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DIALOGIC PEDAGOGY: THE ORIGINS OF THE CONCEPTUAL BLEND

In view of the uprising pursuit of dialogic policies in education as well as its being a civilizational hallmark, dialogic communication is regarded as one of the pivotal teaching competences. However, its conceptual sidelines are a matter of remarkable controversy caused by the complicated genealogy of the term and thus notable differences in the subsidiary concepts. This article presents an attempt to diversify understanding of pedagogic dialogue depending on the standpoints exercised by its proponents and the underlying concepts attached to its conceptual scheme. As a result of this analysis there have been exposed the existence of two basically divergent approaches incorporated in the system of pedagogic views: the approach stemming from theories related to the liberal and democratic dialogic paradigm and the one originating from existential philosophic trends. While the former one rests on the principles of freedom, equality, right and compromise, the latter rather represents an existential conceptual paradigm creating a domain for such principles as juxtaposition, intersubjectivity, personal inclusiveness and predominance of the interlocutor.

Key words: dialogic pedagogy, equality, compromise, juxtaposition, intersubjectivity, personal inclusiveness, predominance of the interlocutor.

The global acknowledgement of the benefits of dialogue on all levels of social intercourse has given a remarkable rise to an exceedingly growing number of views and perspectives on how dialogic approach should be understood and exercised in modern pedagogy. The sophisticated elaborate genealogy of the notion of dialogue necessitated a thorough study of its conceptual base further incorporated in the system of pedagogical knowledge.

A terminological analysis testifies to the fact that the notion of dialogic communication is regarded in pedagogics on two levels: as an objectivated form of democratic intercourse in school life (G. Birukova, G. Davydova and others) and as a means of satisfying the child's need of acceptance and profound personal contact (V. Andriyevska, B. Bratus, N. Volodko and others). It should be noted that this analysis has no reference to the definition of dialogue in its didactic modification as an heuristic investigation method as this aspect of the problem with regard to the whole range of peculiarities must become the object of another study. Herein we enclose a summary table of the definition base of the notion of dialogic communication in pedagogy.

Definition Base of the concept of “Dialogic Communication” in pedagogical literary sources

Definition Base of the concept of “Dialogic Communication”	Authors
Dialogic communication is a teacher-student interaction directed at creating a favourable psychological climate and facilitating comprehensive personality development.	N. Savina
Dialogue is a coexistence, betweenness in which influence gives way to psychological cohesion making mutual creative activity and personality development happen.	N. Volodko G. Kovaliov
Dialogic communication presupposes personal equality, subject-subjectivity, convergence of teacher's and learner's needs, buildup of the potential of coherence and cooperativeness, freedom of discussion, striving for creativity, personal and professional growth, prevalence of devices organizing students' self-study.	S.Bratchenko
Dialogic communication is a higher spiritual level of communication implying authentic personal involvement in the problems and interests of the interlocutor, mutual search of truth, striving for unity and harmony.	B. Bratus, N. Volodko, A. Dobrovych

Dialogue is a system of specially organized interactions directed at the solution of these or those tasks in education that presuppose equality of rights, partnership, mutual understanding, exchange of ideas and views.	G. Biriukova, G. Davydova, N. Labunska
Dialogue is a complex process of establishment and development of contacts between students and teachers originating from the need of common activity and includes information exchange, building an integrated strategy of interaction, perception and understanding of another person.	O. Matveyeva

It is quite obvious that these interpretations are based on different conceptual paradigms. In our view, they should not be treated as contradictory or those that exclude each other. They should rather be regarded as conceptual bases that are supposed to build the base for different levels of pedagogical dialogue. Presumably, these levels are the level of cooperation (organization of the pedagogical process as a common cause, structuring and distribution of responsibilities etc.) and the interpersonal (human-to-human) level involving quite different psychological dispositions characteristic of human relations rather than of the functional professional interaction. Importantly, understanding the difference between these paradigm calls for different approaches to teacher training as the teacher's skill set for each of them will be viewed as different as well. Thus, for instance, object-oriented dialogue requires before all a good command of operational and actional parameters of pedagogical interaction, good organizational skills and communicative competence. Dialogical communication of interpersonal level requires an extended range of personal qualities, insights as well as the proper level of communicative culture.

