

The Role of Reading in the Development of Giftedness in the Context of Globalization and National Identity

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Abstract

The article explores the cultural potential of reading as one of the factors in the development of children's giftedness. The role of the book as the bearer of culture in the process of preserving national identity is revealed. The authors of the article discover the growing importance of family reading in the process of a gifted person development. The survey of respondents, university teachers living in multiethnic environment in the territories of Armenia and the Republic of Tatarstan, confirmed the importance of national literature in future teachers training. The question of the correlation of such phenomena as globalization and the preservation of national identity is touched upon.

Key words: *reading, cultural factor, national and cultural identity, traits of giftedness.*

Introduction

At present preserving national and cultural identity becomes one of the most important problems of the civilizational world order. The statement of the issue is relevant for the post-Soviet area, which witnesses, on the one hand, the loss of identification foundations, on the other hand, the search for a new identity (Bozhkova, 2014).

According to E.A. Matveyeva the essence of the national identity is constituted by "national representations common to a certain social community and formed in the process of intra-cultural socialization and interaction with other nations" (Matveyeva, 2004, p. 9). The basis for ethno-cultural consciousness should be the desire for mutually enriching communication between representatives of various ethnic groups. In this process national literature is of special

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significance. In this process not the last place is occupied by national literature since national identity is connected with the concept of national culture (Bochkareva *et al.*, 2017), which includes the results of spiritual and material activities. S.G. Ter-Minasova emphasizes the relevance of the approach to the study of "national literatures in the historical dialogue of cultures" (Ter-Minasova, 2012) which becomes especially necessary in the context of globalization (Korableva and Kalimullina, 2016; Lyubimova *et al.*, 2015). The national character that underlies the national identity is best embodied in national literature. It should only be added that the trinity "national character - national identity - national literature" is reflected in the native language, therefore it is legitimate to talk about "native literature" along with the notion of "national literature".

Reading is viewed upon as a multidimensional process having to do with comprehension, meaning, or understanding. Reading is a cultural event since it takes place in a given culture that affects what, how, where, when and even why people read. Still there are other dimensions of reading that go beyond purely mental perception - an affective dimension (Erbilgin, 2017; Osadchy and Akhmetshin, 2015). It sees reading as enjoyment, pleasure, excitement, even magic (Winner, 2012). Readers can travel in time and space, visit even nonexistent places and people (Shkilev, 2013). Readers open to this magical dimension of reading get a flow experience.

The first contact with native literature occurs, as a rule, in the family (Zetkina, 2011). In this connection it seems crucial "in the conditions of the negative influence of the modern socio-cultural and information situation, the reading crisis, the weakening of the role of the book in the family upbringing, parents' not being ready for participation in the upbringing and development of children as readers" to preserve and develop the tradition of family reading (Kurganskaja, 2013, p. 41) as home environment. "<...>home environments of very gifted children <...> tend to be enriched <...> with lots of books and stimulation. Even if the parents don't have lots of money, they have very high values in education" (Winner, 2012, p. 79).

Produced by educationalists lists of characteristics of very able and gifted children invariably includes being a good reader and very articulate or verbally fluent for their age [A Report for the Council of Curriculum, 2006, p. 11, large vocabulary, good memory of things read and strong comprehension of texts (Smith, 1991).

A priori that reading is one of the cultural factors of personality development. It is obvious that education should correlate with culture, not only with the world literary heritage, but also with native literature (Ter-Minasova, 2012), the acquaintance with which begins, as a rule, already at

the preschool age. As our research has shown, fairy tales are a favorite literary genre for preschoolers and junior schoolchildren (74%). This is explained by the fact that a fairy tale contributes to the development of the child's emotional sphere (Shkilev, 2015; Ibatullin and Anisimova, 2017), a fairy tale is accessible for comprehension of concepts such as the good and the evil, a fairy tale forms a sense of justice, because, as a rule, the good conquers the evil (Yigit and Tarman, 2016; Magmusov, 2017; Aydarova et al., 2017). One of the many advantages of a fairy tale is the reliance on national roots. From early ages a child gets acquainted with the tales of different peoples, gets the first lessons of acquiring and appropriating national identity, gets the first idea of a different culture, learns self-identity gradually mastering the unique intellectual, emotional and behavioral patterns of the ethnos (Tarman, 2016; Magmusov, 2013; Korableva and Kalimullina, 2014).

