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Zone of Proximal Development: Evolution of the Concept

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The main idea of the article is to trace the development and use of the concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD) in the works of Russian psychologists since its introduction into the conceptual apparatus of cultural-historical psychology by L.S. Vygotsky. The article consists of three parts. The first is devoted to the definition of the concept of ZPD, in which the contradictions between the ideas of the author of the concept and the interpretations of it by other authors are analyzed. The "classical definition" of ZPD is supplemented by the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky, expressed by him in other works. The other two parts of the article are devoted to changes in the methodological functions of the concept at different stages of its development: from an explanatory principle to the subject of research, and from the subject of research to a methodological means for the construction of new research subjects and new practice-oriented technologies. The general trend is to expand the areas of application of the ZPD concept, to go beyond the initial tasks of explaining and theoretically justifying the special connection between learning and development, and beyond the problems of interaction between a child and an adult. Particular attention is paid to the helping activity of an adult (teacher, psychologist, parent, etc.): the main question is how to help in order to contribute to the development. It is shown that the concept of ZPD is now used in psychotherapy and practice of working with adults with developmental disorders, i.e. it becomes the link between education (learning), development and mental health.

Keywords: zone of proximal development (ZPD), L.S. Vygotsky, explanatory principle, subject of research, methodological tool, multi-vector model of ZPD, developmental learning, reflective-activity approach, education, development, mental health.

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Зона ближайшего развития: эволюция понятия

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Основной замысел статьи — проследить траекторию развития и использования понятия «зона ближайшего развития» (ЗБР) со времени его введения в концептуальный аппарат культурно-исторической психологии Л.С. Выготским по материалам работ отечественных психологов. Статья включает три раздела. Первый посвящен проблеме определения понятия ЗБР, в котором анализируются противоречия в представлениях самого автора понятия и трактовках понятия другими авторами. «Классическое определение» ЗБР дополняется идеями Л.С. Выготского, высказанными им в других работах. Два других раздела статьи посвящены изменениям методологических функций понятия на разных этапах его развития — от объяснительного принципа к предмету исследования и от предмета исследования к методологическому средству построения новых исследовательских предметов и новых практико-ориентированных технологий. Общая тенденция заключается в расширении областей применения понятия ЗБР, выходе использования понятия за рамки исходных задач объяснения и теоретического обоснования особой связи обучения и развития, за рамки проблем взаимодействия ребенка и взрослого. Особое внимание уделяется помогающей деятельности взрослого (учителя, психолога, родителя и др.): главный вопрос, как

помогать, чтобы помощь способствовала развитию. Показано, что понятие ЗБР начинает использоваться в психотерапии и практике работы со взрослыми людьми с нарушениями развития, т. е. оно становится связующим звеном между образованием (обучение), развитием и психическим здоровьем.

Ключевые слова: зона ближайшего развития (ЗБР), Л.С. Выготский, объяснительный принцип, предмет исследования, методологическое средство, многовекторная модель ЗБР, развивающее обучение, рефлексивно-деятельностный подход, образование, развитие, психическое здоровье.

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Introduction

In 2024, the centenary of cultural-historical psychology is commemorated. In 1924, Lev Vygotsky began his work in psychology, in 1934 he finished it, entering history as the founder of cultural-historical psychology, which is becoming more and more in demand year after year, and L. Vygotsky himself became one of the most cited psychologists in the world.

Among the ideas that form the backbone of cultural-historical psychology, the concept of the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) occupies a special place. It is a link between the basic genetic law and the new understanding of development, in which learning plays a leading role. The ZPD concept is a bridge from theory to practice, in which L. Vygotsky saw the future of psychology. The problem of interaction between a child and an adult arises from the ZPD concept: how to build a cooperative relationship with a child and how to help a child in what he cannot do himself, so that this help contributes to his development.

It is now difficult to imagine how one can study a child's development and create conditions for it without the ZPD concept. However, the evolution of this concept is an amazing trajectory, and the most impressive thing is that the heuristic potential of the ZPD concept has begun to be revealed quite recently, and this is reflected in the rapid growth of the array of publications in which the ZPD concept is present as one of the key concepts in one way or another [26]. At the same time, the definition of the ZPD concept itself remains controversial, which was facilitated not only by L. Vygotsky himself, highlighting different semantic shades of the concept in different texts [17], but also by collisions of translations of his works into English, which somewhat distort the original meaning of the concept, which gives grounds, in particular, to N. Veresov to conclude that ZBR *(zona blizhayshego razvitiya)* and ZPD are not the same thing [3].

The idea of this article is to trace the evolution of the ZPD concept over ninety years (according to the works of Russian psychologists) from the moment of its appearance in the conceptual system of cultural-historical psychology, starting with the problem of defining the concept, followed by its acquisition of new methodological functions and the further gradual disclosure of its heuristic potential.

ZPD: the problem of defining the concept

In 1935, i.e. a year after L. Vygotsky's death, his associates published a collection of his publications for teachers [5]. The chapters on ZPD were prepared based on the transcript of L. Vygotsky's report at a meeting of the Department of Defectology of the Bubnov Pedagogical Institute on 23 December 1933, and the transcript of the report at a meeting of the Scientific and Methodological Council of the Leningrad Pedagogical Institute on 20 May 1933.

