

Cultural-historical Approach to Preschoolers' Dance Creativity: Problems and Solutions

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The problems of the theory of dance creativity of preschoolers are analyzed from the standpoint of a cultural and historical approach. As methodological support for the analysis, we used the views of L.S. Vygotsky and his followers on children's artistic creativity, on the nature of dance and dance expressiveness, on the peculiarities of music in dance. Based on this, we analyzed three theoretical approaches to the development of dance creativity of preschoolers, and described their differences and partial mutual influences. The system of provisions of cultural and historical psychology as a methodological basis indicates ways to solve the problems of the theory of dance creativity of preschoolers, which should be figurative and meaningful, thanks to the development of the expressive language of dance, reflecting the features of the musical image and real events, relationships, experiences through the embodiment of different characters.

Keywords: cultural-historical approach; dance, dance image, dance creativity of preschoolers, performing creativity, compositional creativity.

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Культурно-исторический подход к танцевальному творчеству дошкольников: проблемы и решения

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Проблемы теории танцевального творчества дошкольников анализируются с позиций культурно-исторического подхода. В качестве методологических опор для анализа рассматриваются взгляды Л.С. Выготского, его последователей на детское художественное творчество, природу танца и танцевальной выразительности, особенности музыки в танце. Исходя из этого рассматриваются три отечественных теоретических подхода к развитию танцевального творчества дошкольников, показаны их различия и частичные взаимовлияния. Система положений культурно-исторической психологии как методологическая основа указывает пути решения проблем теории танцевального творчества дошкольников, которое должно носить образный и осмысленный характер, благодаря освоению выразительного языка танца, с отражением особенностей не только музыкального образа, но и реальных событий, взаимоотношений, переживаний — через воплощение образов разнохарактерных персонажей.

Ключевые слова: культурно-исторический подход; танец, танцевальный образ, танцевальное творчество дошкольников, исполнительское творчество, композиционное творчество.

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Introduction

Considering the dance creativity of preschoolers, today it is timely to talk not only about its importance in the psychophysical development of children, but also about the problems of its development – first of all, the theoretical foundations that determine the methodology of working with children. The solution of these problems is associated with going beyond the system of musical education of children into the broad cultural context of dance art with the use of the cultural-historical approach as a methodological tool both for the analysis of existing theoretical positions and the basis for the creation of a general theory of dance creativity of preschoolers.

L.S. Vygotsky [13] spoke of the importance of “guidance” in scientific research so that the accumulation of material is fruitful, by providing an opportunity to “critically coordinate heterogeneous data, systematize disparate laws, comprehend and verify results” [ibid]. Following K. Marx [31] he had pointing to the methodological principle of the “reverse” method, the essence of which is the cognition of the “lower” through the “higher” [13]. Using this principle, Vygotsky considered the cultural and historical development of man as the key to understanding the development of the child’s higher psychological functions. Similarly, the cultural and historical development of dance as an art can be seen as the “key” to understanding the dance creativity of preschoolers.

L.S. Vygotsky formulated several provisions on the development of imagination and creativity in childhood [10], which is considered as an integral part of the methodological basis of the theory of dance creativity of preschoolers. And although the issues of the development of this type of children’s creativity have never been considered in the cultural-historical concept before, but this concept allows us to test these perspectives by opening “... new horizons of cultural-historical and activity psychology”, with the identification of implied, but not yet highlighted assumptions, with the formulation of new questions, “required in the logic of the concepts” [39, c. 103].

Proceeding from the said, we will consider three theoretical approaches to understanding the dance creativity of preschoolers, developed in our country in the twentieth century, one way or another are influencing the modern theory and practice in this direction of domestic preschool education [22; 23]. The method of “Musical Movement” (S.D. Rudneva et al.) [36] was born in the early twentieth century. The later, “traditional” approach (N.A. Vetlugina [4; 7]), began to develop in the 60s and took a dominant position until the end of the 90s, and retained its influence until now. The third approach – the author’s [18; 20; 21] – was formulated in the 80s.

The analysis of these approaches to the development of preschool children’s creativity in dance detects their

advantages and disadvantages, the undeveloped of methodological foundations inherent in each of them, which is why there is absent a full-fledged theory of children’s dance creativity [22].

Let’s outline some decisions of the problems in the theory of preschoolers’ dance creativity on the methodological basis of cultural and historical psychology. At the same time, the supporting positions for analysis in the “methodological coordinate system” will be: 1) children’s artistic creativity, 2) the nature of dance and 3) music in dance.

