CREATIVE MANIFESTATIONS IN THE GAME OF YOUNG CHILDREN

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INTRODUCTION:

Is it legitimate to pose the problem of creativity in relation to such young children? After all, it is inextricably linked with the personal development of a person and traditionally refers to his mature forms. However, recent studies have shown that the formation of a child's personality, which includes the formation of one's own attitude to the surrounding objective and social world, as well as to oneself, begins from the first months of life, and by the beginning of early age the "knot" (A. N. Leontiev) is tied, in which these components are combined. Being filled with new content in the process of development, refracted through the peculiarities of the child's individuality, they gradually form a unique ensemble of qualities that determine the child's position in relation to the world. Consequently, already in relation to the early stages of ontogenesis, we can talk about the origin of creative manifestations.

In general, creativity is considered as an activity, the result of which is the creation of new material and spiritual values, generating something new that was not previously. A look at this problem from the point of view of age psychology reveals the need to clarify such an interpretation. First of all, this concerns performance as the main characteristic of creativity. From this point of view, children's play, for

example, does not create values in the common sense of the word. And yet we are talking about creative play, about the ability of children to look at the world in a unique way, transform it in their fantasies. L. S. Vygotsky is right, who wrote that creativity manifests itself wherever a person imagines, changes, departs from the stereotype, creates at least a grain of new for others or for himself. Apparently, in relation to the early stages of children's development, it is necessary to focus on the subjective side of the creative process, on what the child discovers and transforms in himself, in his vision of the world, regardless of the degree of awareness and external effectiveness of this process, on what makes him "a being facing the future, creating and modifying his present".

In this regard, the task arises of finding criteria by which one can judge whether a child has a creative attitude to the world around him. Imagination is traditionally considered one of such criteria.

At the same time, imagination is an important, but not the only characteristic of creativity. The approach to creativity as a personal property requires its analysis, at least from different points of view: its need-motivational side, which assumes that a person has his own activity in cognition, internal initiative that encourages the search for new things, and operational-technical, which implies that the subject

has certain skills to perform a particular activity. After all, "the more complex the creative act, the more difficult his craft. Conversely, the expansion of operational and technical skills also expands the possibilities of applying creative approaches, techniques, methods". In our work, we sought to explore all three aspects of creativity identified.

The approach to creativity in its age and personal aspects also involves an analysis from the point of view of its development, connection with the most significant moments of a child's life: with the nature of his leading activity, the peculiarities of cognitive and communicative spheres, i.e. in a broader context of development.

Among the works carried out in the context of the leading subject activity for an early age and relevant to our problem, it should be noted the study of N. N. Palagina, who studied the development of imagination in children of the second year of life in their tentative research activities with subjects. She discovered at this age elements of fantasy and creativity, which manifested themselves in the ways the child mastered actions with objects. The possibility of constructing an objective action as a creative act is stated in their work by B. D. Elkonin and L. Elkoninova. The criteria of creativity for the authors are the creation by the child of a sample of an action with the subject, the construction of it as their own action. Although the latter work was carried out with preschool children, the reference to it is legitimate in the sense that this study was also carried out at the level of searching for "trace elements" of creativity. Such an approach opens up a broad prospect of searching for the origins of any human activity and discovering new elements in it, expanding the boundaries of understanding human capabilities. The objectives of our research are in line with this problem and are devoted to the search for the foundations of creativity in a special kind of subject activity - a procedural game.

As D. B. Elkonin wrote, the objective action is dual in nature. Firstly, it contains a general scheme reflecting the social significance of the subject. Secondly, it is carried out by certain operational means. These two sides of the objective action are assimilated at different times: first, the child masters the meanings of objects, and then learns to act in accordance with these meanings. The second side is connected with the development of utilitarian practical actions, and the first - activity with the meanings of things - is defined by D. B. Elkonin as an object game. "By its origin, it is a branch that has separated from the common trunk of the child's assimilation of activities with objects and acquired its own logic of development". The differences between the two types

of subject actions are determined by the fact that the subject-practical activity is regulated by the result that is obtained in the course of transformations, and game actions — by the plot and the process of action. Since the defining moment of the game at an early age is the process, it is sometimes called procedural. It was in it that we searched for the origins of the child's creative attitude to the world around him.