The publication defines the ZPD concept as the interval "between the level of the child's actual development, determined by the tasks solved by the child independently, and the level of the child's possible development, determined by the tasks solved by the child under the guidance of adults and in cooperation with his smarter comrades...." [5, p. 42]. This definition is usually considered "classical", i.e. expressing the main essence of the concept, its most important comprehension. In other, both earlier and later publications and reports of L. Vygotsky, there are indications that the ZPD concept allows for other, more complex interpretations.

L. Vygotsky himself considers this definition to be "conditional" [5]. In it, ZPD is associated, first, with the cognitive development of the child, i.e. with the development of his higher mental functions, speech, and the formation of scientific concepts. Because of the translation into English and the publication of this brochure (with significant abbreviations) in the most popular edition of Vygotsky's works in the western countries, "Mind and Society" (1978) [41], it was this definition that was taken as the basis by foreign psychologists. N. Veresov, conducting an analysis of the translation of Vygotsky's texts into English, criticizes them, pointing out that the translations, especially the first versions, omit important semantic nuances, which in fact distort the ZPD concept [3]. Thus, according to N. Veresov, due to inaccuracies in translation, the most important thing in the ZPD concept disappears — its connection with the basic genetic law and the idea of learning as a source of development.

Indeed, in this definition it is not so easy to grasp the line between learning and development. A child cannot do something independently but can do it with the help of an adult. During interaction with an adult, a child appropriates (internalizes) a shared experience, turns it into his own acquirement, increases his level of actual development, pushing the boundaries of ZPD even further. There is a question: where is the development here? If a child could not count, but learned to count, this is the acquisition of mathematical knowledge, skills, and abilities. This is an unconditional step in learning. But where is the development here? The vagueness of the distinction between "steps in learning" and "steps in development" in L. Vygotsky's works gives grounds for B. Meshcheryakov, who analyzed the relationship between the main concepts of cultural-historical psychology, to be critical of the various interpretations of ZPD. Analyzing the points of view on ZPD, he notes the tendency to reduce ZPD to a pedagogical meaning, i.e. interpret it as a "zone of proximal acquisition of knowledge," which "does not diminish its significance for the theory of development" [29].

In the article devoted to the analysis of the current state of cultural-historical psychology, it is noted that the "classical" definition of ZPD should be considered as a "working structure" created to convey to teachers and psychologists the importance of taking into account not only the level of the student's actual development, but also the level (zone) of his potential development [31]. It is precisely because the work is addressed to teachers (considering their own "zone of proximal development") that some simplification of the ZPD concept is possibly associated, focusing their attention only on the importance of what the child can do together with an adult, and "measuring the interval" between two levels of development in years. Such logic makes the importance of the ability to define and consider ZPD in their work clear and convincing for a teacher who is not very concerned with the problems of child development. However, this definition lacks at least four important semantic components of the concept that are present in the descriptions of the concept's comprehension given in other texts by L. Vygotsky himself, including in his speech on 23 March 1933, when he first formulated the ZPD concept [9][1].

The first element is that he points out that *the ZPD concept can be extended to the development of the whole personality*. This means that any aspect (vector) of cognitive and personal development can be considered through the ZPD concept. The second is that *the child's development occurs in cooperation (joint activity) with an adult* and depends on the help that the adult provides to the child. The third is that *ZPD has not one, but at least two boundaries*: one is between the ZPD and the area of actual development (what the child can do himself), the other is between the ZPD and the area in which the child cannot consciously (L. Vygotsky writes "intelligently", i.e. not simply "imitating") interact with an adult (what we later called the "zone of unattainable challenge" [15]). The fourth point is the famous statement by L. Vygotsky, which he cites in the book "Thinking and Speech", published in Russian in 1956 and translated into English in 1962, that learning not only leads to development, but under certain conditions "one step in learning can mean a hundred steps in development" [8, p.230], *i.e. development in the learning process can occur simultaneously in different directions*. This idea is literally thrown in passing in the book "Thinking and Speech". Notwithstanding L. Vygotsky emphasizes that this is the most valuable thing in the new theory of the connection between learning and development, up until the beginning of the XXI century, neither domestic nor foreign researchers paid any attention to it [16]. None of these ideas were developed by L. Vygotsky himself, which is not surprising, since all of them appeared only in the last year of his life. The ZPD concept turns out to be organically connected with such already developed concepts as the concept of sign, genetic law, interiorization (ingrowth), and with the ideas that for a long time remained only outlined by L. Vygotsky, but they were not given due attention [16].

An attempt to work through the above ideas in the logic of L. Vygotsky himself led to the idea of a multivector model of ZPD [14], which began to be considered as a logical continuation of the concept's evolution, since it integrates various provisions of L. Vygotsky, expressed by him in reports and texts of the last year of his life (in 1933—1934). We will dwell on the description of the multi-vector model of ZPD in more detail below.

We have considered the problems of defining the ZPD concept, which remains a subject of discussion, and we will then try to outline the contours of the concept's evolution, which is described by the methodological functions acquired by the ZPD concept at various stages of the development of cultural-historical psychology and related areas of psychological science and practice. For this, we will use the idea of the methodological functions of scientific concepts, most clearly formulated by E. Yudin: explanatory principle, subject of research, methodological means of constructing new research subjects and tools for practice [38].