Children’s artistic creativity

A brief definition of creativity is an activity in which something new is created (a material product, a building of the mind, a feeling) [10, p. 6] on the basis of combining elements of known experience into new combinations [10, p. 11].

When considering children’s artistic creativity, it is worth relying on the provisions of the psychology of art (L.S. Vygotsky), the main issue of which is the connection between emotions and imagination [16], determining the choice and association of elements of personal experience into new images on the law of the general emotional sign [10]. The emotional connection between reality and imagination is two-sided: the senses influence the imagination, and the imagination influences the senses [10, pp. 14–15, 25]. Under the influence of works of art, strong feelings are awakened in those who perceive them, which are almost not expressed outwardly; such a “delay in external manifestation” is a characteristic symptom of artistic emotions while retaining their extraordinary power, which “are resolved mainly in images of fantasy” [16, p. 201].

L.S. Vygotsky speaks of the artistic experience [perezhivanie] not only of the spectator, the listener perceiving works of art, but also of the experience [perezhivanie] of the creator, in particular the actor, calling his activity “a peculiar of creativity of psychophysiological states” [14, p. 321]. Since the time of D. Diderot [40] and long before him [24], the question has been discussed: should an actor experience the roles performed in order to evoke the viewer’s experiences? [14, p. 321]. L.S. Vygotsky emphasizes: the actor’s experiences are “... part of the complex activity of artistic creativity” [14, p. 323], they are a fact of art, included not so much in an individual psychological as in a socio-psychological context: an actor on stage creates generalized emotions, cleansed of everything superfluous as a result of the process of artistic forming, which become “the emotion of the entire theater hall”, since they are in tune with the moods of broad public circles, act as a “crystallized design” these moods, a means of their awareness and artistic refraction [14, p. 324; 20].

Works of art evoke real feelings also because they have a logic in *image development*, reflecting the external world of real life in the imaginary world of the work [10, p. 18–19].

Creativity is observed even in young children; it has a subjective significance: it is important for the child to exercise his creative imagination for his overall development and maturation [10, p. 7]. It is necessary to develop creativity from childhood; and it's important to start it as early as possible [3; 10; 23]. Involvement in creative activities is “quite natural for a child and ... meets its needs and capabilities” (B.M. Teplov [38]), so it is necessary to involve all children into a creativity, not just the gifted.

It is worth emphasizing, that material children's artistic creativity are impressions from the child's personal experience — *images reflecting the phenomena of reality* in terms of their cognition and emotional experience [27; 38]¹.

The “root” of children's creativity is play [10; 12]; their common features are their improvisational nature, connection with experiences, and the use of the simplest means of artistic reflection of reality on the basis of mastering the signing, symbolic function [12; 20]. Vygotsky sees in play the best form of organizing emotional behavior: with all the vividness of experiences, the child learns to reconcile them with the rules of the game in an imaginary situation [15, p. 131; 12]. In the game a double affective plan occurs, and the child experiences emotions akin to those of an actor: he cries as a patient, but rejoices as a playing [12]: Vygotsky points to dramatization as the closest to a game type of children's creativity, where there is realized the motor character of the children's imagination: the images of the personages are portrayed by the child actual, “through the medium of own body” [10, p. 63], and imagination describes a full circle — from isolating and combining elements of reality to creating new images [23], in which intellectual and emotional factors are mutually necessary for creativity [10, c. 16].

The search for ways to form children's artistic creativity leads to an understanding of the importance of children's learning the language of the corresponding art, which can be achieved at the purposeful teaching of composition techniques and a combination of educational and creative moments, with the possibility of early formation of the child's attitude to creativity and the need for it (B.L. Yavorsky, B.V. Asaf'ev, K. Orff, L.A. Barenboim) [20, pp. 12–13; 18]. At the same time, B.V. Asaf'ev [3], speaking of children's musical creativity, differentiated “a creativity-reproduction” and “a creativity-performance”, which can also be applied to the dance creativity of preschoolers.

The language of movements, the nature of dance, dance expressiveness

Movements born in real life, reflecting the emotional states of people and being a means of their commu-

nication [34], became, even in the “pre-verbal period” of man's historical development, the primary basis of the expressive language of dance [5]. In ancient dances there was reflected events (hunting, war, labor processes) with the help of pantomime, rhythmic exclamations [28]. K.Ya. Goleizovsky emphasized that dance is not a set of techniques and virtuoso movements, but “a consciously developing in front of the viewer story on a certain topic with a plot, a retelling of events of real life” [17, p. 317]. In ritual and cult dances, movements with aesthetic coloring and symbolic, magical meaning were used, and so the lexis of the dance began to acquire its own originality [28].

