

## SYMBOLISM - COMPREHENSION RELATIONSHIP IN SCHOOL LEARNING

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**ABSTRACT.** In everyday life, comprehension phase message induces interest of knowledge itself, the surrounding world, empowering, interpreted, skill formation to guess/search for meanings/multiple correlations between notions, facts, phenomena.

Communication with and through symbols, in concrete operative phase of thinking can trigger the transition to formal operative phase, the abstraction and generalization. Iconic and symbolic communication occupies a growing share in the instructive-educational, thanks largely to technical means of training (video-projectors, interactive whiteboards). Thus is born a series of questions such as: how does the image, respectively the symbol, at the cognitive development as well as to educating experience affective-emotional needs of students? To what extent determines the quality of social interactions symbols?

**Keywords:** *symbol, comprehension, symbolic communication.*

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG.** In konkreten, täglichen Plan weckt das Verstehen einer Nachricht das Interesse der Selbst - und Umgebung-Erkenntnis, die Verantwortung, die Solidarität, die Ausbildung von folgenden Fähigkeiten: Sinnsuche/multiple Korrelationen zwischen den Begriffen, Fakten und Phänomene zu erraten. Kommunikation mit und durch Symbole kann, in die operative Phase des Denkens, den Übergang zu formalen operative Phase ermöglichen (abstraktes und konkretes Denken). Ikonischen und symbolischer Kommunikation nehmen einen wachsenden Anteil der pädagogischen Aktivitäten, vor allem dank technischer Mittel verwendet in dem Unterricht (Videoprojektoren, interaktive Whiteboards). So erscheint eine Reihe von Fragen, wie zum Beispiel: Wie wirkt das Bild oder den Symbol auf den kognitiven und affektiven-emotionale Entwicklung der Studierenden? Inwieweit bestimmen Symbole die Qualität der sozialen Interaktionen?

**Schlüsselwörter:** *Symbol, Verständnis, symbolische Kommunikation*

### 1. Introduction

All forms of communication are likely to persuade the various degrees of value human psyche are corruptible. As a reaction against those trends to influence

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the human will, no matter how it manifests, a didactic approach effectively must propose to use some positive ideas and concepts, mainly expressed through symbols empathic facets, whose perception, outside of contents rationally, request spiritual valences of trainees.

The teachers should pay increased attention to communicative ethos, given the major influence exerted on all components of the educational activities.

## 2. Symbols in contemporaneity

Ernst Cassirer (1994) proposes to define man as “animal simbolicum”, this naming it showing the specific difference, opening the way for civilization, meaning to a community consensus views and living forms.

So, symbol mediate between conscious and unconscious and establishes a relationship between what is hidden and what is manifest.

Contemporary man is surrounded by images which are currently assigned a certain symbolic significance, which is able to influence people’s sensitivity, images which are recognized status symbols.

Thus, the concept of symbol is used with different meanings. Versatility symbols stand rigorous classification, demonstrating failure of multiple attempts taxonomic. Means of designation are highly varied: words, gestures, objects etc. Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant (2009) reveals the following functions of symbols, which could cause a taxonomy of them:

- *exploratory function* of symbols requires expanding field of consciousness in an area devoid of any unit, where the investigation involves certain risks. In this case, the symbol allow identification of situations that reason can not define;

- *substitute function* of symbols gives key status symbol for entrance consciously, concealing certain semantic or emotional load;

- *gives mediation function* symbol binding role of environmental elements internal spiritual man, with external natural and social environment;

- *unifying force function* reflects the fact that the fundamental unifying symbols axes human existence, condenses the entire human experience (religious, cosmic, social, psychological);

- *pedagogical or therapeutic function* symbol assert anthropocentrism line. Man feels, because symbol, that identifies a supra-individual force, in the vast assembly environment, reaching in this way to understand it;

- *social function symbol* placed among the factors that determine insertion into reality. He puts the individual in relation to the social environment as a consequence of the fact that each social group and each age has its own symbols. Express self identity.

- *resonance function symbols* implies that you have them echo in individual or collective consciousness;

- *transcendental function* makes it possible harmonization requirements that differ from individual to individual and from one community to another. Establish contact between opposing forces makes it possible to overcome opposition.

- *the psychic energy transformer function* exercise a decisive role throughout human evolutionary movement, surpassing the role of knowledge and the means to enrich a stimulating aesthetic interest.

Interpretation of symbols is a subject for many sciences. In fact, all the sciences that study man in its various aspects, interferes in research and thus forced to join efforts for them deciphering and interpretation.

Connection between symbol and its meaning is determined on the basis of convention, with a circumstantial nature, being available either large or small groups of people or for longer periods or shorter. Decoding symbols requires knowledge of conventions that were the basis of their establishment. Interpretation is the act of putting symbols in relation to the means of the object by interpretive consciousness. Transparency is very important in the interpretation of symbols, leading interpretive relationship between consciousness and the means by which it is designated symbol.

The same symbol has different meanings depending on individuals, nations, ethnicities, historical era, being closely related to collective psychology. Symbol belongs to the social environment, even if it appeared in an individual consciousness. This means that there are complex cultural creations, prepared and circulated by certain communities.