Zone of proximal development: from the explanatory principle to the subject of research

The ZPD concept appears in the context of at least three ideas of L. Vygotsky that are important for the theory of development. Historically, the first is the idea

[1] The exact date of L. Vygotsky's speech is given in the book "Lev Semenovich Vygotsky" [4].

of psychology as a practice of promoting development, which he arrives at while discussing the future of psychology in his work "The Historical Meaning of the Psychological Crisis" [1927] [6]. The next is the idea of the basic genetic law: "every function in cultural development appears on the stage twice, on two levels, first social, then psychological, first between people, as an interpsychic category, then within the child, as an intrapsychic category" [8, p. 145]. The ZPD concept becomes an explanatory principle that sets this law in motion: only that which is in the zone of his proximal development (functions that are in the maturation stage and become "fruits" in cooperation with an adult) can become the acquirement of the child. The third idea is a new interpretation of the connection between learning and development: it is not development that comes before learning and makes it possible for a child to master educational material, as J. Piaget believed; it is not the identity of learning and development, as behaviorists believed; it is not simply the interrelationship between learning and development, as F. Koffka believed; but learning as a source of development, learning comes before and precedes development. A. Leontiev in the preface to the six-volume collected works of L. Vygotsky, discussing the role of the concept of the zone of proximal development, calls this view of development "revolutionary" for that time [25]. The ZPD concept, therefore, contains the idea that learning can and should contribute to development, that not all learning contributes to development (but only that in which there is interaction between the child and the adult in ZPD), and implicitly there is the question of how developmental learning is possible.

Discussing the ZPD concept, Vygotsky's associates and followers, P. Galperin and D. Elkonin [10] emphasize that the existence of ZPD is a fact. However, it is a fact that allows for different interpretations of the connection between learning and development. "L. Vygotsky gives one interpretation, J. Piaget — another one." The "method of assessments" criticized by the authors cannot answer this question, since it can only record that the child's capabilities increase with age. But what plays a leading role here: development, which makes the child capable of learning as he matures, or learning, which leads to development? The authors conclude that such a formulation of the problem justifies the need to introduce a formative method into the study of thinking, i.e. a method that would show how exactly learning leads to development. The article questions the sufficiency of the theoretical justification of ZPD and poses the problem of its experimental justification by proving the possibility of forming mental actions and concepts with predetermined properties. Thus, ZPD is considered as a tool for justifying the possibility of proving that learning leads to development by developing a methodology for a formative experiment.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence that learning leads to development if the interaction between a child and an adult is built in ZPD are the experiments on the formation of initial mathematical concepts, conducted under the supervision of P. Galperin in the early 1960s. They showed that the so-called Piaget phenomena, which in his experiments took place in children even 7—8 years old, and for preschoolers were one of the most striking characteristics of thinking, these phenomena disappeared even in children aged 5, if the children mastered the initial mathematical concepts of "measures", "units" and "numbers". But if in learning they took "one step", i.e. were taught to count using these concepts, then, as noted by P. Galperin and L. Obukhova (a direct participant in these experiments), in addition to the disappearance of Piaget's phenomena, the children's operational thinking patterns about objects changed: each object was presented as a set of parameters relatively independent of each other, each of which was measured in its own units. Thus, 5-year-old children, if they are shown two bottles with the same level of water in them, say that they contain equal amounts of water. But if one of the bottles is turned over and placed on its neck, the water level in it will become higher, because of which the child will say that there is more water in this bottle. A child of the same age, with formed scientific mathematical concepts, will say differently: "It seems that there is more in this one, but we did not pour out or add anything, which means that there are equal amounts of water in them." The formation of mathematical concepts is preceded by the child's immersion in the activity of measuring different parameters, various objects, which allows the child to consciously interact with an adult, measuring the parameters of different objects. According to P. Galperin, awareness is one of the most important parameters of developing mental action. Later, one of Galperin's students, V. Davydov, and D. Elkonin created a theory and laid the foundations for the practice of developmental learning, in which ZPD is one of the key concepts [12], giving another convincing and — importantly — practical answer to the question of how exactly learning can contribute to development.

If we consider that the theory and method of the step-by-step formation of mental actions and concepts began to be developed by P. Galperin and his students in the 1950s, and the system of developmental learning began to be created in the 1970s, then we can conclude that the ZPD concept for 20-40 years remains in the status of an explanatory principle of development, as a process derived from learning, and only many years later does it receive first experimental and then practical confirmation of the mechanism of the connection between learning and development, which it is intended to explain.

At the next stage of the concept's evolution, ZPD itself becomes the subject of research. In the natural science approach, the question could be put this way: "What is ZPD or how is it structured?" In the constructivist approach, the question sounds differently: "How can ZPD be conceived so that it can be used

in practice?" Or even differently: "In what direction can L. Vygotsky's thought be continued?", which is especially relevant because L. Vygotsky himself had neither the time nor the opportunity to complete work on his conceptual system [25], one of the most important of which (if not its cornerstone) was the ZPD concept.

One of the first attempts to make ZPD a subject of research is the work of N. Belopolskaya, devoted to the assessment of cognitive and emotional components of ZPD in children with mental retardation [1]. The author, defining the content of ZPD, refers to the ideas of L. Vygotsky, supplementing the "classical definition", such as the possibility of extending the ZPD concept to the development of the whole personality, and indicates that ZPD "reflects the mental potential of the personality development". Another basis for introducing the "emotional dimension" into the ZPD concept is the principle of the unity of affect and intellect. ZPD is considered in the cognitive and emotional-semantic dimension, and, importantly, in the help of an adult, the intellectual and emotional-semantic "dimension" is also distinguished.

