Pedagogy

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INTERACTIVE THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Summary. *The article conceptualizes interactive theatrical performance as a mediative form of pedagogical interaction in children's education. It examines the pedagogical and psychological mechanisms that structure its effectiveness, including active participation, joint action, and play-based experiential engagement. The roles of the facilitator and theatrical characters are analyzed as mediators of value-based and moral meanings. The study outlines practical applications of interactive theatre in cultural and educational settings, and identifies its potential within structured educational frameworks.*

Key words: *interactive theatre, theatrical performances, mediative pedagogical interaction, cultural and educational activity.*

Introduction. In preschool and early school age, educational work is oriented toward the formation of social, moral, and communicative competencies. Effective formats at this stage must correspond to age-specific forms of perception and activity. Approaches based primarily on passive reception limit experiential engagement and reduce the internalization of social norms.

In classical theatrical performances, the child remains a spectator, which restricts participation in the unfolding action. Interactive theatrical performance

modifies this structure by positioning the child as a participant involved in narrative development and joint activity within a defined framework [1]. Educational content is integrated into play-based interaction, dialogue, and situational tasks. Direct communication with actors and puppet figures supports attention, engagement, and the development of communicative and socio-emotional skills [2]. The present study analyzes interactive theatre as a form of mediative pedagogical interaction in children's upbringing and socialization.

Interactive Theatre as a Mediative Form of Upbringing and Socialization

In preschool and early school age, play constitutes the dominant mode of activity through which children assimilate social roles, behavioral patterns, and forms of interaction. Activity-based pedagogical approaches therefore regard experiential participation and joint action as primary mechanisms of educational influence [3].

Within the system of educational practices, theatre functions as a means of modeling socially significant situations. In traditional forms, educational influence is conveyed through artistic representation, while the child remains outside the structure of action. Interactive theatrical formats modify this structure by integrating the child into the narrative framework and collective activity.

In this context, interactivity denotes structured participation in shared action regulated by a predefined pedagogical design. The child engages in coordinated activity with actors and peers, responds to situational tasks, and influences the progression of events within established boundaries. Educational meanings are formed through experiential involvement in socially modeled situations rather than through declarative instruction [4].

The mediative character of this interaction is central. Educational influence is organized indirectly through play episodes, symbolic imagery, and collective action. The intermediary, embodied in the theatrical situation and its characters, creates a

functional distance between adult and child, supporting intrinsic engagement and stable behavioral orientation [5; 6].

Within interactive theatre, the facilitator ensures structural coherence and regulates interaction in accordance with pedagogical intent, while maintaining the integrity of the play framework [2]. Theatrical characters act as carriers of value-based and behavioral models. Through enacted situations and symbolic representation, complex moral and social contexts become accessible for reflection and coordinated response [7].

Interactive Theatre: Mechanisms of Educational Influence and Implementation Outcome

Joint enactment of narrative situations requires coordination, rule adherence, and shared responsibility. Social norms, behavioral models, and causal relations between actions and consequences are internalized through experiential participation. Dialogic interaction with characters and peers stimulates speech activity, non-verbal communication, and initiative. Improvisational elements and structured variability support cognitive flexibility and creative thinking within predefined pedagogical boundaries.

This format was implemented in Ukraine within cultural centers, theatre studios, and educational platforms for preschool and early school-age children. Interactive performances functioned both as independent activities and as components of broader developmental programs. Educational content was integrated into play episodes, dialogic tasks, and collective actions mediated by the facilitator and theatrical characters.

Observed outcomes included sustained engagement throughout the performance, increased initiative in verbal and non-verbal communication with characters and peers, coordinated group behavior, and readiness to adhere to established interactional rules. Children demonstrated role awareness,

responsiveness to narrative development, and the ability to adjust actions in relation to other participants. Participation was associated with reduced situational tension, maintenance of attention during waiting periods, and stable involvement in collective tasks. The format supported the development of communicative competence, including dialogic exchange, perspective-taking, and regulation of expressive behavior. Moral orientations and social norms were internalized through experiential participation in situations requiring choice and shared responsibility. Engagement occurred within a stable emotional environment that facilitated empathic response and reflection on actions and consequences. These results indicate the applicability of interactive theatre as a structured educational format adaptable to diverse cultural and institutional contexts.

Conclusion. Interactive theatrical performance functions as a mediative form of pedagogical interaction based on active participation in structured collective activity. Educational meanings are internalized through experiential engagement rather than direct instruction. Within this framework, the child occupies a subject position in the educational process.

Active involvement sustains attention and motivation, joint activity supports socialization, and the theatrical environment facilitates the development of communicative competence, empathy, and creative thinking. The facilitator and characters mediate educational meanings through coordinated interaction.

Implementation in cultural and educational settings, including practice in Ukraine, demonstrates the applicability and reproducibility of this format under defined methodological conditions.

Further research may focus on the formalization of mediative interaction models and the extension of interactive theatrical practices to diverse educational contexts.

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