Summing up the data available in psychology about the procedural game, it can be characterized as follows. The first game actions appear in the second year of a child's life. From the side of the structure, they are distinguished by fragmentation, monotony, one-act, short duration in combination with endless repetitions of the same action. The content of these actions is imitation of an adult. Only realistic toys serve as game material. The motif of the game is initially at the adult pole. The game unfolds mainly in his presence and requires constant participation. The emotional involvement of the child in the game is weak. Gradually, the baby's own activity develops in it, the variety of actions increases, they begin to form logical chains that reflect the real course of events, the duration of game episodes increases. Substitutions are beginning to creep into the game. Game motivation and the associated emotional component of the game are enhanced.

The appearance of a role in the game, the child's awareness of it, traditionally refers to preschool age. The absence of the latter components is a significant difference between the procedural game and the plot-role-playing game of preschoolers. This gave L. S. Vygotsky a reason to call the object game a quasi-game, and D. B. Elkonin to define it as the prehistory of the game. According to L. S. Vygotsky" "we have a kind of game here, but it is not yet realized for the child himself... objectively, this is already a game, but it has not yet become a game for a child".

Looking at the game of young children from the point of view of its developed forms, the emphasis on its imitative nature allows us to identify its distinctive features, but leaves the creative side of this activity in the shade. But the game acts, according to D. Bruner, "not only as a means of research, but also as a form of manifestation of ingenuity" [3; 71]. A distinctive feature of any game is a combination of repetition and surprise. We believe that the origins of creative play should be sought precisely in this period of childhood, at the stage of the origin of gaming activity.

Studying the creative aspect of the game, we set ourselves the task of discovering the very first moments of a child's discovery of new things. We looked for these moments in such parameters of the

game as its need-motivational aspect, the structure of game actions, features of imagination, the nature of interaction between children and adults during the game.

Building an experimental model, we proceeded from the position of A. N. Leontiev that when studying a particular leading activity, including a game, the researcher's task is not only to explain this activity from the already established mental characteristics of the child, but also to understand from the emergence and development of the game itself those mental characteristics that manifest and form in the child during the period of the leading role of this activity [8]. For this reason, the study was both ascertaining and formative in nature. A series of experiments was conducted with each child, during which the available level of the game and the changes that occurred in it under the influence of an adult and the development of the activity of the child himself were recorded.

METHODOLOGY

In the experiment, the game situation "doll care" was used. On the table there were attributes of the game that allowed for various actions: feeding the doll, putting it to bed, combing, bathing, etc. Among the realistic toys there were objects with an indefinite function that could be used as substitutes for missing objects. The experimenter was next to the child, but occupied a passive observer position, joining the game only as needed. The experiments involved children of two age subgroups: from 1 to 2 years and from 2 to 3 years.

AGE STAGES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVITY IN THE GAME OF YOUNG CHILDREN

The main parameters of gaming activity that characterize both the game as a whole and its creative aspect are included in the table (see). It also includes data that allows us to judge age differences in the manifestations of children's creativity.

The second year of life is the period of the birth of the procedural game. The data of one-time slices made it possible to once again fix those weaknesses mentioned above. It should be noted that the figures in the first column of the table reflect not so much the features of the individual game of children, but rather a game played together with an adult who, with his participation, display, support, ensured that the game took place. However, for our purposes, it is more important to trace how new acquisitions accumulate in a joint game with an adult, allowing each child to highlight the creative potential. The grounds for such a separation were given by a formative experiment with children of this age. From

the point of view of the need-motivational aspect of the game, it should be noted the rapid change in the attitude of children towards it during several meetings with the experimenter — from complete indifference to interested acceptance. This was expressed in a statistically significant increase in the duration of the game for all subjects, in a rapid transition from manipulation to game actions, in an increase in the emotionally positive coloring of the game, in the appearance of independent actions (the latter indicator increased in some subjects by 8-10 times). Each subsequent game session revealed an increasing willingness of children to play. At the same time, the role of an adult gradually began to be reduced not to teaching influences, but to supporting the initiative of the child and the atmosphere of the game. Thus, there was a gradual formation of the child's own need for play.