E. Kravtsova [23] also takes as a starting point the idea of considering the ZPD concept in relation to different aspects of personal development and the principle of the unity of affect and intellect in her interpretation of the ZPD concept. The author (a granddaughter of L. Vygotsky) initiates the development of new educational programs for preschoolers and adolescents, in which conditions are created and prerequisites for the emergence and development of the next age period are organized. It is important to note that in the interaction of a child and an adult in ZPD, the child is considered as a subject of leading activity, as a subject of new formations.

In the work of L. Obukhova and I. Korepanova the task is set to develop a dimension and time model of the ZPD [30]. The classical concept of ZPD is supplemented by the idea of a semantic dimension, which becomes the subject of the study. The authors pose the problem of the structure of ZPD and the content of the processes occurring in it, including cooperation between a child and an adult. The original design of the experiment, when an adult acts in different positions (an adult helping to master a new action, and an adult being "incompetent", in relation to whom the child acts as a teacher), makes it possible to trace the dynamics of the child's mastering of the action and the process of understanding the method of its implementation. The complex and original design of the study gives the authors the opportunity to "see" the structure of ZPD from different sides. Thus, ZPD is considered as the relationship between the operational-technical and motivational-semantic components. Making the structure of ZPD the subject of the study, the authors demonstrate the possibility of various approaches to its "construction", the possibility of a "multidimensional" understanding of ZPD, its dependence on the position of an adult and the dependence of the child's activity on the adult.

G. Zuckerman, relying on the definition of Vygotsky and several other ideas about ZPD, poses fundamental questions to which the author of the concept does not have a clear answer. Discussing these questions, Zuckerman comes to the following conclusions. ZPD is not a naturally existing phenomenon that arises by itself whenever an adult helps a child achieve greater independence. This is a special form of interaction in which the adult's action is aimed at generating and supporting the child's initiative. The relationship between the skilled and the unskilled, the knowledgeable and the ignorant is a reduced form of joint action capable of creating ZPD [37].

G. Zuckerman departs from the "classical" concept of ZPD, asking three questions and justifying the answers to them in the logic of the relationship between learning and development: 1) what develops in ZPD? 2) where does learning lead to development? 3) what develops in developmental learning? The key to answering these questions is the author's vision of the value of the child's initiative and its support by adults. ZPD is understood as a set of types of assistance from an adult to a child, as an area where the interpsychic arises, as a multidimensional space of potential development opportunities supported or not supported by educational interaction. The role and significance of ZPD concept for understanding the development of a child as a bearer of his own initiative, the support of which is carried out by an adult, is revealed. The child develops as the author of the initiative, and the adult, as a person for the first time supporting the initiative of this child. Thus, their alliance is developed in ZPD. The development of mental functions is only a special case of the development processes occurring in this multidimensional space. The modified concept of ZPD, compared to the classical one, becomes an explanatory principle of why learning can be "non-developmental" and how it can become "developmental". The author illustrates these ideas with a "thought experiment" in which the trajectories of a child's development are modeled under different conditions, with different types of assistance, with an adult's orientation toward supporting or suppressing the child's initiative.

In 2006, the various approaches of the above-mentioned authors to the search for new dimensions of ZPD were summarized in a multi-vector model of ZPD, which attempted to integrate the outlined but not developed ideas of L. Vygotsky. The article was called "The Zone of Proximal Development: What L.Vygotsky Did Not Have Time to Write About" [15]. The reason for it was a note to "Problems of Age" in the fourth volume of selected works of L. Vygotsky to his phrase, which follows his detailed analysis of the diagnostic meaning of the ZPD concept: "The pedagogical significance of ZPD will be considered in one of the following chapters." The note says simply and briefly: "These chapters were not

written by L. Vygotsky." Thus, the question arose about "what else L. Vygotsky had no time to write." What kind of psychology did he see, to which he led people, comparing himself with Moses (see "Notebooks of L. Vygotsky" [14]), but which he himself was not destined to enter (this is one of his last notes)? The multi-vector model of ZPD is one of the attempts to answer this question.

The multi-vector model of ZPD first appeared as an explanatory principle for phenomena observed in the practice of helping children to overcome learning difficulties using the reflection-activity approach [16]. It is a variant of the implementation of Vygotsky's ideas that the ZPD concept can be extended to various aspects of personal development, that the interaction of a child and an adult is carried out in the form of cooperation, that ZPD has not only a "lower" boundary (beyond which is the zone of actual development), but also an "upper" boundary (beyond which is the zone of unattainable challenge), as well as the idea of such a relationship between learning and development, in which one step in learning can lead to many steps in development.

The diagram (see Fig. 1) shows a child and an adult (teacher, educational psychologist, consultant, parent, etc.), who are the subjects of joint educational activity aimed at overcoming a difficulty (see the lower plane). "Above the child" are various abilities, qualities, and personality traits of the child that are related to the educational activity being carried out. They are designated as potential development vectors, in the sense that their state can change in the process of overcoming an educational difficulty.