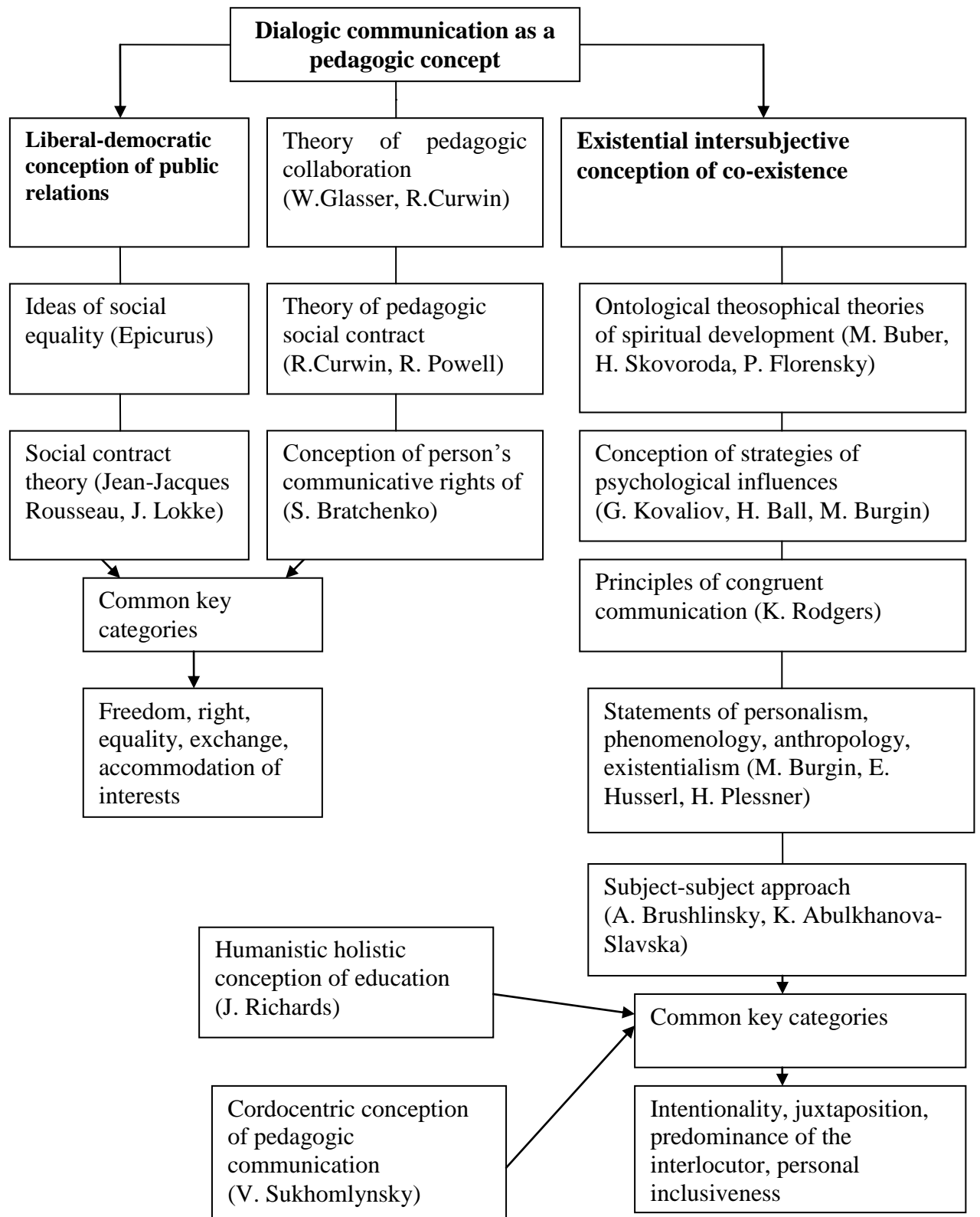
Going by the criterion of personal directedness we single out two relatively independent conceptual lines which are based on different networks of values and categories and are firmly linked with diverse types of worldview: liberal democratic conception of public relations and existential ontological conception of co-existence.

