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The concept of “perezhivanie” in the works of L.S. Vygotsky and the prospects for its consideration in the modern theory and practice of special psychology

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Abstract

Context and relevance. The concept of “perezhivanie” is not fully developed by L.S. Vygotsky, but it is quite often encountered in his latest works. In his works, L.S. Vygotsky seems to be groping for the content of the concept of “perezhivanie”, and at the same time he writes about experience (perezhivanie) as a dynamic unit of consciousness. The development of defectology, and then special psychology, as a scientific psychological direction working with children with special needs, is inextricably linked with the name of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. Actualization of the concept of “perezhivanie” can be of particular importance in the context of psychological and pedagogical assistance to special needs children, strengthening its humanistic focus, as well as operationally clarifying methodological developments. **Objective.** To determine the role of the concept of “perezhivanie” in the value system of special psychology, and how this concept changes the attitude to the theory and practice of working with children with special needs. **Methods and materials.** Theoretical analysis of the works of L.S. Vygotsky and his followers, as well as a phenomenological description of stories from the practice of interaction with a special child and his relatives, which demonstrate the value of experience that changes the attitude to reality and the behavior of children with special needs. **Results.** The analysis indicates the prospects for the concept of “perezhivanie” to change the paradigm of research within the framework of developing cultural-historical psychology in general and special psychology in particular. **Conclusions.** The development of the concept of “perezhivanie” can open a new dimension in the theory and practice of psychological and pedagogical work with special needs children, their families, as well as in the topic of inclusion – in organizing the process of including a special child in society.

Keywords: perezhivanie, cultural-historical psychology, special psychology, soul, children with special needs

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Понятие «переживание» в трудах Л.С. Выготского и перспективы его раскрытия в современной теории и практике специальной психологии

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Резюме

Контекст и актуальность. Понятие «переживание» у Л.С. Выготского не является в полной мере разработанным, но достаточно часто встречается в его последних работах. Л.С. Выготский в своих работах как бы нащупывает содержание понятия «переживание», и при этом именно о переживании пишет как о динамической единице сознания. Развитие дефектологии, а затем и специальной

психологии как научного психологического направления, работающего с детьми с особенностями в развитии, неразрывно связано с именем Льва Семеновича Выготского. Актуализация понятия «переживание» может иметь важное значение в контексте психолого-педагогической помощи особым детям, усиливая ее гуманистическую направленность, а также операционально уточняя методические разработки. **Цель.** Определить роль понятия «переживание» в системе ценностей специальной психологии, а также то, каким образом это понятие изменяет отношение к теории и практике работы с детьми с особенностями развития. **Методы и материалы.** Теоретический анализ работ Л.С. Выготского и его последователей, а также феноменологическое описание историй из практики взаимодействия с особым ребенком и его близкими, в которых проявляется ценность переживания, изменяющего отношение к действительности и поведение детей с особенностями в развитии. **Результаты.** Проведенный анализ указывает на перспективность разработки понятия «переживание» для смены парадигмы исследований в рамках культурно-исторической психологии в целом и специальной психологии в частности. **Выводы.** Разработка понятия «переживание» может открыть новое измерение в теории и практике психолого-педагогической работы с особыми детьми, их семьями, а также в теме инклюзии — в организации процесса включения особого ребенка в общество.

Ключевые слова: переживание, культурно-историческая психология, специальная психология, душа, дети с особенностями психофизического развития

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What is all this about, what is it about?
We understand little in life.
It is a riddle, a mystery, a darkness,
But you can live like this,
Without understanding a single word.
After all, a tear still shines,
And silver laughter sounds,
And the poor heart beats.
Larisa Miller

The development of the theory and practice of working with children with pronounced psychophysical characteristics is directly related to the name of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. A broad and multifaceted field of knowledge with the telling name of "defectology" received a qualitatively new direction of development in connection with the scientific insights of Lev Vygotsky, his associates, students and followers. The cultural-historical theory was created not in the abstract from the demands of life, but precisely with the focus on solving real practical problems, including the tasks of teaching children with developmental disabilities. On the one hand, the defectology that existed at that time was, according to A.A. Puzyrei (1986), one of the sources of the cultural-historical theory, on the other hand, this theory itself became the methodological and theoretical basis of modern defectology, including special psychology as its structural component.