The earlier the awareness of the importance of reading occurs, the more successfully the development of the child's personality progresses. The so-called "cultural development" (Vygotskij, 1991) creates the conditions for the intellectual development of the child, contributes to the manifestation of signs of giftedness in early childhood. As the survey shows, in a multi-lingual environment reading aloud as the main form of family communication should be based on texts of native literature.

Method

The problem of supporting and developing gifted children is not new in the psycho-pedagogical science. However, the question of how to make each gifted child a gifted adult still remains urgent. It's no secret that very often the endowments which used to admire people around disappear after the child starts schooling (Mauch and Tarman, 2016; Tünkler et al., 2016). It also happens that a person who was not considered gifted or even capable in childhood achieves success (Tarman, et al., 2015; Korableva and Litun, 2014). This suggests that some children do not show their talent in any way or adults for some reason do not create the conditions for the activity in the course of which the development of a gift of a certain type is possible" (Savenkov, 2012, p. 57-58).

Scholars have found out that the greatest effect in the upbringing and education of gifted children is obtained by investing resources in preschool and primary not higher education, as is done now. The Nobel laureate James Heckman and his students proved that investments at the earliest age

(0-6 years) are the most effective from the point of view of man development (Heckman, 2000). In this respect, perhaps, the most important effect is produced by those measures that the society is taking to create developing environment for working with children of preschool age.

As it is stated in the Federal State Educational Standard, "understanding of literature as one of the main national and cultural values of the people" becomes the primary goal of school education in Russia, as it is called upon to ensure "cultural self-identification" (Prikaz Ministerstva, 2010).

In the multilevel model of outstanding talent, developed by B.S. Bloom, at each stage a central role is assigned to the teacher who is capable of making contribution to the talent evolution that elicits progress (Bloom, 1982, p. 664–668). A gifted child should be taught and brought up by a gifted teacher, while future educators and teachers who are able to work with gifted children can be prepared only by a gifted teacher (Akhmetshin et al., 2017; Waters and Russell, 2016). It seems that everything is logical and simple. But in reality gifted teachers are not so numerous. Therefore, it is very important to identify the so-called pedagogical giftedness in children and young people on time and support it in every way possible (Kotelnikova, 2014).

T.M. Khrustaleva regards pedagogical giftedness as a psychological prerequisite for the development of the endowments that will allow the gift-bearer to achieve success in the field of "man-man" activity. In her opinion, this is a certain dynamic system that has certain age characteristics and is formed in the process of life activity through interaction with the cultural and social environment of the child (Khrustaleva, 2012).

There are several factors that influence the development of giftedness: social, psychological, pedagogical and others. In our opinion, among them a cultural factor deserves special attention. Unfortunately, recently the latter is considered by researchers only in the context of linguistic endowments development (Scherbatyh, 2015). However, the significance of the cultural factor should be considered in a broader way since it is culture that makes the core of the spiritual upbringing of a person, his activity and life-building. A person who can be considered quite cultural, as a rule, views reading as a vital mental creative process leading to the knowledge of the world and the enrichment of the mind (Korableva et al., 2017 a; Korableva et al., 2017 b).

In order to determine the role of reading as a cultural factor in the disclosure of an individual's potential and development of giftedness, we carried out a survey in two universities: Yelabuga Institute of Kazan Federal University and H. Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University. In our survey, 136 teachers aged between 25 and 79 took part. Since the research was aimed at solving

several problems, it took into account the nationality of the respondents, the majority of which were Tatars, Russians and Armenians (representatives of other nationalities accounted for 7% of all those who took part in the survey). The following sub-headings should be used in this section.