The following changes occurred in the structure of game actions: during the joint game, its imitative character was quickly lost. The main indicator of this was the parameter of variability of game actions. As they master the game skills, children gradually begin to enrich the adult's game with their own elements. This is manifested in the fact that the child: 1) begins to reproduce the actions of an adult in relation to different objects; 2) varies the order of actions; 3) diversifies the set of toys with which the game action is carried out (for example, feeds a doll from different devices that an adult did not use); 4) changes the pattern of the game movement (from complete imitation of an adult to introducing its own nuances into it). Thus, there is a gradual expansion of the horizon of the game, which begins to develop both in breadth (due to the involvement of an increasing number of objects) and in depth (during the testing and improvement of various ways of performing game actions).

It is also interesting to analyze game actions from the point of view of their orientation to different objects. Such objects in the game can be the child himself (for example, he feeds himself with a toy spoon), a doll, a partner in the game, objects (the kid diligently stirs something with a spoon in a saucepan, depicting cooking).

For children of the second year of life, actions with a doll are characteristic. At the same time, quite often (in 24% of cases) children perform playful actions with themselves, interspersing them with playing with a doll. What is the reason for this behavior? It can be assumed that this is due to the gradual development of an imaginary situation by the child. In order to feel himself in the game atmosphere, he independently tries out the boundaries of reality and fiction, which are not always clearly realized.

Feeding the doll with an imaginary candy, and then "trying" it himself, the child seems to make sure that this is a game, that it is "make-believe". Some children do such actions with humor, laughing and enjoying new sensations. And this experience of mastering game reality is their own invention.

In general, describing the movement of game actions at this age segment, we can distinguish the following stages:
1) watching an adult play;
2) joining it and playing together;
3) full imitation on the initiative of an adult;
4) independent imitation with the appearance of variability of game actions;
5) the emergence of independent game actions.

The last two points can serve as a starting point for the origin of creative game action. In short, this process can be described as the transformation of an action shared with an adult into an individual action of a child, during which he tries out schemes known to him in different conditions and invents his own.

The appeal to the traditional aspect of the game (imagination) shows that the game of children of the second year of life has a reproductive character: their actions are entirely determined by the visual situation and actions in the imaginary plan of an adult, and the use of substitutions is an imitation of it and is poorly understood by the child. The development of substitutions during this period will be discussed a little later.

In the third year of life, the game undergoes significant changes. It should be emphasized that the results of experiments with children of this age, presented in the table, reflect an individual game in which the experimenter did not interfere meaningfully, while the data on children of the second year of life include adult influences, without which the game could not take place. But even this circumstance did not reduce the statistical significance of the differences in the two samples of children. The parameters of the need-motivation sphere have sharply increased, among which we especially note the increase in the independence of children in the game.

The most significant changes in the structure of game actions affected their variability. Not only has the variety of actions increased, but their reorientation has also occurred. The focus of the older children's attention was not a doll, as in the younger ones, but an object that performs the role of a means in the game. The scattered actions of younger children were replaced by a consistent and independent development of different schemes of one action and options for transitions to another. So, in order to cook a doll lunch, the child could cut vegetables for 15 minutes, put them in a saucepan, stir, taste, set the

table, etc. P., while a kid of one and a half years old, with a cursory movement, brought a spoon to the doll's mouth and put it aside. In this processality, the main events related to creativity unfold. Although the child cannot yet break away from the reliance on the objective situation, nevertheless, the content of his game actions allows us to evaluate them as an independent study and modeling of reality in game circumstances.