The idea of the development of higher mental functions, the key role of symbolic mediation, the need to include a special child in culture and, accordingly, the development of special developmental bypasses — this huge layer of new ideas and practical moves in defectology was based on the brilliant reflections of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. Special psychology as an ap-

plied branch to the greatest extent allows testing and applying the general theoretical provisions of L.S. Vygotsky to a specific area of reality and is the basis for checking the truth of these theoretical premises and developments.

And now I would like to draw attention to the concept of "perezhivanie", which can be traced in the works of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, which he emphasizes in his latest articles, pointing to "perezhivanie" as a possible dynamic unit of analysis of consciousness. It is this concept that can be of particular importance in the context of psychological and pedagogical assistance to special needs children, their families, and society as a whole, strengthening, on the one hand, its humanistic inclusive focus, and on the other hand, requiring an increasingly clear, detailed and thorough development of the general direction and specific methods of working with different children.

Let me say right away that this work does not set the task of a detailed and deep analysis of the concept of "perezhivanie" itself, does not solve the problem of finding a clear definition of this concept, but an attempt is made to identify the value of this concept and show the need for its further development to strengthen and deepen the positions of cultural-historical psychology

in general and special psychology in particular — as a practice of cultural-historical psychology. The article presents reflections that are based, on the one hand, on the works of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky from different periods of his life, and on the other hand, on the author's own active practice of working with special needs children.

By accepting and developing the concept of "perezhivanie" as the main one, as the core one for human psychology, as a dynamic unit of consciousness, we may be able to come closer to such a substance that is not amenable to direct scientific research, but at the same time very important for psychology, as the soul. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that at the beginning of the 20th century, when the development of the cultural-historical concept began, there was a very strong desire to refuse to mention the soul, to disown the metaphysical part of psychology, which is not amenable to strict scientific study from a natural-scientific standpoint. At that time, the position of creating a new man, building a new, more perfect society was actively manifested, therefore the new psychology (according to L.S. Vygotsky himself) was oriented toward materialism, objectivism and the biosocial basis in man (Vygotsky 1999, pp. 14–15). But experiments in building a new man and a new just society throughout the 20th century, frankly speaking, did not lead to positive results. And now, at the present time, in the 21st century, after all the experiments to create a new man, as well as in connection with the developments and rapid progress in the field of artificial intelligence, the task is to establish how to be a man, and then how to remain a man. And this is already a difficult task, and this is more than enough in general. Here I join the thoughts of A.G. Asmolov that at the present time it is time to realize and accept the fact that in general it is difficult to be a man and that it is very difficult to preserve the soul and human dignity in rapidly changing civilizational conditions (Asmolov, 2025, p. 28). At the current historical stage, most likely, the task is to preserve the original human dimension, which is not subject to copying and reproduction by artificial intelligence. And this dimension may be precisely the "perezhivanie" that is closest to the mysterious soul of man, which eludes direct scientific study, but manifests itself in artistic descriptions that recreate and awaken experiences, and can lead to a deep inner understanding and awareness of that basis of life that usually defies verbal description and rational explanation.

It is surprising that Lev Semenovich Vygotsky in his earliest works, which some authors consider pre-psychological, delved deeply into issues related to the existential metaphysical manifestations of the soul: ("Tragicomedy of Searching" (2022), "The Tragedy of Hamlet" (1998), "Psychology of Art" (1998). Later, already in those works that are directly psychologi-

cal, Vygotsky carefully developed the mechanics of the work of mental processes, the mechanics of their transition from lower natural functions to higher, arbitrary and self-regulating ones. But then, in his last articles, he came to the need to revise the starting point, the unit of psychological analysis and settled on the concept of "perezhivanie", which nevertheless again brings us closer to the search for the unique integrity of the soul of each person. I think that this view of the consideration of the dynamics of the content of the works of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky is promising for further work on the development of cultural-historical psychology. It is not worth stop at quoting Vygotsky's texts, we must try to understand the logic of the movement of his thoughts and continue to develop the content that develops the cultural-historical concept and its practice, in particular special psychology.