Throughout the history of the development of the art of dance, separate expressive movements have been generalized, sharpened, and isolated from the concreteness of everyday life, giving dance more and more originality in the plastic expression of the image [5; 25]. The main factors influencing the development of the dance language (as the history of ballet shows) include: the theme of the ballet, which reflects reality and is refracted in the dramaturgy of the performance, as well as the music, which determines its emotional and artistic basis [29; 32].

The development of new thematic material is the driving force in the development of ballet art: during its heyday, new content was embodied, had stimulated the development of the language of dance. And in the periods of decline, performances were characterized by the impoverishment of plots and figurative content; the dance lexis was replenished due to technical techniques for the sake of spectacular effect, demonstration of the performer's dexterity. It was only later that these techniques became the material for a new system of images [29].

The lexis of ballet is dance and pantomime; their primary basis is real life movements [5; 25], expressive movements, that is, the outward manifestation of emotions and a means of communication between people [34]. However, in contrast to pantomimic, dance movements are less similar to everyday ones, they are more conditional because of the generalized, “pointed” form developed in the course of historical development. In turn, pantomime in ballet also undergoes changes: it becomes danceable and rhythmic [25].

The ratio of dance and pantomime in ballet and their role in the development of the plot was changing. In the old ballets (18th century) pantomime moved the plot, helping to embody dramatic conflicts. Dances unfolded in the course of the plot: at a ball, during a celebration or procession. In the era of romanticism, dance began to develop as an effective one: it came to the fore and turned into a conventionally poetic language for expressing the feelings and characters of the characters, especially in the culmination of dramatic action. The dance's heyday flourished at the end of the 19th century (M. Petipa's ballets): the feelings of the characters were summarized

¹ There is no doubt about this when it comes, for example, to children's visual activities, however, in relation to the dance creativity of preschoolers, such a statement of the question is not obvious to everyone.

in large dance ensembles, and pantomime scenes explained the plot. At the beginning of the 20th century, reformed choreographers (M. Fokin, A. Gorsky) tried to create a choreography in which dance was filled with mimic expressiveness, and pantomime was imbued with the dynamics of dance (the principle of choreographic drama) [25]. Their views were greatly influenced by the art of A. Duncan [9; 26], which enriched the lexis of the new dance due to the natural positions of feet and the free drawing of the hands. This made it possible to bring closer the conventionality of the dance and the everyday gesture in the ballet performance: the dance was freely born out of pantomime, emotionally and aesthetically developing the theme set in it [25].

As the dance moves became more and more conventional, they did not become meaningless “schemes”, but in each of them one can see a more or less generalized meaning. “The movement carries a certain content, has only its inherent own imagery, which can be strengthened or weakened, ... but cannot be changed to the opposite” (F.V. Lopukhov [30, p. 27]). The generalized imaginative meaning of this or that movement becomes the “key” moment in the construction of the composition (“text”) of the dance: for the expression of the general idea, the dramatic development, precisely those movements are selected that most clearly contribute to such expression. In an integral composition, this plastic-generalized symbolism, due to its genetic connection with real expressive movements, gives rise to certain figurative associations in the viewer, allowing him to understand the content of the dance in the system of its own language without verbal explanations [5].

In the second half of the 20th century, a new flowering of Russian ballet, the next round in the development of expressive language (in the productions of Y. Grigorovich) are associated with the development of new thematic material (love, heroism, the struggle for freedom), which became a powerful source for dance dramaturgy.

In Russian ballet of the 21st century, the significance of the theme and plot of dance is also confirmed, including “from the opposite”: more and more choreographers refuse to speak the language of dance about the global themes of the modern world, choosing “an infantile strategy associated with the embodiment of purely personal emotions and feelings on a stage” [6, p. 25]. “The plot has become an old-fashioned tool in the working kitchen of modern choreographers”, which “allows modern dance to talk about nothing” [6, p. 24].

Thus, the highest achievements of dance art prove that the reflection of images of reality, starting with the choice of theme and plot idea is the source of dance imagery, the development of the language and dramaturgy of dance.

L.S. Vygotsky writes: “Russian ballet is one of the greatest creations of the creative spirit” [11, p. 199]. He emphasizes the opportunities of classical ballet to convey a deep meaning that is far removed from the depiction of a particular experience [perezhivanie], and juxtaposes it with music, considering them as “equal scale” kinds of arts. According to him, the language of classical dance is not meaningless, it builds a special world of great, spiri-

tual meaning [11, p. 199], which outstanding dancers reveal each in own way.