Liberal democratic conception of dialogue with its ideas of equal rights, pluralism and compromise of interests correlates with pedagogical approaches of

democratic education. In its context dialogue is a means of ensuring equal rights of teacher and pupil to self-expression and self-fulfillment, establishing their own position and mutual respect to it and also a constructive method of mutual search of practical solutions.

Giving the right to equality to a traditionally “less privileged” stratum echoes the global sociopolitical processes reflecting the philosophical position originating from the ideas of Epicurus. This type of interaction was viewed as singularly optimal as people are equal by birth and there must exist a “common paragon of justice”. Gradually these ideas were developed into an integral paradigm of social dialogue as a special type of communication between social groups, subjects of political life, public institutions based on the principles of trust, equality, mutual responsibility and directed at resolving social contradictions in a civilized way.

This pragmatic actional view of dialogue is based on the categorical network of “freedom-equality-right-compromise” quite distinctively represented in Western pedagogic conceptions of teacher-learner cooperation and social contract (R. Curwin, W. Glasser, B. Posner, R. Powell etc.). Cooperation as a dialogic form is regarded as an alternative to the competitive and individualistic interactional strategies between all the subjects of educational process and grants the teacher the role of a partner, leader and manager, guide and facilitator who delegates power to the learner. This kind of partnership presupposes shared responsibility for the results of the common cause, equal right to its assessment and free exchange of possibly critical remarks concerning faults and mistakes. According to J. Dewey, school must become a reflection of society, a laboratory of real life experience. He continually stressed upon the social function of school, the necessity to organize the educational environment in the way that it would contribute to the development of students’ social skills as well as skills of cooperation in the process of everyday interactions. The following diagram presents the system of conceptual connections of the concept of “dialogic communication” in pedagogy:



Social contract in pedagogy is a prototype of the same-named conception substantiated by J. Lokke and J.- J. Rousseau as an optimal way of regulating relations, rights and responsibilities of parties in a class-divided society. This

theory gradually spread to the sphere of pedagogy where the authoritarian form of management with a dominant position of the teacher and a subordinate position of the learner had been recognized as ineffective. In pedagogic context social contract came to be viewed as a continuous process of dialogue directed at regulating relations between interacting subjects in the framework of agreements and assumed responsibilities.

The development of pedagogic social contract, according to R. Powell, includes several aspects: inclusion of communicative norms between teacher and learner as well as between learners as an issue at class meetings, discussion and accommodation of rules of interaction, students' suggestions concerning the teacher's behavior. R. Curwin's research into students' requirements to the teacher and registered the following ones: the teacher should not humiliate the students' dignity, should not address them with their second names only, should not exercise pressure on the low-achieving learners or show open preference towards some particular students, keep marks in confidence etc. The teacher expresses his or her wishes as to students' behavior as well as each other's [Curwin, 1980].

A kind of a normative approach towards interpretation of the essence of dialogic communication presented by S. Bratchenko. Believing in the importance of equality of the participants of dialogue, S. Bratchenko developed a construct of communicative rights of a person describing a system of psychological base of communication and defining the framework of the interlocutors' freedom. The main communicative rights are the right to one's own system of values, the subject's responsibility, self-determination, dignity and respect, individuality and originality, independence and sovereignty, free non-regulated thoughts.

The other system of views concerning the essence of pedagogic dialogue is a conceptual analogue of dialogic philosophy which, in their turn, correlate with such modern philosophic trends such as phenomenology, anthropology, personalism, existentialism and, in G. Diakonov's view, reveal the intersubjective, spiritual, transcendental, humanitarian cultural nature of consciousness and communication, personality and the life space of a person. On the crossroads of

these ideas, dialogue appears to be not a particular kind of communicative interaction, but a spiritual, ontological, intersubjective cultural phenomenon.

Despite the fact that dialogue as a notion appeared in pedagogical theory considerably later than its practice, a whole range of ideas equivalent to those formulated in the philosophy and psychology of dialogue were expressed by pedagogues prior to their appearance as concepts of dialogic education on the academic level.

