of the social situation of development and the zone of proximal development; he touched upon the issue of social interactions and learning, as well as of various aspects of the organisation of joint activity. Rubtsov stressed the importance of understanding fundamental principles and basic concepts of cultural-historical psychology and activity approach for organising and conducting research in the framework of the tradition of this scientific school. At the end of the keynote Rubtsov highlighted current challenges of L.S. Vygotsky's scientific school, connected not only with the development of the theory itself, but also with its application in research in various fields of social practice — particularly in education.

The panel session continued with the keynote "Research into interdisciplinary social practices: L.S. Vygotsky's influence" given by **Harry Daniels**, professor of Education in Oxford University, Head of Oxford Centre for Sociocultural and Activity Theory Research (OSAT) (United Kingdom). The report highlighted the theoretical and methodological basis of the analysis of interaction between various social institutions in cross-disciplinary social practices.

The report was followed by the presentation: "The influence of the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky and J. Piaget on modern research of development problem" given by professor **Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont** and professor **Jean-François Perret** (University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland). The report highlighted, that in the year when the world is commemorating 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the great psychologists L.S. Vygotsky and J. Piaget, one could say that they still remain the key figures for the researchers in the sphere of psychology and education. In the report, data on the citation of the fundamental works of L.S. Vygotsky and J. Piaget in international scientific literature in different languages was presented, and the main trends of the development of their ideas in contemporary research were discussed.

The work of the plenary session was closed with the report "The problems of modern cultural and activity research: from personal experience as President of the International Society of Cultural-historical Activity Research", made by professor **Malcolm Reed**, President of the Executive Committee of ISCAR. The report was devoted to the issue of child development in the context of the tradition of L.S. Vygotsky and his followers: "Many of the problems that modern cultural and activity research currently addresses are commensurate with the problematization that Vygotsky deliberates in his final years, 'the principle of the semantic structure of consciousness' (Zavershneva, 2010, 34; Zinchenko, 2011) and the reinvigoration of inner experience (perezvivanie). The value of inner experience and subjectivity to cultural-historical approaches has become a powerful focus for theoretical and empirical attention. <...> I believe that Bozhovich's (2009) conception of the internal positioning of the child is very relevant. Considerable interest concerning the philosophy of mind is being paid to the formation of reason in development (Bakhurst, 2007,

2011; Derry, 2013). Following the pedagogic tradition (Davydov, 1999) and its attention to the problem as the seed of scientific conceptualisation, there is increased interest in double stimulation (Sannino, 2015). El'konin (1993) and Hedegaard (2012) have renewed our attention on the importance of the crisis in development" [1].

The work of the first day of the Symposium continued with the round table: "New research in cultural-historical psychology and activity theory: challenges and prospects", moderated by professor **Arkady Margolis**, Vice-rector of MSUPE (Russia); professor **Malcolm Reed**, President of the Executive Committee of ISCAR (University of Bristol, UK); professor **Viktor Zaretsky**, Member of the Executive Committee of ISCAR (Russia).

In the framework of the round table the following presentations were given: "The role of L.S. Vygotsky's ideas for the development of social cognition paradigm in modern psychology: a review of foreign research and discussion of the prospects" (professor **Kholmogorova A.B.**, Russia), "One step in learning – 100 steps in development: metaphor or fundamental principle?" (professor **Zaretsky V.K.**, Russia), "Cultural-historical psychology and activity approach in training specialists in special education. Brazilian teacher education for inclusive work" (professor **Fidalgo S.S.**, professor **Santos F.A.**, Brasil).

At the end of the round table a presentation was given, highlighting the results of a 10-year publishing experience of the international journal "Cultural-historical psychology" – a unique platform for discussing research conducted in the framework of the tradition of L.S. Vygotsky, A.N. Leont'ev, A.R. Luriya. **Anna Shvedovskaya**, Head of the Informational-Analytical Department of MSUPE, gave a presentation "Prospective study of L.S.Vygotsky's scientific school on pages of the journal "Cultural-Historical Psychology": results of a decade's work",

highlighting the history of the creation of the journal and its concept as well as presenting the dynamics of the steady improvement of the the position of the journal in Russian and international publishing ratings.

15 authors from 6 countries (Australia, Brasil, United Kingdom, Greece, Netherlands, Russia) participated in the poster session. Posters, presented in the framework of the session, highlighted different aspects of the application of the ideas of the cultural-historical scientific school in various social practices and aroused great interest of the Symposium's participants, turning the poster session into a meaningful space for discussion.