And if now, at this historical stage in the 21st century, we boldly look reality in the eye, a reality in which the issues of preserving human dignity and the uniqueness of his soul are extremely relevant, and after that we boldly and clearly accept into development Vygotsky's idea of perezhivanie as a dynamic unit of consciousness, then new perspectives will open up — a whole range of questions and problematizations will be actualized again, starting from existential questions (which is very important!) and ending with more technical and operational ones, clarifying the concepts of cultural-historical psychology, such as "cultural development", "higher mental functions", "zone of proximal development", "arbitrariness", "mediation", etc. I also believe that it is precisely within the framework of special psychology and pedagogy in direct work with special needs children that the meaning of experience as a dynamic unit of consciousness becomes even more distinct.

Let's start with the fact that Lev Semenovich Vygotsky in one of his last works "The Problem of Mental Retardation" points out the absence of a positive characteristic of the personality traits of a mentally retarded child (Vygotsky, 2003, p. 324). And this is really so, unfortunately. Let's admit honestly that the very name of the vast field of knowledge "defectology" focuses on the defect, which, of course, inevitably causes a negative semantic connotation. No matter how hard we try to maintain positive humanistic attitudes, the initial mention of the defect invariably leads to the image of a breakdown, a shortcoming, a flaw that a child with special psychophysical development has. And we must admit that this is a big problem — the belittlement of the value of a person if he was born (or in the course of life became) different from typical development, especially in the direction of reducing some adaptive capabilities. After all, when you read a scientifically substantiated description of, say, a mentally retarded child, you come across the fact that everything is worse, less, more primitive, etc. But life shows that this is not al-

ways and not entirely true, that in certain moments in life a child or adult with mental retardation can show himself to be very worthy and even wise (I'm not afraid of such a word). And perhaps it is not without reason that in his work entitled "The Problem of Mental Retardation" Lev Semenovich Vygotsky postulates the need for a holistic consideration of affect and intellect, which probably underlies the concept of "perezhivanie": "We must rise above the isolated metaphysical consideration of intellect and affect as self-sufficient entities, and recognize their internal connection and unity" (Vygotsky, 2003, p. 354).

Returning to the problem of positive characteristics, let us note the following fact: despite the existing "defect", for example, a decrease in intellectual capabilities, this child with developmental disabilities lives, and he already has experiences in which, to one degree or another, his own unique life flows, at one level or another, is recorded, is realized. And this in itself is valuable. And if there are any violations or deficits — sensory, cognitive, operational (activity-related) or a complex combination of them — then this does not at all diminish the life of the child and his family. Moreover, these experiences can be so deep that they can lead to such realizations that it would be difficult to even expect or anticipate their appearance in a person (child or adult) with reduced intelligence or impaired mental functions. But practical experience of communication and interaction with special needs children and adults shows that such deep realizations happen. It also happens that ordinary, normotypic people do not always get into this depth, they can, as it were, skip past the experiences that give these non-standard deep realizations.

As an example, we can turn to the remarkable description of the girl Rebecca, created by the famous British psychoneurologist Oliver Sacks (Sacks, 2006, pp. 228–238). Rebecca had a pronounced developmental disorder caused by genetic deviations. I will quote the author's description: "... Rebecca had a partial cleft palate, which caused a whistling in her speech; short, stumpy fingers, with blunt, deformed nails; and a high, degenerative myopia requiring very thick spectacles — all stigmata of the same congenital condition which had caused her cerebral and mental defects. She was painfully shy and withdrawn, feeling that she was, and had always been, a 'figure of fun'" (Sacks, 2006, p. 229). Oliver Sacks, as a qualified psychoneurologist, noted that Rebecca's intellectual abilities were also limited: "gross perceptual and spatio-temporal problems, and gross impairments in every schematic capacity — she could not count change, the simplest calculations defeated her, she could never learn to read or write, and she would average 60 or less in IQ tests (though doing notably better on the verbal than the performance parts of the test)..." (Sacks, 2006, p. 230).