These propositions, not directly, but in a certain approximation, can also be applied to the dance creativity of preschoolers, in which children (at a level accessible to them) will be able to convey a meaning richer than the expression of their spontaneous emotions to music. Using the language of dance, the movements of which have generalized-imaginative meanings, it is possible to compose “remarks”, “phrases”, “to tell stories” — at the level of composition and meaningful performance.

Music in Dance

Turning to the origins of dance and music, one can see that in folk dance music is merged with word and gesture, movements are combined with music due to the archaic (simplicity) and syncretic nature of all expressive means [37]. Ballet as an independent art form took shape in the 17th century; As it developed, the role of music in a ballet performance changed step by step.

Choreographers of the period 17th — early 19th centuries more often used ready-made musical works (as a rule, of low quality) or were content with musical accompaniment convenient for dancing in a preset tempo, character, and metro-rhythm. The music and choreography existed as if on their own; most of the performances resembled disparate dance fragments with “applied music” [32].

It was only beginning with the ballets of P.I. Tchaikovsky and A.K. Glazunov in music began to be developed *dramaturgy of the dance image*. This was prepared by the period of romantic ballet, when the search for expressive means of dance required new musical “solutions”, as well as by the symphonizing of music in the operas of M. Glinka and M. Mussorgsky. P.I. Tchaikovsky made a revolution *in ballet music* by symphonizing it according to the principle of end-to-end musical action [29; 32], unified in style, figurative system, with a truly dramatic character — this stimulated the search for new means of expressiveness of the dance language.

At the beginning of the 20th century, A. Duncan began to use symphonic works for her dance improvisations, which also influenced the ballet theater [37]: the search for an organic combination of music and dance intensified; as a result, the following concepts began to be distinguished: dance “on music”, “under music”, “into music”, etc. [37; 30], — related to the historical stages of the development of the connection between choreography and music. “Dance *on* music” (superficial following music) is characteristic of the initial development of classical ballet: the movements approached the music, but not all of them coincided with it. “Dance *under* music” is a more accurate following of music (in the second half of the 19th century). “Dance *into* music” (complete coincidence with music) is aimed at to convey the character and expressive features of a musical work through pure movement, without conventional gestures and facial expressions (the genre of “symphonic ballet”); but, according to the fair opinion of critics, if the dance is

completely subordinated to music, it will be reduced “to the level of musical illustration” [37].

Interestingly, A. Duncan, who called to learn rhythm and harmony from music, was looking for opportunities to make dance autonomous, including freeing it from music [37, p 55].

Both extremes – “dance into music” and “dance without music” – are obviously exceptions, confirming that the driving force of the development of ballet and dance is dramatism, plot, reflecting images of reality on the basis of musical dramaturgy.

In the review by L.S. Vygotsky [11] a very important point is noted: the music and the movements of the dance do not prevail over each other; in dance music and movement should be unity with the common goal of embodying figurative content.

Thus, the analysis of the literature allowed us to identify a number of defining properties of the dance art, independent of the complexity of its forms, – these are: dramaturgy embodied in the plot, the relationships of personages with different characters, coordinated with the development of musical images; the use of both dance and pantomimic movements as expressive lexis [20, p. 23].

Analysis of Domestic Theoretical Approaches to the Development of Dance Creativity of Preschoolers

The method of “Musical Movement” was developed in the studio “Heptachor” at the beginning of the 20th century under the influence of free dance by A. Duncan, but did not continue its tradition, but took shape in an original pedagogical system, which is still developing [1; 2; 36].

“Heptachor” has developed its own unique method of holistic musical and aesthetic education of the personality, which goes beyond the “narrow task of teaching dance”. The basic principles and methodology of the “Musical movement” were developed on the basis of the experience of dance studios (for adults and children) and within the framework of musical education in kindergartens, as well as on the basis of psychological comprehension [35] and a description of this method as a specific practice of aesthetic education [1; 2; 23] with an attempt to provide a theoretical justification for the method [35; 36].

In the “Musical Movement” method, the main thing is music, and movement and dance are the means of its active aesthetic experience and perception. Here, music comes first, and movement is in a subordinate position. The goal of the approach is to develop children’s musicality, the ability “...to experience the content of the musical process in its entirety” [1; 2, p. 7; 23]. The authors of the method emphasize that music is a source of imagery of movements (other sources are not mentioned or taken into account). The motor image, which is understood as “...an expressive form of movement that embodies the content of music” [35, p. 149], entirely depends on the features of music [35, c. 149]. In order for the experience [perezhivanie] of music in motion was acquiring an aes-

thetic character, classical instrumental works are chosen that are accessible to children’s perception [36; 25].