For instance, among H. Skovoroda's assumptions we can find ideas identical to the principles of dialogic communication: observing a close connection between the quality of pedagogic communication and the pedagogue's spiritual development, he actually preceded the existential conception of dialogue by M. Buber and M. Bakhtin. Dialogism of his pedagogy was in authentic involvement in the child's inner world and guiding the "young spirit" with "light, delicate, intangible" in accordance with her natural potential. The two dialogists later mirrored this approach, far too humanistic for its age: M. Bakhtin claimed the principle of juxtaposition to be among one of the fundamental ones in dialogic communication and M. Buber introduced another one: the principle of personal inclusion [Slutsky, 2000]. The latter is an essential part of dialogism in pedagogic communication and is a phenomenon of spiritual level in which the pupil becomes part of the teacher's life and soul. In fact, Buber's pedagogic "formula" is as follows: dialogue between "I" and "You" – personal inclusion – trust – compassion – spiritual development of a person. Another fundamental principle of dialogic communication – the predominance of the interlocutor – is to be traced in the views of the outstanding Ukrainian pedagogues. S. Rusova who wrote that "the aim of the school is to awaken and facilitate a child's own creative potentials. The teacher should try to understand the mindset of each pupil, get familiar with the conditions of their lives, determine the level of knowledge. Only considering these individual peculiarities, the pedagogue can add something new and unite the broken parts" [Suknomlynska 2005, p. 143].

The most vivid difference between these conceptual paradigms is to be observed on the level the categories, fundamental for both of them – equality and exchange – are interpreted. While from the point of view of liberal democratic paradigm equality is seen as the fundamental principle of parity of the communication parties, the existential ontological conception regards makes this notion acquire additional, subjective spiritual implications, reflects understanding of the profound essence of interpersonal dialogic communication and is based on the universal notions of truth, unity, development etc. The principle of equality implies symmetry, mutual influences as well as equal responsibility and activeness in the process of upbringing.

The notion of exchange is regarded in these two conceptions differently as well. The liberal democratic paradigm of dialogue involves such an “interaction of social groups and individuals that means a direct exchange of the results of activity performed with regard to the skills, abilities, experience, acquired information which satisfies human need in the contact with other people”. Dialogue as an exchange automatically grants the pupil the position of the subject rather than object of communication. It also encourages the teacher to systematic changes in the personal format, as the idea of exchange does not correlate with reproductive teaching, closed position, but rather stimulates formation of personal senses as information units, ready for exchange, correction and coordination. According to S. Sheyin, dialogic interaction implies sharing knowledge as personal experience.

Existential ontological interpretation of dialogue shows the idea of exchange and its functional potential in quite a different light: as a wholesome mutual reflection, the process of conversion of positive dispositions of one party into satisfaction of needs of the other. In other words, dialogue presupposes exchange of those communicative acts that satisfy the psychological needs of each other.

It is only in this case that the parties create common interpersonal cognitive and reflexive space, the “betweenness” (M. Bakhtin) and in this way reaching the ontological level of communication, conversion of exchange into unity.

The phenomenon of unity, unlike the notions of exchange and equality, belongs only to the existential conception of dialogue and directly or indirectly appears in pedagogic texts.

H. Ball, for instance, points out that dialogic relation take place only when one partner perceives a whole image of the other one recognizing him as part of a community to which he belongs himself. The parties of dialogic intercourse create the so-called collective subject [Ball 1997, p. 35]. According to G. Kovaliov, in the situation of dialogue the two individuals begin to create a common psychological space in which influence gives way to psychological unity, and which makes mutual development as well as self-influence and self-development happen [Kovaliov 1987, p. 46]. A. Dorsky identifies unity as the ultimate result of productive dialogue: “Evolution of dialogue is the development of “betweenness” which does not only change in itself but also changes the borders of interlocutors. The progressing mutual understanding leads to the destruction of the borders and turns contact into the point of complete equality”. A whole range of ideas has been derived by pedagogy from psychological study. Herein there exist two different approaches: the one based on the theory of subjectivity and the social nature of man (A. Brushlinsky, B. Lomov, S. Rubinstein) and regard dialogue as a form of coordination and regulation of functions, the other one is represented by the so-called “optimistic tradition” or humanistic psychology (A. Maslow, K. Rogers) which believes in the uniqueness of each individual and views dialogue as a realization of humane treatment of a person as an absolute value.

In conclusion, it is the different forms of teacher-learner cooperation that determine the interpretation of dialogue and its specific use in pedagogic context. Each of the levels, partnership or person-to-person communication requires observation of a certain kind of rules and specificities of the teacher’s skill set.

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