But at the same time, Dr. Sacks noted the girl's attraction to books, by the way, she showed deep attachments, she was characterized by strong experiences, which she, surprisingly, knew how to express in ways accessible to her: "...the language of feeling, of the concrete, of image and symbol, formed a world she loved and, to a remarkable extent, could enter. Though conceptually (and 'propositionally') inept, she was at home with poetic language, and was herself, in a stumbling, touching way, a sort of 'primitive', natural poet. Metaphors, figures of speech, rather striking similitudes, would come naturally to her, though unpredictably, as sudden poetic ejaculations or allusions..." (Sacks, 2006, p. 229).

Oliver Sacks is surprised that despite all her defects, Rebecca possessed harmony, that her inner world of experiences was full of deep contemplation, which allowed her to accept and comprehend life in some of its important essential categories. "but at some deeper level there was no sense of handicap or incapacity, but a feeling of calm and completeness, of being fully alive, of being a soul, deep and high, and equal to all others. Intellectually, then, Rebecca felt a cripple; spiritually she felt herself a full and complete being..." (Sacks, 2006, p. 230).

"What was the basis of her integrity and balance?" Oliver Sacks wonders. "The answer lay outside the realm of schemas and abstractions. I found myself thinking of her fondness for tales, for narrative composition and coherence. Is it possible, I wondered, that this being before me — at once a charming girl, and a moron, a cognitive mishap — can use a narrative (or dramatic) mode to compose and integrate a coherent world, in place of the schematic mode, which, in her, is so defective that it simply doesn't work? And as I thought, I remembered her dancing, and how this could organize her otherwise ill-knit and clumsy movements" (Sacks, 2006, p. 232).

So, the reason for such integrity may be in the unique coherence of internal experiences, in which the mental processes included in this unity are dynamically successfully and harmoniously combined, which somehow express the secret of Rebecca's soul? In addition, I highlighted the words of Oliver Sacks about the artistic, dramatic method, i.e. about the view of life that was very close to Lev Semenovich Vygotsky. In order to fully illustrate my thoughts, I will allow myself to quote a fairly large excerpt from this narrative.

I saw Rebecca sitting on a bench, gazing at the April foliage quietly, with obvious delight. Her posture had none of the clumsiness which had so impressed me before... She could have been any young woman enjoying a beautiful spring day. This was my human, as opposed to my neurological, vision.

As I approached, she heard my footsteps and turned, gave me a broad smile, and wordlessly gestured. 'Look at the world,' she seemed to say. 'How beautiful it is.' And then there came out, in Jacksonian spurts, odd, sudden, poetic ejaculations: 'spring', 'birth', 'growing', 'stirring',

'coming to life', 'seasons', 'everything in its time'. I found myself thinking of Ecclesiastes: 'To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time ...' This was what Rebecca, in her disjointed fashion, was ejaculating — a vision of seasons, of times, like that of the Preacher.

Having realized that Rebecca remains a complete and harmonious being in conditions that allow her to organize herself artistically, I was able to go beyond the formal, mechanical approach and discern the human potential hidden within her...

The goal of psychological and neurological testing is not just to find flaws but to break a person down into their component functions and deficits. As expected, this approach left Rebecca in tatters. But now, on this spring day, miraculously, before my eyes, the disparate parts had come together to form a harmonious and balanced being...

We pay too much attention to our patients' defects and too little to their surviving abilities; Rebecca was the first to point this out to me. To use technical jargon once more, we are too much concerned with 'defectology' and too little with 'narratology,' the forgotten and absolutely necessary science of the concrete (Sacks, 2006, p. 235).

Then, in November, Grandma died, and the light and joy of April turned to darkness and sorrow. Rebecca was shaken, but she held herself with remarkable dignity. This fortitude — this new spiritual dimension — added another plane to the bright, lyrical side of her soul that had so struck me before.