The main changes taking place in the sphere of imagination are due to the fact that substitutions are firmly included in the repertoire of children's play behavior. Almost all children easily and independently find objects that are really missing, but necessary for them, among multifunctional objects and freely include them in the game. Indicators such as: a) independent choice of substitute items; b) flexibility in changing the function of items; c) original names and actions; d) criticality to the partner's substitutions, which indicates the presence of their own special vision of the environment, collectively indicate that imagination at this age acquires a creative character.

Let us dwell in more detail on the symbolic use of objects by children, since it is the main line of development of play activity, as well as a means of developing a child's thinking and speech at an early age. The ability to imagine one thing through another characterizes both the game, and the imaginative representation, and verbal thought. According to J. Bruner, the game serves as the ground on which the ways of organic connection of thinking, speech and imagination are tested [10]. The following scheme of the development of substitutions in the game of young children is a generalization of the observations obtained in experiments.

Not every child demonstrates all the described stages in an expanded form, their change proceeds at different speeds. But the general direction reflects, in our opinion, the dynamics of age-related changes in the use of substitutions.

Children start using substitutions quite early. Zh. Piaget attributes this period to the 18th month of the child's life and connects their appearance with the emergence of delayed imitation. In such imitations, the child uses as material not the objects that the adult acted with, but others that he has at hand. Thus, there are differences between the signified and the signifier, the latter can be attached to different objects.

How do such differences arise in the game? Individual facts of early use of some objects by children instead of others can only at first glance be regarded as substitute actions. Analysis of the data obtained shows that it is possible to judge the presence of symbolic substitution in the game only in the context of the game situation as a whole. So, for

example, if a child stirs a stick in a cup, imitating an adult, this does not mean that he replaces a spoon with a stick. At the same time, he can only blindly copy the action, without attaching importance to the object by which this action is carried out. If a child is asked to show a spoon at this moment, he will put aside the wand and show a real spoon. It is clear that such use of one object instead of another can only be called substitution by appearance.

We have identified several stages in the development of symbolic actions with objects.

At the **first** stage, the child uses only realistic toys in the game, and either does not respond at all to an adult's request to find a missing object, or responds negatively. Adult substitutions, accompanied by comments, do not arouse interest in children and do not stimulate imitations. In general, the game is at a low stage of development at this stage.

At the **second** stage, the child discovers interest in the adult's substitute actions and immediately after observation imitates them with the same substitute objects. However, the game behavior in general indicates that such substitutions are unstable, uncritical, and little conscious. This is confirmed by the fact that: 1) the child does not remember the substitute object that the adult played with; 2) when asked about the substitute object, the child mindlessly takes the first object that comes to hand and performs a game action with it that he saw from an adult; 3) the kid does not hesitate to agree with any renaming of objects by an adult; 4) when asked by an adult about different substitute objects, the child points to the same object every time or replaces it with different toys, without thinking about their choice. Thus, in none of the cases does the child "hold on" to his or someone else's replacement. Apparently, he does not have a stable image of the object that he replaces in action. Therefore, the substitution has a formal character and is not significant for the baby. The child imitates an adult, very vaguely aware of the meaning of substitution.

And at this stage, the game is carried out only together with an adult and on his initiative, leaving the child generally indifferent to it.

At the **third** stage, the child performs an independent delayed imitation of the adult's replacement actions. At the same time, there is a fairly accurate and complete copying of them, as well as the concentration of children on their implementation. Often the kids themselves name the substitute object used by an adult, and demonstrate attachment to certain substitutions, which they repeatedly reproduce on their own initiative and with obvious pleasure. Objects that do not have a specific function are filled with new meaning during the game. In repeated