New schools of thought consider communication phenomenon relationship, not a simple transmission of information. Thus, to live is to communicate, to be in relationship with physical and social environment and the common man through his entire being and with all their forms expressive, not only words. Because man can not live life without manifest themselves in relation to others, so without expressing this, everything we do has a meaning for others. This may make the sign of equivalence between communication and behavior in a broad sense.

Teaching ability to communicate is essential in suggesting or setting latent expressive nuances. Teacher fully exploits the spoken word meanings to excite students and you capture. Avoiding concise expression or common, the figures of speech amplify the power of the message, by collateral meanings, directing behavior toward imaginary. (Ricoeur, 1984). Symbols, graphics or icons, substitute the word, condensing an incredible amount of information in all fields of knowledge. Combining these channels of communication in teaching, organization, review and evaluation stimulates receptivity facilitates interdisciplinary logical correlations, increases the attractiveness of the subject and increase his motivation.

Using semiotic potential is a major purchase, that involves knowing to control gestures, body language, to meet expectations of actors, it means, in fact, form a communicative competence (Judith Greene, 1986).

The teaching approach perceptual images allow decoding easier, resulting more accessible communication. A pedagogy of the image, well shaped, can stimulate learning through direct observation and a brief review of learning content. Transmitted, but mostly will be refreshed and reorganized significant information, facilitating conceptualization itself. This justifies the usefulness of symbols in consolidation, enrichment and refinement of knowledge, providing storing logic and flexibility of thought.

### 3. Formative valences of symbolic communication

Understanding and experiencing the world is more affective than cognitive. The social phenomenon comprehension provide cognitive connections by themselves. The literary texts incorporates significant connotative structure, whose content is inexhaustible and can lead to coverage or discovery, the coding or decoding meaning.

Affective communication highlight the ability of educators to understand the motivations and aspirations of pupils, involving a sustained personal engagement.

Genuine knowledge is determined by the teaching conditions that influence building and learning, and modifying and adapting existing content concepts. Any scientific concept is inserted into a complex network, coherent and organized and established connections support a conceptual field.

Social interactions have an essential role in triggering cognitive conflict. They induce school knowledge, producing intellectual progress, provided that the subject was aware of this.

Based on the major role assumed by educators in preparing children for life, from the concern interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary teaching, from care to reduce or overcome barriers of communication, from cultivating a nuanced language, we identified symbolic communication, as a means of formative facilitate holistic approach to reality in the broad sense, but also the approach of the school curriculum narrowly.

Therefore we wanted to determine the symbols used pedagogical learning at different ages, based on the idea that if the symbols facilitates learning and comprehension messages, symbolic communication promotes implicitly valuing the social and linguistic intelligence.

The major objectives of the research were reflected in:

- monitoring capacity of receiving / generating symbolic communication;
- avoid / remove communication barriers through the use of symbols;
- harnessing the potential ludic symbols in zone of proximal development, in order to achieve and maintain optimum motivation;
- encouraging students to formulate personal opinions (with, by, about symbols) using methods of critical thinking;
- developing social and emotional component of school children, involvement in activities focused mainly on organizing learning content in teamwork tasks.

For this, we implemented the first program of acquiring teaching and use of symbols as active method in acquiring and consolidating knowledge from elementary school grade level, aiming also to establish possible relationships between teachers improve communication using symbols and obtain maximal results best of learning.

Involved in research activities have included:

- learning the symbols present in various literary texts appealing to critical thinking, multiple intelligences, metacognition;
- the use of symbols in cooperative work and learning, taking advantage and are cultivating emotional intelligence and interpersonal communication favoring teaching and learning.

The experiment was applied to students in two classes IV, consisting of 23 and 21 students. Teams both classes are characterized by heterogeneity, both in terms of the degree of development reached cognitive mental processes, but especially in emotionally-affective and social. However, a modest number of students was highlighted in the pre-experimental phase, criticism or elements of logical inference.

In the same stage of the experiment, the affective processes were revealed by spontaneous manifestations, intense, with rapid changes from excitement to demoralization, from individualism to solidarity, most students being easily impressionable, especially in relation to situations presenting and analyzing the various conflicting aspects of literary texts studied.

In terms of sampling elements contents, research aimed discipline Romanian language and literature, being selected three or four topics of study subsumed monthly basis, taught the word support, chosen from among tale (popular and cult), because their formative valences.

In the formative experiment, the eight units have watched a few constants in the act of teaching:

- text semiosis - which require separation referential aspects, the reconstruction of meaning, the message from the perspective of the reader, re-reading the metatextual approach, the redefinition critical reproductive;

- reading and re-reading the text - which reveals and adds original meaning, understanding and interpreting symbolic processes of discovery, deciphering the meaning and/or significance;

- addressing affective/emotional text - aimed at identifying reaction/rejection and correlation with personal experiences.

To form the habit of critical approach literary texts were used as teaching methods: explanatory lecture, shaping, vocabulary exercises, brainstorming. In reading strengthening, the methods were used: thinking hats, the cube. In evaluation: Venn diagram, gallery tour, dramatization, and to recap: clusters, quintet etc.