The second day of the Symposium "Scientific School of L.S.Vygotsky: Traditions and Innovations" was devoted to the discussion of the philosophical and methodological fundamentals as well as basic concepts of the cultural-historical scientific school. The panel session opened with the keynote speech "The system of concepts of cultural-historical psychology and activity theory" given by **Manolis Dafermos**, professor in the University of Crete, Member of the Executive Committee of ISCAR (Greece). The report focused on the philosophical background of L.S. Vygotsky's theory, rooted in the works of Spinoza, Hegel, Feuerbach and Marx.

The discussion of the philosophical and methodological fundamentals of the cultural-historical psychology and activity theory was continued with the presentation given by professor **Boris El'konin**, Head of the Laboratory of Theoretical and Experimental Problems of Developmental Psychology of the Psychological Institute of the Russian Academy of Education (Russia). His report "Mediation and development" was devoted to the analysis of the connection between mediation and development through the prism of the concept of "Action". In the conclusion of the presentation B. El'konin said: "The subject of study of the modern cultural-historical concept is a Mediated Action. Mediation must be understood and built as birth and recreation of the Action. That is how the connection of mediation and development is performed. Human development represents birth and transformation of the Mediated Action" [1].

Discussing the basic concepts of the cultural-historical scientific school is not possible without considering the historical and methodological roots of the concept of "pereghivanie". The history of the elaboration of the concept of "pereghivanie" in psychology, as well as its application in the broad context of social and cultural practices became the focus of the report "On the History of the Concept of "pereghivanie" made by professor **Fyodor Vasiluk**, Chief Researcher of the Laboratory of Consultative Psychology and Psychotherapy of the Psychological Institute of the Russian Academy of Education, professor of the Department of Consultative and Clinical Psychology of MSUPE (Russia).

The second day's panel session and the discussion of the role of the concept of "pereghivanie" in the development of the cultural-historical theory was closed by the presentation "Pereghivanie" in the system of concepts of the cultural-historical theory" given by professor **Nikolay Veresov**, Member of the Executive Committee of ISCAR (Monash University, Australia). The report focused on the theoretical content of the concept of "pereghivanie" and highlighted the ways of applying this concept as a theoretical tool for analysing the process of the socio-cultural genesis of higher mental functions.

At the end of the second day of the International Symposium a round table "New approaches in research on learning and development in the context of the cultural-historical theory and activity approach" was held. The discussion was moderated by professor **Nikolay Veresov**, Member of the Executive Committee of ISCAR (Monash University, Australia); professor **Manolis Dafermos**, Member of the Executive Committee of ISCAR (University of Crete, Greece); **Olga Rubtsova**, assistant professor of the Chair of Age Psychology, Head of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Modern Childhood (MSUPE, Russia). In the framework of the round table the following presentations were given: "Ideas of L.S. Vygotsky, I.P. Pavlov and H. Werner for contemporary psychology" (professor **N.I. Chuprikova**, Russia); "The development of the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky in the theory of P.Ya. Gal'perin" (professor **Obuchova L.F.**, Russia); "The feeling of self-activity in the role play of preschoolers" (professor **El'koninova L.I.**, Russia); "Playgrounds for children in the context of the cul-

tural-historical psychology” (professor **Smirnova E.O.**, Russia); “Experimenting with roles in adolescent play” (Head of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research on Modern Childhood **Rubtsova O.V.**, Russia).

The Symposium attracted attention of a broad audience including psychologists, educators, young scholars, students and specialists in various fields of science from Russia and other countries. Abstracts of the reports given by the participants of the Symposium were published in a collection of abstracts in Russian and in English.

An important aspect of the concept of the International Symposium “Scientific School of L.S. Vygotsky: Traditions and Innovations” consisted in supporting and inspiring young researchers. The work of the Symposium was continued by the VI<sup>th</sup> International ISCAR Summer University, which created a platform for presentations and discussions of research projects of young scholars from 17 countries of the world.

The main goal of the International ISCAR Summer University for PhD students and young scholars, which has been organised on the basis of the International UNESCO Chair of MSUPE for 6 years already, consisted in sharing the experience of fundamental and applied research projects conducted in the framework of the cultural-historical tradition, which contribute to the development of the system of psychological support in the sphere of education, social practices and special education, as well as bringing together young scholars from different countries of the world, who are developing the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky, A.N. Leont’ev, A.R. Luriya, M.M. Bachtin and other representatives of the cultural-historical scientific school.

The world’s leading experts in cultural-historical psychology traditionally participate in the work of the Summer University. In the past six years professors from Australia, Brasil, United Kingdom, Germany, Greece, Italy, Russia, Finland and Japan have taken part in the University.