Findings

We believe that only gifted people are able to become successful university teachers with high performance indicators. However, only 38% of respondents with confidence confirmed that they showed talent in childhood. This suggests that there is a hidden talent that under certain favorable conditions may become obvious.

All teachers who took part in the survey confirm the importance of reading as a cultural factor in the development of giftedness. They believe that reading promotes development of any kind of giftedness (in practical, cognitive, artistic and aesthetic, communicative and spiritual and value activities). 89% of the teachers interviewed also noted that books read in childhood remain relevant during life and the process of personal development.

In the respondents' opinion, reading promotes development of general children's talent into the special endowment of an adult, thereby ensuring achievement of high results in the activities. It should be noted that leisure reading is meant, which, for example, in the process of the formation and development of talented teachers is not related directly to pedagogical activity. Respondents believe that leisure reading should be diverse in genre and style and at the same time correspond to the age and personality characteristics of the child (100% of the interviewed teachers); it is under these conditions that the realization of developmental function of reading is ensured.

Discussion of the results

The survey shows that among the books that teachers consider important and significant in their lives are those written by national authors. For example, teachers working in Armenia prefer and recommend for reading literary works of Armenian writers. 80% of the respondents (in a group that was allocated by nationality) indicated them among their favorite works. The same can be said about the teachers of Tatarstan. 28% of respondents, Tatars by nationality, named the works of

Tatar writers as their favorite books. These results testify to the importance of the role of native literature in the formation and development of future educators.

Teachers who took part in the survey believe that a successful personality with high achievements in various fields of activity, without abstracting from the processes of globalization, should strive to maintain national identity (100% of respondents). This is confirmed by the fact that interviewed teachers mention the representatives of both native and world literature as favorite authors. The quantitative correlation of national and international authors (classics and contemporaries) mentioned in the answers of the representatives of the three main groups of nationalities among the respondents (Tatars, Armenians, Russians) can be represented as 63% to 37%.

The quantitative analysis of the works by national and international authors mentioned by respondents as favorite and recommended also indicates the importance, in the opinion of the respondents, in the process of personal development in general and the development of general and special giftedness in reading both national and world literature (average ratio - 49% to 51%). The respondents also note that reading of national literature is necessary at all stages of growing up and personal development. However, this is especially important in childhood (pre-school and junior school age) (see Table 1).

Table 1

The importance of reading literature of national authors depending on the readers' age (in the opinion of the survey participants)

Reader's age	Teacher
6-10	63
10-15	59
15-18	56
18-23	41

It can be assumed that the formation of national identity is laid precisely in early and middle childhood (2-6 and 6-12 years), and the effectiveness of the processes of national self-identification and familiarizing with other cultures within the framework of interculturization and globalization depends on the family. All the teachers who participated in the study confirm the importance of the family not only in the development of the child, his general and special giftedness, but also in the specified processes that predetermine the success of the individual in achieving high rates of professional and social performance (100% of respondents).

Conclusion

Thus, our study showed that irrespective of the country of residence, the teachers of higher education recognize in the absolute majority the importance of reading as a cultural factor in the development and support of the individual's giftedness, pedagogical included. Therefore in the context of the decline in reader's activity it is necessary to develop additional measures to attract the attention of children and young people to the literary heritage both of their nation and the peoples of other countries.

The carried out research, on the one hand, confirms the correctness of the hypotheses put forward by the authors, on the other hand, it indicates the direction of further research of the problems under consideration. For example, the question of the influence of reading native literature in the early childhood on the development of children's talent remains open for research. Of importance is also a more detailed study of the role of family reading and the specifics of its organization in the context of globalization and the preservation of national identity.

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