It is assumed that steps in learning are changes in the boundaries of the zone of actual development (ZAD) and ZPD in the educational plane (the vector of educational activity), and steps in development are qualitative changes in any of the vectors or in several vectors simultaneously. Thus, the formula of L. Vygotsky "one step in learning can make a hundred steps in development" within the framework of this model acquires a very specific meaning: one step along the vector of educational activity can be accompanied by qualitative changes in many vectors simultaneously if an adult helps a child in the problem epicenter, i.e. some main difficulty that attracts a variety of vectors and restrains the dynamics in them. The most striking problem epicenter that not only teachers but also psychotherapists encounter in practice is learned helplessness. But if it can be overcome, then cases of "explosive dynamics" are often observed [19].

From the thesis of L. Vygotsky that what is in the ZPD today, tomorrow the child can do on his own (i.e. his actual capabilities increase), it follows that the boundaries of the ZPD also expand, since part of what was in the zone of unattainable challenge, moves into the zone of proximal development. There seems to be nothing su-

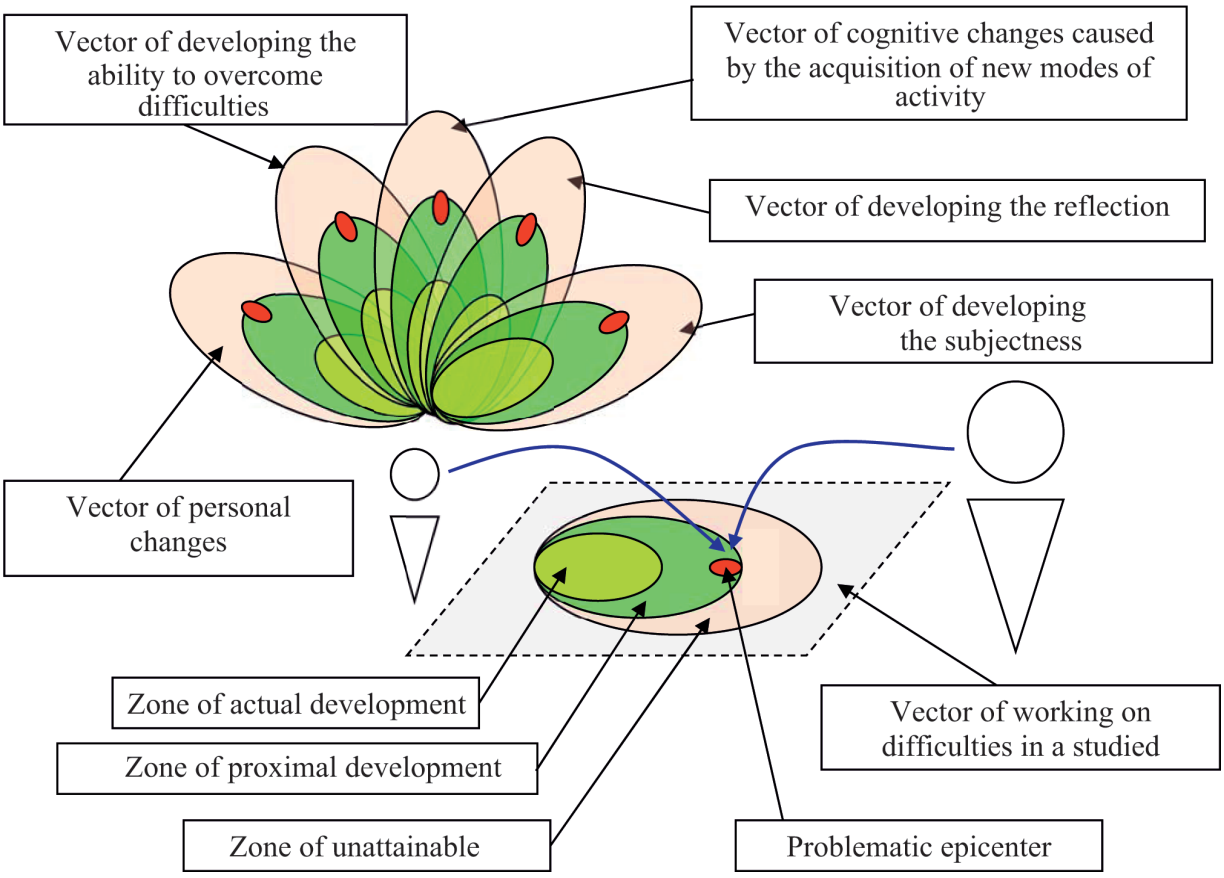

Fig. 1. Diagram of the zone of proximal development as a set of vectors along which "steps" in development are possible in the learning process [15; 17]

pernatural in this idea, since any teacher has a rough idea of what is attainable to his students today and what is not, and what their capabilities will expand "tomorrow". But the problem is that in practice this does not always happen. In practice, children often encounter difficulties that cannot be overcome by any effort. Especially when it comes to pathology, children or adults with mental disorders. If we trust practice, then we should admit that there are "learning-disabled", at least in the sense that they cannot be helped to overcome their difficulties. If we proceed from the theory, then, for example, Vladimir Zinchenko, discussing the ZPD concept in his essay, makes a different conclusion: "If the teacher is sensitive to the zone of proximal development, then it will turn into an infinite perspective" [21]. But what does "sensitive" mean? — Maybe it means that the teacher understands its boundaries, accurately determines where the epicenter is, and can provide adequate assistance to the child in overcoming his difficulty. And then the "teaching" he carries out (or rather assistance in overcoming the child's difficulty) can have a developmental effect in all cases without exception. But this is in theory...