I went to see her immediately after hearing the sad news, and she — frozen with grief — received me in her little room in the now-deserted house. Her speech again reminded me of Jackson's 'eruption,' but this time it consisted of short exclamations full of bitterness and suffering:

'Why did she leave?!' Rebecca cried, adding, 'I'm not crying for her; I'm crying for myself.' And then, after a pause: 'Granny's fine. She's in her Long House.'

The Long House! Was it her own image or a subconscious response to the words of Ecclesiastes?

'I'm so cold,' she went on, huddled — 'but it's not outside. Winter is inside. Cold as death.' She finished: 'Grandma was a part of me. A part of me died with her.'

It was a real grief, and Rebecca emerged in it as a full-fledged personality — complete and tragic — without a hint of mental retardation. After half an hour, warmth and life began to return to her, and, having thawed slightly, she said:

It's winter now. I'm dead, but I know that spring will come again.

Rebecca was right: the healing work of grief was slow, but the wound gradually healed. An old aunt, the sister of the deceased grandmother, who had now moved in

with Rebecca, helped a lot. The synagogue, the religious community, and above all the shiva ritual and the special position of the 'mourner' helped. I hope that frank conversations with me brought her some relief. Finally, dreams helped, which she recounted vividly. These dreams precisely followed the known stages of healing of a mental wound (Sacks, 2006, p. 234).

In the above-proposed fragment of Oliver Sacks' story, it is clearly seen that the change of focus in psychological analysis — from Rebecca's physical, adaptive, intellectual disabilities to her experiences — "perezhivanie" — opens up a new dimension in the perception and understanding of this girl as a person with a living soul, perceiving and realizing her life; a girl who deeply and wisely experiences and realizes important life events. And we see truly positive characteristics of Rebecca's personality; we feel the value of her life, the lives of those around her, and life in general.

I would also like to tell you one of my personal stories that made me think about the importance of a child's experiences — "perezhivanie" — about the soul, about the possibilities of mutual understanding not only and not so much through words. This story happened to me and to a boy, Yaroslav, six years old. Yaroslav has a complex developmental disorder associated with a genetically determined disease called tuberous sclerosis, which — along with somatic disorders — also causes damage to the nervous system: epilepsy, speech disorders, and intellectual decline. The boy underwent complex treatment associated with surgical intervention on the brain to reduce epilepsy — as one of the consequences of the underlying disease — and he still takes anticonvulsants. Of course, many skills that are easy for ordinary children to learn are difficult for Yaroslav; at six years old he practically did not speak. My task was to establish communication with the child using pictograms — a way to include mediation in communication in ways accessible to him. It should be said that despite severe impairment in speech communication, Yaroslav is actually a sociable boy — facial expressions, vocalization, behavior — all speak for him; but he cannot speak in the usual way — in words or speech — except for agreement "yes" and, more rarely, refusal "no." He is happy to interact with others, but it is difficult for him to accept and understand those games and tasks which require obedience, repetition of desired actions, quick learning of skills — most often useful or convenient for adults. That's why Yaroslav has a prickly nature; disagreement; a desire to make reality convenient for himself rather than for adults who constantly demand something that is probably useful but boring or suspicious.

Learning to exchange images with Yaroslav was difficult. The boy avoided even touching the pictures, wanted to get what he wanted immediately or bypass the proposed rules. And if he didn't get it, he refused to interact at all and started looking for another ac-

tivity. And he always came up with something! Even in a practically empty room, where all the toys were with an adult, Yaroslav found a piece of paper, simply stamped his feet, took off his socks, and always looked at the adults' reaction, provoking them to interact on his terms.

But gradually, Yaroslav and I managed to make positive friends with the cards and to understand that they can and should be passed around or glued to a tablet because it helps to play and communicate.

And now I am approaching the key dramatic story with Yaroslav. We met again at the lesson, and again he had a certain stubbornness to do things his own way and not agree to my suggestions. Yaroslav played with my toys for a while and even asked for a card, but then tried to snatch the toy; I did not allow it without exchanging the card. The boy showed a reaction of free resistance and began to look for something interesting in the practically empty room — after all, I am the "banker" — I have all the toys, which I will gladly give out but only in exchange for a card with the appropriate picture.