Applying specific methods of stimulation/development experience creativity through active participation in cognitive, affective and empathic communication/expression have provided ways of perceiving, feeling and expression of various configurations of stimuli and their communication transcoding.

Achievement and fostering access to knowledge throughout the experiment was performed by the subject's active involvement in the construction process, the mental plane, the object of knowledge, with a strong formative character:

a) stimulate mental processes:

- sensory (feelings, perceptions, representations) in reading activities accompanied by photos, games, music, drawing or painting;

- intellectual: thinking, memory, imagination, especially in times of lessons of history or civic education, the generalization and categorization occupied a significant place;

- volitional in all activities, by maintaining optimal due motivational interdisciplinary approach, holistic symbols;

- affective - during lessons focusing on fairy tales, legends, parables, proverbs, accompanied by PowerPoint projections with appropriate content based on examples/links from/to real life, valuing personal experience and collective.

b) depth study of literary texts as a support for teaching and understanding symbols, symbolic communication targeting, seen as a means and method of learning, as follows:

- familiarity with the graphical and conceptual symbols;
- activation, enrichment, growth language expressiveness;
- develop the ability to track subtle clues in the text, to infer the evolution examined typologies, based characters and text structure;

- obtaining retention and transfer of knowledge in all subject areas in extracurricular activities and in everyday life;

- identify different meanings of the error, depending on determinants of context, the consequences caused by reading and interpreting of parables, fables, parodies;

- reasoning and accept opinions, feelings, different approaches of facts, characters and people.

As a result of running the experiment over a period of about five months, were obtained some data, collected through systematic observation, recording students' school results on various sequences of learning and through direct conversation with students.

From data analysis, it is noted that determination and practice metacognitive behavior (through critical thinking, based on the types of intelligence) was reflected in increasing school performance.

Tests provided cognitive information and the feedback led adjustment over time the contents and revealed educational attainment at the end of the experiment.

By solving diverse learning tasks, attractive, designed zone of proximal development, symbolic communication gave higher valent entire student mental developments, training mostly higher operations of thought (generalization and abstraction). Results, materialized in progress in knowledge and cognitive linguistic competence were assessed by reference to the objectives.

To sample initial assessment, the cognitive testing prior experiment highlighted the following issues: most students know symbols learned in previous years (like traffic signs), the significance of color (such as a lily or flag). Instead unanimously confuse the meaning of the object of utility objects (for example the road). They know the proper meaning of words like cave, fountain, spiral, candle, but not their symbolic connotations. Very few students show originality in interpretation of expressions (for example eyes are the mirror). Four students proved not know the notion of symbol/stands. Student achievement expressed in qualification responses are evaluated in the following table:

**Table 1**

**Assessment of students' responses in the pre-experimental**

Very well	Good	Enough	Not enough
24 responses explicitly formulated, spelled correctly	12 responses explicitly formulated, spelled correctly	6 responses explicitly formulated, spelled correctly	2 responses explicitly formulated, spelled correctly

During the experiment, monthly interim testing (summative nature) were the reference points in the composition of individual progression chart.

In the post-experiment revealed a gradual increase of interest, initially for tale and for his approach in terms of symbols, then for reading in general, students being incited by identifying symbols in the proposed texts and establish connections with other subjects or with their existence.

Frequency of communication barriers with colleagues or teacher dropped significantly, in part thanks to the extra-curricular activities.

Cognitive school performance rendered by the results presented in Table 2 illustrates that after unfolding experiments show an increase in students' correct answers related to the symbols theme, but showed also, a pedagogical communication optimization.

**Table 2**

**Assessment of students' responses in the post-experimental**

Very well	Good	Enough	Not enough
34 responses explicitly formulated, spelled correctly	8 responses explicitly formulated, spelled correctly	2 responses explicitly formulated, spelled correctly	-

Enriching learning experience through the use of symbols in teaching and learning, as in daily activities was demonstrated by increased interest in reading, emotional involvement of students in higher proportion in the case of co-participation in activities, but also by academic progress due to learning motivation.

**4. Conclusions**

The paper contains possible landmarks in the development of a training model corresponding new paradigm, being a genuine learning support focused on symbolism, thanks holistic approach, transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary. This allows learning:

- increasing the size of spelling practical and applied knowledge through reference to concrete situations of life, conceptualized to support a construction of scientific knowledge;

- making easier the transfer of knowledge, the premise of adapting learners in different contexts and different demands;

- complementary approach to teaching strategies, valuing maximum mental potential acting with best motivation in the zone of proximal development, emphasizing the importance of metacognitive strategies;

- facilitates comprehension, literary text;

- ensure academic success for all students, eliminate obstacles by displaying independence in action, the constructive spirit of acceptance of change, to overcome patterns and finding new solution, allowing maturation of social relations.

Notions and concepts were learned in a relaxing endeavor of confidence. Satisfaction decoding of contents, in both group and individual, prompting students to engage in an active learning, logic, creative.

Thus, learning centered on symbols allows permanent restructuring, endless connections and gradual integration of new concepts in a concentric learning.

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