In reality, the understanding that ZPD is a derivative of how an adult acts and helps a child has led to the construction of new research subjects and practical developments related specifically to the activity of an adult. How to help so that assistance in ZPD contributes to the child's development? Or more precisely: how to help so that the difficulty the child has encountered becomes a resource for his intellectual and personal development? The search for answers to these questions leads researchers and practitioners to two extensive areas of research, in which the ZPD concept is used as a methodological means of constructing new research subjects and tools of practical activity.

ZPD: from the research subject to the methodological tool for constructing new research subjects and psychological and pedagogical technologies

To somewhat roughen the complex picture of the multifaceted use of the ZPD concept in the function of a methodological tool, we can say that new subjects that are built on its basis form two large groups: the first — various functions, abilities, qualities, the development of which is considered through the prism of the ZPD concept; the second — all questions related to the activity of an adult, the central one of which is "how to help a child in what he cannot do himself, so that this help contributes to development?"

By the time when the professional consciousness of domestic specialists focused on cultural-historical psychology and the use of ZPD concept in their research and practical developments, the concept of "scaffolding" appeared in the western countries, based on which its authors proposed principles of activity of a teaching adult. Several works by domestic authors analyze and compare the ZPD concept and the concept of "scaffolding" ("building scaffolding"), which was introduced by J. Brunner, D. Wood and G. Ross based on the works of L. Vygotsky and then began to be considered as an American analogue of ZPD concept [42]. The metaphor of building scaffolding suggests that in the process of interaction between a child and an adult, the amount of help from an adult gradually decreases, and the number of independent actions of the child gradually increases until the child begins to do without the help of an adult and act completely independently. At first glance, the concept of scaffolding seems to quite adequately reflect the process of internalization, and the scaffolding technology is gaining wide popularity [24, 26, etc.]. The positive aspect of introducing this concept is the very fact of posing the problem of assistance [24]. At the same time, it is noted that ZPD and scaffolding are not identical concepts, that the first relates more to development, and the second to learning [26].

If we look more closely at the concept of "scaffolding", we can pay attention to some of its features, due to which this concept should be used with caution. For example, B. Meshcheryakov [29], analyzing the metaphor of scaffolding, emphasizes the mechanical nature of the process: scaffolding is made to construct a building. The building remains, and the scaffolding is removed. Is this image adequate to Vygotsky's idea of internalization? — No. Vygotsky himself used the term "ingrowth", i.e. he saw this process as "organic", and not "mechanical". Secondly, and this is perhaps the most important argument for a critical attitude to the concept, "scaffolding", i.e. the help of an adult, according to L. Vygotsky does not "fall away", but becomes the acquirement of the child, is ingrown, is interiorized. The point is not that the amount of help gradually decreases, but that what the adult does, helping the child, becomes "elements of the structure" of the new action of the child himself. The "scaffolding" does not fall away, but becomes a part of the structure being built, i.e. what is developing in the child with the help of the adult (mental action, ability, some new quality, etc.). Thus, the metaphor of "scaffolding", beautiful and effective, distorts the essence of L. Vygotsky's idea and turns out to be in contradiction with the basic genetic law. Because in it, it is not "inter" that becomes "intra", but the child acquires the ability to do without "inter", i.e. without the help of an adult. For example, if a child, having difficulty solving a problem, turns to an adult with the question "How can this be done differently?", and the adult, instead of answering, suggests that the child ask himself this question, then the processes of reflection of his own action and creative search are launched. And, perhaps, the child himself will find the answer to the question that he asked the adult, but did not ask himself. And if next time he asks himself this question, it will mean that he is not just doing

without the help of an adult, but he has appropriated this experience and the question that the adult asked him, he now asks himself. That is, the joint action has become the acquirement of the child, and not just this question of the adult has fallen away, like "scaffolding" that has become unnecessary...

And finally, we will add that hypothetically the concept of "scaffolding" allows for the possibility of assimilating the ZPD concept in the behavioral tradition, i.e. interpreting the help of an adult as positive reinforcement of correct and inhibition (negative reinforcement) of incorrect actions of the child. Thus, the process of "development" turns out to be completely reducible to learning, the role of the adult — to positive and negative reinforcement of the child's actions, and the process of their interaction in this case is not at all like the cooperation of a child and an adult, which L. Vygotsky himself emphasized.

Cooperation presupposes the participation of the child as a subject in his interaction with an adult. The vision of the child as a subject of joint activity, in which he, together with an adult, learns to do what he cannot do himself, overcomes his difficulties, appropriates the experience of joint activity, leads to the fact that the child should be considered as a subject of self-development, a subject of activity and its reflection. L. Vygotsky almost never used the term "reflection" but attached great importance to awareness. In his logic, only that which is done by the child "intelligently", with an understanding of what and how the adult helps, can be appropriated; through awareness, arbitrariness is achieved, i.e. mastery of one's mental processes occurs. Natural functions turn into higher functions.