Yaroslav began stubbornly looking for a replacement for my toys. And, oh horror! In the far corner of the room under the radiator, he found a piece of glass. Indeed, a month earlier, another boy broke a glass mug in this room; we carefully cleaned everything up — there seemed to be no traces left — but not for Yaroslav: he found it! This is his superpower — to find something unexpected for others and change their plans and intentions.

Of course, Yaroslav was happy! Such a large piece of glass that you can carry in your hand; through which you can look at the light; with which you can scratch a wall or a chair — how many games you can come up with using this piece of glass! And most importantly — you can be independent from an adult, from his box of toys, and from his demands — even such minimal ones as exchanging a card for a toy.

My task was to take away this dangerous object — which, of course, is not a toy for a child. It was obvious that running after it and taking it away was dangerous — most likely Yaroslav would regard it as a game; if he tried to take it away himself, he might squeeze the glass in his palm by force — and then everything would really be bad.

I tried to outwardly treat his find as emotionally calmly as possible, not to run after him, but at the same time enthusiastically playing with my toys from the box. In the end, Yaroslav came up and became interested in the massager, which was humming and rattling. The boy came up to the table where I was sitting and put the piece of glass down; at the same time, he looked at me very expressively, as if saying: "This is my toy and you can't touch it." But what could I do — I, of course, quickly grabbed this piece of glass and threw it out the window. Yaroslav's reaction was immediate, it was pre-

dictable and fair — he was offended, indignant, because his only toy that he personally found was treacherously taken away from him! The boy threw himself on the floor, screamed, turned to the wall and was not going to talk to me anymore.

I paused to think, and, frankly, in quiet despair, I sank to the floor by the wall next to Yaroslav, who was lying and screaming in despair. I would like to emphasize the similarity of our experiences: I was also in despair, because the lesson was ruined, because such a treacherous action of mine could forever break the thin bridge of trust that we had been building for so long... Experiencing the full depth of the failure, I began to speak in a quiet, calm voice with complete respect and sympathy for his experiences, his *perezhivanie*. Slowly and with all sincerity, I told him that I was very sorry, that I understood his offense and sympathized with him very much, because it was his toy. But I had to take it away, because in fact it was a very dangerous object, not a toy. And I apologized for my treachery. I offered to look at my toys and choose what he liked. I really empathized with him and shared my experiences — "*perezhivanie*". Let me remind you that the boy was non-verbal and the question of his complete understanding of my words remained open, but in addition to words there were also my emotional experiences, my attitude towards Yaroslav, towards his and my actions in the situation.

Surprisingly, after a while Yaroslav got up from the floor, came up to me and pointed to a balloon. I asked: "Should I blow up the balloon?" — He answered: "Yes." Then we played together, Yaroslav took the cards and passed them on, looked at similar pictures on the cards — a blue ball and a light blue balloon. He tried to figure out what was drawn there so that he could ask me for it. And after some time he just came closer, hugged me tightly and trustingly — these were the most precious moments of understanding and gratitude.

After the lesson, while Yaroslav was with another specialist, I talked to his mother. I told her how the lesson went and how I managed to get out of a difficult situation with a piece of glass, how Yaroslav hugged me in a burst of trust and gratitude. I sincerely told his mother that Yaroslav's ingenuity in finding his alternative activities is in fact an indicator of his personality's activity, his inner experience of independence, his desire for self-reliance. And that I respect him for the challenges that I have to accept from him at each lesson. And his mother also sincerely thanked me. I think that this is very important for parents, for their difficult experiences that fill every day in a difficult, non-standard life situation.

I would like to emphasize one more aspect of the problem of studying *perezhivanie*, namely, taking into account the interaction of *perezhivaniya*. Here is one of the memoirs about the practical work of Lev Semenovich Vygotsky: "... during one of the clinical analyses that

he regularly conducted at the EDI (Experimental Defectological Institute) base and to which almost half of the pedagogical Moscow flocked, Vygotsky was shown a child brought from the countryside. Everyone in the village considered the boy feeble-minded, and only his own grandfather stubbornly did not accept this general verdict and, as it turned out, he was right: the grandson was found to have hearing loss, and the feeble-mindedness was secondary, imaginary. 'Thank you, chief,' the old man said, approaching Vygotsky and bowing low. 'Thank you for recognizing my grandson and treating me, an old man, with respect. I have been to many places, but only here have I seen good people' (Vygotskaya, Lifanova, 1996, pp. 158–159).