experiments, children often pick them up first, immediately using them in a game action. There are no independent replacements yet. Leading adult questions about new substitutions often cause a negative answer, and sometimes - the choice of a random object that the child has at hand. Thus, substitution at this stage has a meaningful and reproducing character, but is not yet in the least recreative, creative, having the character of its own invention. However, during this period there is an important change in the child's attitude to substitution. If, after randomly choosing a substitute subject, the experimenter asked the kid to reproduce a game action with him, the child either refused to do it, or chose another, more suitable object. For example, Zhenya S. [1; 9] happily feeds, combs the doll with the help of realistic toys. In response to the words of an adult that the doll wants a carrot and asks to find it among the toys, Zhenya quickly takes a toothbrush and shows it to an adult. The experimenter agrees and asks to feed the doll with this carrot. Zhenya looks at the brush in embarrassment and tries to distract the adult's attention by showing him pictures on the wall. Then the girl starts sorting through the objects, finds a drawing of a carrot and happily feeds them to the doll. After a while, Zhenya picks up a toothbrush again and, with the words: "It's necessary to clean", cleans his teeth with it, as if correcting a mistake. This behavior was not observed at the previous stage, where the kid did not care what to do with the game action. Thus, we observe that the child begins to realize the gap between the familiar object (denoted) and another, which acts instead of it, as well as the need to replace it not with any object, but with a suitable one for some quality. It is at this time that the kids refuse to accept any adult substitutions and agree to only some of them. The emergence of criticality when using objects in a new function is, in our opinion, a symptom of the emergence of a truly symbolic use of objects. The most important factor ensuring awareness of the gap between the subject and its meaning and the ability to transfer this meaning to other subjects is speech. The further development of substitutions is connected with it.

At the **next** stage of the game, independent substitutions appear in children's behavior along with imitation ones, which are not borrowed entirely from the experience of observing an adult or playing together with him. The game captures the child more and more and more often unfolds on his initiative. Without going beyond the proposed plot, the child begins to vary the actions of an adult, introducing elements of novelty into them. However, the observed actions are not yet substitutions in the full sense of the word. Expressed initially in action, the transfer of the

meaning of one object to another is still vaguely reflected in the child's consciousness and, when confronted with the need for verbalization, disintegrates. At this stage, the child performs substitution actions, but in response to a question about the name of the objects with which he plays, gives them real names. So, Yura D. [2; 9], diligently stirring something in a saucepan, blowing on a spoon and tasting the food, i.e. clearly engaged in cooking, to the experimenter's question" "What is cooking in your saucepan?" - answers: "There are pyramids and sticks." In 60% of the subjects of the third year of life, there was such a discrepancy between the game use of the object and its "realistic name". Younger children showed even greater instability of substitutions, which was expressed in a rapid slipping from the game action to object manipulation. A more perfect, but also insufficiently differentiated use of substitute items was expressed in their double naming. Olya P. [2; 9], who was asked by the experimenter what she was feeding the doll, immediately replied" "Pyramids, cookies"" The real and game functions of the objects turned out to be in this case side by side.

The influence of the word on the completeness of the substitutive action appeared extremely vividly in the experiments. The new meaning of the subject fixed in the verbal plan allows the child to imagine its image more clearly and, as a result, the way of acting with it. Here is an excerpt from the protocol of the experiment. An adult asks Natasha S. [2; 11], who picks with a knife in the hole of the oval top of the pyramid and feeds the doll:
"What does the doll eat?"Natasha looks at the object and says uncertainly: "Cookies." Then he quickly corrects himself: "Testicle." The adult nods his head understandingly, and Natasha quickly takes a spoon, hits the egg with it, peels it from the shell, blows on it, saying: "Hot egg, it needs to cool down."

CONCLUSION:

A feature of the use of substitute items by young children is their flexibility. It is known that preschoolers in the game clearly adhere to the rules and make sure that each item is used in its assigned function. At an early age, a different picture is revealed — the same object in one situation can repeatedly change its purpose. The more indefinite the function of an object, the more freely the child ascribes this or that meaning to it. In our experiments, the largest number of substitutions was associated with a cube (22 use cases), a ball (20 variants), a rectangle (15 variants) and a stick (12 variants). In relation to them, the highest originality of actions was also found. This fact, apparently, should be explained not by the high level of imagination of the child at this age, but by the lack of clarity and stability of the image of the substitute object. The amorphous nature of representations leads to their fluidity, instability. In our experiments, multifunctional use of objects was observed in 66% of children. At the same time, this flexibility allowed the child to vary, to diversify his game within a limited subject situation, to try out different possibilities of substitutions.

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