It is of interest to note that the first research subjects in Russian psychology, for the construction of which the ZPD concept was used, was precisely the ability to reflect. As early as 1981, A. Zak conducted a study of the zone of proximal development in the diagnostics of reflection in primary school students [13]. The significance of the ZPD concept for the development of reflection as an activity of self-knowledge aimed at one's own methods of action is revealed. In this case, the author relies on the idea of L. Vygotsky that "abstraction and generalization of one's thought are fundamentally different from abstraction and generalization of things."

A. Zak developed a method for studying reflection, including two types of tasks. The first part proposed solving problems of different types, and the second offered grouping the problems by a common solution method. If the problems were grouped by content, then it was considered that the reflexive action was performed. If the grouping was carried out not by the method, but by some external similarity, then it was considered that reflection was absent. An important indicator of the development of reflection is the amount and nature of the adult's help that the child requires if he cannot cope with the task himself.

In the work [3] the ZPD concept is used as a tool for explaining the process of formation of motivational and operational-technical components of an action in the experimental conditions. The ZPD concept makes it possible to explain the cases of successful and unsuccessful assistance, because of which the child stops acting together with the adult if he does not pay due attention to the motivational component or acts contrary to the child's plan. Thus, in the work not only a new subject is introduced (the motivational component of the action), but also a dual subject is constructed: the development of one or another component of the action and the nature of the adult's assistance. It is clearly shown that the content and meaning of the action should be worked with differently.

In the study by E. Bozhovich, which provides a thorough analysis of the ZPD concept, the problem of how ZPD depends on the nature of cooperation and the quality of assistance is also raised. This dependence is illustrated by analyzing the data from the experimental study of solving tasks on language competence in the context of "indirect cooperation" [2].

"Double subject", i.e. the connection between "ZPD and help from another person" is also formed in several other studies, for example: ZPD and the organization of students' activities [27], working on ZPD of the planning function of the thinking process in schoolchildren [28], learning ability in children with intellectual disabilities [11], preschool play as a developmental practice [22], etc. In the work [32], using the example of the practice of developmental education, it is shown how the ZPD concept allows revealing the potential of educational activities for the development of various reflective and communicative abilities of a child. Experimental studies of joint activities as the zone of proximal development of reflexive and communicative abilities of younger schoolchildren revealed three types of interactions in the process of searching for and identifying a common method of action in a situation: pre-organizational, organizational, reflexive analytical. Each of these types of interactions is characterized by a qualitatively specific way of implementing communicative and reflexive actions. Each type of interaction in joint activities corresponds to a certain commonness of its participants.

The ZPD concept has become one of the basic concepts for developing the practice of a reflection-activity approach to helping students overcome learning difficulties. Reflection on the experience of helping children of various categories contributed to the development of the above-described multi-vector model of ZPD [15], to distinguish between the types of help an adult provides to a child in a difficult situation that contribute and those that do not contribute to his or her development [18], to develop a method of situational-vector analysis of transcripts of educational sessions, which makes it possible to reconstruct the dynamics of the development of various mental functions, abilities and personal

qualities that takes place when a child takes "steps in learning" in cooperation with an adult [19]. Based on the transcripts of educational sessions, which are based on audio or video recordings, it is possible to identify situations in which a child encountered a difficulty and failed to complete a task; situations of assistance provided by an adult, i.e. cooperation between a child and an adult in ZPD; situations when a child begins to cope with a similar educational task on his or her own. The analysis of speech recorded in the transcript allows us to reconstruct the dynamics along various vectors that accompany the implementation of a "step" along the vector of educational activity. When providing assistance by means of the reflection-activity approach, as a rule, the dynamics are observed along the vector of the child's subjective position (i.e. the adult consciously builds cooperation with him), along the vector of self-efficacy (since the child gains experience in successfully overcoming difficulties and understands that any difficulty is temporary and, by making due efforts, he will cope with it sooner or later), along the vector of reflection (since the adult's assistance is aimed, first of all, at initiating and supporting the child's awareness of his ways of action, establishing relationships between the shortcomings of these ways and the mistakes made, as well as getting rid of these shortcomings and developing new ways). Positive dynamics can also occur along other vectors that are associated with substantive work on the educational difficulty (attitude to the difficulty, relationships between the child and the adult, the ability of self-regulation, etc.). With adequate assistance from an adult and work within the boundaries of ZPD, Vygotsky's idea that one step in learning can lead to many steps in development becomes a reality [16], and the mechanism of this connection is described by the multi-vector model of the ZPD.

Initially, the ZPD concept was actively promoted within the framework of developmental psychology, educational psychology, and pedagogy. Age ranges were expanded, work was carried out with various categories of children with special needs, new subjects were created within the framework of the connection "learning and development". But in the XXI century, it turned out that the ZPD concept and the concepts associated with it (thinking, reflection, subjectness, cooperation, self-regulation, mediation, etc.) make it possible to see the psychotherapeutic process differently, as work with the development of the client (child) [36]. Firstly, it turned out that L. Vygotsky has followers among psychotherapists abroad. Thus, an English psychotherapist Stiles puts forward the principle of "acting within the boundaries of ZPD" as the main requirement for the work of a psychotherapist, and he declares going beyond the boundaries of ZPD to be the main mistake of a psychotherapist [40]. Upon that, Stiles refers to the works of L. Vygotsky. Independently of him, a Swiss researcher of the effectiveness of "extracurricular" factors of psychotherapy K. Grawe formulates the rule "not to actualize problems for which the client does not have the resources." Accordingly, sensitivity to the client's resources is the most important condition for effective psychotherapy [39]. It is easy to notice here a direct analogy with the ZPD concept, although K. Grawe himself did not refer to L. Vygotsky and, perhaps, would not expect the possibility of such an interpretation of his ideas.