It should be noted that what is important in this story is not only identifying the real reason for the deviation in the grandson's development, but also taking into account the grandfather's *perezhivaniya*, a respectful human attitude to the experience of pain and despair that constantly accompanies the parents of special needs children, because this is the social situation of development in which the child develops, his *perezhivanie* and his consciousness are formed.

"When you touch suffering, if you manage to give a little strength to the despairing, something strong and true falls upon you — love, probably" — this is a quote from the book "The Not Scary World" by Maria Berkovich. In this book, you can also find many valuable artistic descriptions of communication with special needs children and observations of the *perezhivaniya* of these children, as well as the author herself (Berkovich, 2014, p. 22).

By paying attention to experiences — "*perezhivanie*", we will be able not only to explain, but first of all to accept (!) a special child and his family into society, and this radically changes the point of view, allows us not to dwell on shortcomings, defects, but to adjust our view, our optics to what the child already has, and then to search for what resources this child and his family have. I think that almost all specialists working in practice will agree that children manifest themselves differently, reveal their skills and capabilities depending on the attitude towards them, as well as towards their immediate environment. And here a special perspective arises for considering and clarifying the content of the child's zone of proximal development, i.e. the development of the concept of "*perezhivanie*" will allow us to clarify, continue the development of such an important concept as the "zone of proximal development", and this is especially important and even necessary for special psychology.

If we return to the problem of the social situation of development, in which the child develops, including the inclusion of a sign as the most important element for the formation of higher mental functions, then the drama, the collision that occurs during the interaction

of an adult and a child, the clash of their experiences and the solution of some of their internal tasks by the child himself are very important. According to the law of cultural development, in which higher mental functions are formed, the basis is a contradiction, conflict, dramatic collision between a child and an adult (Veresov, 2016). I think it is important to keep in mind that this law works in both directions; a new understanding, awareness through experience can appear not only in a child, but also in an adult. And these mutual experiences not only matter and create the social situation of development itself, but also determine the angle of resolution of a dramatically tense social situation. After all, an adult also solves his/her internal problems, and then the question of coordination, mutual understanding between an adult and a child arises, and this is especially acute in the situation of teaching a child with deviations in psychophysical development, since children have different sensitivity, different interests and capabilities that still need to be identified and the situation organized in such a way that an adult can find himself/herself on the same territory of experiences with a child, so that a dramatic collision is not reduced to just a superficial emotional outburst, but systematically affects the entire psyche and leads to new contents of consciousness. If we accept the concept of "experience" as the leading problematic, then we make more vital and truly dramatic the question of how and in what way to create a situation of formation of higher mental functions in a child with special needs, how to provide him/her with cultural development, what kind of workarounds should be built in each specific case. It is also worth considering the impact that a child has on an adult, on his/her experiences, understanding and awareness. And here the process is important, the search itself, movement in the right direction, dynamics, since often achieving the normative level of development of higher mental functions, arbitrariness and self-regulation in behavior in children with special needs is not always possible. We observe human imperfection even under the condition of normotypic psychophysical development, and what can we say about those complex paths of development when there are psychophysiological disorders. But here the movement itself, the direction, any achievements — both large and small — are important, since first of all, it is the experiences, their quality and depth that matter.

And again returning to the question of the soul, we can say with confidence that it is in special psychology, as in no other field of psychology, that the problem of the existence of consciousness and soul in man in conditions of imperfection, the breakdown of the biological basis of the psyche, aggravated by the situation of social isolation, is acutely revealed in a dramatic way. The tragic note of the deep experience expressed by Lev Semenovich Vygotsky in his brilliant work on Hamlet sounds especially tense: "The very fact of human exist-

tence — his birth, his life given to him, his separate existence, isolation from everything, isolation and loneliness in the universe, abandonment from the unknown world to the known world and his constant dedication to two worlds that flows from here — is tragic" (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 324).