The Summer University is supported by the International Society for Cultural-historical Activity Research (ISCAR) — a powerful international scientific community that contributes to the development of cross-disciplinary theoretical and practical research in the field of social, cultural and historical aspects of human activity. The major part of research projects, conducted by the ISCAR members, are devoted to the study of various aspects of development, learning and interaction between people in different social and cultural contexts, as well as to the analysis of the specific conditions of the genesis and development of higher mental functions.

The opening ceremony of the VI<sup>th</sup> International ISCAR Summer University took place on June, 28 in Moscow State University of Psychology & Education. Welcoming the participants, rector of MSUPE, professor **Vitaly Rubtsov** underlined the particular significance of the event in the year of commemorating the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founder of the cultural-historical scientific school — L.S. Vygotsky. President of the Executive Committee of ISCAR, professor **Malcolm Reed** (United Kingdom) delivered welcoming remarks, highlighting the long-standing tradition of cooperation between MSUPE and ISCAR.

The opening ceremony was followed by the first lectures given by professor **Manolis Dafermos** (University of Crete, Greece): “Developing the dialectical perspective of the cultural-historical theory” and **Vitaly Rubtsov** (MSUPE, Russia): “On the issue of training researchers of social practise in the framework of the scientific school of L.S. Vygotsky, A.N. Leont’ev, A.R. Luriya (the experience of running a Master’s program: “Cultural-historical theory and activity approach in education”)”.

The work of the Summer University continued up to July, 3, bringing together an intensive learning programme, presentations of the research projects by the PhD students, as well as informal communication and exchanging ideas between young scholars and well-known scholars — experts in the field of cultural-historical theory.

The work of the Summer University was based on four main directions, each them embracing lectures, presentations and discussions:

- the history of the formation of the system of concepts and fundamental principles of cultural-historical psychology and activity theory;
- the problem of learning and development in the context of the ideas of the cultural-historical psychology;
- training specialists for the system of education and social sphere in the tradition of cultural-historical psychology and activity theory;
- challenges of special education in the context of cultural-historical psychology and activity theory.

The programme of the Summer University-2016 included the following lectures:

“Three generations of the cultural-historical theory”, “The system of concepts of the cultural-historical theory” (professor **N.N. Veresov**, Monash University, Australia);

“Pereghivanie” and “co-pereghivanie” in the context of “understanding psychotherapy” (professor **F.E. Vasilyuk**, MSUPE, Russia);

“Assistance in overcoming learning difficulties, contributing to development” (professor **V.K. Zaretsky**, MSUPE, Russia).

The programme also included round tables and seminars:

“The concept of drama in modern research of social practises” (professor **H. Daniels**, professor **I. Thompson**, **A. Tawell**, Oxford University, UK) and **O.V. Rubtsova**, MSUPE, Russia);

“Activity theory in modern research and practises” (professor **M. Dafermos**, University of Crete, Greece and **O.V. Rubtsova**, MSUPE, Russia);

“Research on the development of thinking in cultural-historical theory and activity approach” (professor **L.F. Obukhova**, professor **L.I. El’koninova**, MSUPE, Russia and professor **L. Cloetzer**, University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland);

“Cultural-historical theory and activity approach in teacher training” (professor A.A. Margolis, professor **V.A. Gurughapov**, MSUPE, Russia and professor F.A. Santos, University of Sao-Paolo, Brasil);

“Practises of inclusive education in the context of cultural-historical theory and activity approach”

(professor A.I. Suvorov and professor T.I. Bassilova, MSUPE, Russia).

Abstracts of the presentations of the young scholars who took part in the work of the International ISCAR Summer University were published in a collection of abstracts in English.

Organisation of the International Symposium “Scientific School of L.S. Vygotsky: Traditions and Innovations” and VI<sup>th</sup> International ISCAR Summer University, together with the Master’s Programme “Cultural-historical psychology and activity approach in education”, launched at the UNESCO Chair “Cultural-historical psychology of childhood” in MSUPE largely contribute to increasing the level of competence and formation of research skills of young specialists for the field of education and social sphere in Russia and abroad, as well as to bringing together scholars from

different countries of the world, who conduct research in the framework of the cultural-historical scientific school.

Detailed International Symposium “Scientific school of L.S. Vygotsky: traditions and innovations” materials are available on the website: <http://conf.childpsy.ru/vygotsky-symposium/>, materials and all information related to the International ISCAR Summer University can be found on the website: <http://iscarschool.ru/>. Current information on the activities of the UNESCO Chair “Cultural-historical psychology of childhood” in MSUPE can be found on the Chair web-page on following address: <http://vygotsky.mgppu.ru/>.

Call for applications for the VII<sup>th</sup> International ISCAR Summer University to be held in July 2017, will be announced for PhD-students and young scholars in October 2016.

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