An attempt to comprehend the consequences of "implementing" the ZPD concept in the field of mental health and psychotherapy led to the idea of the possible development of a new subject (or rather a system of subjects): the connections between "education, development and health" [20]. The ZPD concept and the concepts associated with it (thinking, reflection, subjectivity, self-regulation, etc.) enable different helping professionals to see their input as part of a holistic development process. The ZPD concept unites different types of helping activities: learning can not only promote development, but also have a psychotherapeutic effect; psychotherapy can be viewed not only as containing an educational component (this is present in all types of psychotherapy), but also as bringing development to the norm; development can be viewed as a mental norm ("developing is normal"). The ZPD concept enables different professionals to find a common language in which they can conduct professional dialogue [20].

As an example of practices that attempt to establish the connections between education, development, and health within a single subject, based on the ZPD concept, we can cite the experience of conducting chess lessons with adults with mental disabilities, which help restore their legal capacity [33], and the experience of conducting an integrated motivational training program for patients with schizophrenia, living in psychoneurological residential facilities [35]. One of the rules for conducting the program is to work "strictly in the zone of proximal development." Both areas of work are being carried out within the framework of reforming the system of psychoneurological residential facilities.

This interpretation of ZPD as a concept potentially applicable to the most diverse aspects of normal and abnormal development leads to a natural expansion of the areas of application of this concept, so that the real prospect is the implementation of the ZPD concept into a wide variety of helping activities.

Conclusion

In his work "The Historical Meaning of the Psychological Crisis" [6], L. Vygotsky describes a typical trajectory that "explanatory ideas" trace in their evolution. At first, when an idea appears, it exists within the framework of a "primary abstraction" (e.g., the psyche, the unconscious, the behavior), and is fully consistent with the reality for which it was created to designate and ex-

plain the facts. Then it begins to be applied more widely, gradually "stretches to cover more extensive material than that which it covers" [6, p.303], "separates from the facts that gave rise to it," and as an explanatory principle begins to take over an entire discipline, as L. Vygotsky writes, partially adapting to itself the basic concept underlying the discipline. At the fourth stage, the idea goes beyond its own limits, "inflating to a worldview." And then comes the most dangerous fifth stage, at which it "bursts like a soap bubble" and returns to the boundaries of the area from which it came from, "it is forced to reverse its development; it is recognized as a particular discovery, but rejected as a worldview; and now new ways of comprehending it as a particular discovery and the facts associated with it are put forward" [6, p. 304]. Thus, the idea gradually narrows, tests its area of applicability and then remains in the boundaries within which it can be used adequately. Having introduced such a schematic representation of the explanatory principle, L. Vygotsky describes the trajectories of four basic ideas — the ideas of psychoanalysis, reflexology, gestalt psychology and personalism...

As can be seen from the analysis of the evolution of the ZPD concept, its trajectory is quite atypical. At first, for several decades, the ZPD concept was almost ignored. Then it gradually began to be used to explain the processes of development and learning and their interrelation. At the same time, the concept itself, seemingly simple in content, became the subject of discussions as soon as it was made the subject of research. The consequence of approaches to the study of ZPD, being a certain fact of the reality of development, is a multitude of different ideas about ZPD and approaches to its technological application in the practice of teaching and promoting development. Then, during research into ZPD and its application as a methodological tool for constructing new subjects and practice-oriented technologies, its heuristic potential began to gradually unfold. L. Vygotsky writes about this stage that during this period the concept "inflates". But then, instead of the expected return to the boundaries of an "adequate application", for some reason a new round of "escalation" of the concept has occurred, capturing new areas of psychological science and practice. And so far, no reverse dynamics are expected. On the contrary, there is a feeling that this is only the beginning of a real understanding of the unlimited heuristic potential of the "zone of proximal development" concept. And this is related, in our opinion, to the tendency to expand psychological practice, the rapid development of practical psychology, its implementation into various areas of human life and activity, such as pedagogy, developmental education, practices of correcting interventions and assistance to development, clinical psychology, neuropsychology, psychotherapy (various schools), psychological counseling, coaching, organizational psychology. And, apparently, this list will only expand. Why so? — L. Vygotsky has a very precise term that helps to substantiate this thesis. Speaking about the patterns of change and development of ideas, the death of some and the emergence of others, he writes that all this can be explained by the connections of the science "with the general socio-cultural subsoil of the era" [6, p. 302]. It seems that in our time such a "subsoil", "the general context of the era" is that the man and the world are in the process of constant change and development, and psychology claims to accompany these processes. And in this process the ZPD concept can theoretically be applied to any developing subject of activity, being a child, an adult, a family, a group, a community. So it is possible to put forward a hypothesis that the ZPD concept, having managed to overcome the phase of the explanatory principle, having served as the tool for development of many research subjects and technologies, having entered the phase of expanding the spheres of use, continues to maintain its relation with the original context, but becomes appropriate and heuristic wherever the studied (accompanied processes) can be thought of as development processes.

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