For a special child and his family, this tragedy is especially acutely felt, especially deeply experienced, and from this an incredibly deep existential understanding can be born, although it may not be expressed in a complex, ornate form, but very simply, but hitting the most essential point.

It may seem strange, but I will return to the earliest recorded manuscript of the young Lev Vygotsky, entitled "The Tragicomedy of Searches" (Zavershneva, 2022). In this manuscript, Vygotsky speaks not only about the soul, but also about the path of maturation of the spirit, which passes through the crucible of despair, tragedy and decay, but with the possibility of searching for the meaning and justification of life, constantly groping for an acceptable, possible and worthy way of life for a person. A child's illness, a deviation in his development, a search for an opportunity to organize a worthy way of life in society, capturing the manifestations of his soul — this is probably the greatest existential request, causing deep tragic experiences in parents, and the child himself is in the field of these experiences. The whole world must be justified so that it is possible to live on. Most often, there is no single correct solution, no final reconciliation, but there are searches, there are the most important moments of the emergence of solutions, the emergence of opportunities for reconciliation. The life of a child with special needs must be justified in its entirety, and this justification is contained in life experiences.

Conclusion

1. Recognition of the concept of "perezhivanie" as the main, core concept for cultural-historical psychology in general and special psychology in particular will allow us to treat the value of any person with respect and care, regardless of their intellectual and adaptive capabilities, and will ensure the initial application of an existential and humanistic approach when working with children with special needs. The experiences of each person are unique; they are hidden in the inner world of consciousness, mysterious, and cannot be ranked quantitatively by assigning points, as in assessing cognitive intellectual indicators. This allows us to avoid an unhealthy dichotomy — dividing people into smart and stupid, useful and useless, important and unimportant, promising and unpromising.

2. If we put the concept of "perezhivanie" at the forefront, then special psychology in theory and practice

can be considered as a direction in which it is necessary to consider the value of human life as such and then create conditions for the maximum possible development of mental functions in order to provide support for adaptation and the creation of a decent way of life.

3. The appeal to the concept of "perezhivanie" causes the need for careful work on the operationalization of this concept, the development of its substantiated content, and the definition of what experience is, what its internal components are, and how their changing dynamic unity manifests. To do this, it is necessary to again turn to the works of L.S. Vygotsky, carefully study the law of cultural development formulated by him and how this law manifests itself in life — how, on the basis of this law, a person develops cultural conscious forms of relationship with reality. After all, the main consequence arising from this basic law is the recognition of perezhivanie as a unit of consciousness (Veresov, 2007). Then there is a need to clarify basic concepts of cultural-historical psychology such as "higher mental functions," "zone of proximal development," "mediation," "arbitrariness," etc., taking into account the developed content of the concept of experience.

4. Careful development of the concept of "perezhivanie" leads to the need to clarify methodological approaches in specific areas of work with children with special needs. Taking into account the reality of the child's experiences and his social environment, it is possible and necessary to individualize teaching strategies, more effectively organize a child's life with certain developmental features, optimize interaction with society, and solve inclusion issues — all while taking into account shared experiences. Priority is given to teaching ways of understanding and expressing one's experiences through cultural means and inclusion in social conditions and interactions where a child with special needs (and later an adult) can live with dignity, adapting to difficult life circumstances.

5. When actualizing the content of "perezhivanie," not only does the final result become important but also the process: searching for workarounds, interaction among people's experiences, moments of insight in forming new contents of consciousness. The movement toward seeking normality can be filled with creative experiences; what matters here is not only achieving results but also experiencing important life realizations through these experiences. Development occurs constantly; not only does an adult teach a child and contribute to his consciousness development, but a child also teaches an adult — filling his life with new challenges that lead to deeper understanding. The goal is not merely measurable social success but daily work on creating one's own life story — composed of various experiences embodied in real actions — where each day gains special value through a search for meaning even in simple everyday tasks.

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