A system of exercises has been developed here, in which certain movements are correlate with certain musical fragments, expressiveness of the movements is specially “worked out” in order to “turn the body into an instrument for perceiving music... Only by cultivating a response similar to a reflex reaction, ... the dancer will be able to fully “do what the music tells him to do” and only then will his movements become expressive” [37, p. 62]. Proponents of the “Musical Movement” considered musical and rhythmic education according to the Dal’croze method to be unemotional, hindering the formation of the “correct musical-motor reflex” [37, p. 63].

The necessary motor skills, such as readiness for movement, muscular feeling, and “*breathfulness*”, ensure the development of expressiveness of movements and the musical-motor image as a whole [1; 2; 23]. The means of its creation are flowing freely movements: pantomimic and natural (steps, running, jumping, etc.). In the absence of requirements for the performance of movements according to the given canons, nevertheless, the reflex motor response to music is consistently worked out.

The strategy of that approach is to move from improvisation in response to the sounding music through the comprehension of the primary emotional-motor reaction to the step-by-step formation of an integral musical-motor image (by means of its clarification and deepening) in order to more accurately embody the content of music [1; 35; 36; 23].

The effectiveness of the development of creativity according to the “Musical Movement” method is determined by the observations of teachers (and when working with adult participants, their self-reports are also used).

Traditional approach was founded at the end of the 60s of the twentieth century (N.A. Vetlugina [7]). Subsequently, it was widely used in musical education in mass kindergartens. N.A. Vetlugina speaks about the reflection of reality in musical and movement images inherent in dance art; However, in the transition to children’s “musical-rhythmic movements”, it recognizes imagery and plotting only for round dances and children’s musical games with singing, where verbal texts are illustrated by pictorial movements, secondary to music and words. The characteristics of preschooler’s dance are reduced only to the use of dance movements and their combinatorics; dance is considered only as a means of active-motor perception and transmission of the features of the musical image (tempo, metro-rhythm, general character), but not as an independent artistic activity of preschoolers [22].

Definitions of creativity in dance are contradictory. On the one hand, it “is manifested in the ability of children to combine familiar elements of dance, to create their own movements, to come up with a simple dance such as a polka” [8, p. 122], and on the other hand, – in an attempt to convey his attitude to music [8, p. 93]. The possibility of dance creativity is mentioned only in relation to children of the preparatory group. The graceful, rhythmic performance of dance movements is probably

seen as expressiveness of the performance (although it is not formulated in this way).

Approach strategy: first master the technique and musical and rhythmic execution of individual dance movements; learn to reproduce them in dances, the compositions of which are built as a random alternation of movements, without semantic connections, only on the basis of combination with the character of the music; and only on the basis of this experience to move on to free dance improvisations to music.

In dances (for learning and also accumulating dance experience) dance music was used in two or three parts, according to the tempo rhythm, dynamics, character, and change of which it was necessary to change the dance movements (“heels” [“kabluchki”²], stomps, turns, and other). An insignificant exception (in the 1980’s) were figurative (characteristic) dances, such as: the dance of several (identical) parsley, the dance of snowflakes, and so on [22], in which all children simultaneously reproduced the same learned composition of movements with attempts to convey the characters of the same personages, their usually cheerful mood (outside a plot).

For creative tasks there was used a dance music (Russian folk, waltz), which had a certain character (without the development of a musical image); and the child was suggested: “Dance as you want” or “As the music tells you”.

Practice has shown that most of the children who coped with the task of reproducing movements according to the pattern and verbal instructions turned out to be helpless in the situation of a creative task [20].

Author’s approach was created in the late 1980s as part of an experimental study [20] as an alternative to the traditional approach; then the methodological manual was published [21; 22].

The author’s approach was also not without contradictions: dance was considered as a type of musical movement [20, p. 7]. In addition, despite the mention of two of Vygotsky’s theses about the nature of children’s imagination and play as the “root” of creativity [20, p. 15], cultural-historical theory as a whole was not considered as a methodological basis. Now all this needs to be clarified.

Still, a number of provisions of this approach are very productive. The possibilities of children’s dance to convey with the help of dance and pantomimic movements the relationships and experiences of different characters, due to the development of the plot, are shown. Movements in dance are considered as the main means of conveying figurative content (in the absence of verbal texts, theatrical costumes and other “auxiliary” means). The sources of the imagery of the dance are the images of the surrounding reality and the possibilities of the language of movements to artistically embody them. Conditions for this: the use of a story dance with a given imaginary situation and exercises with plot elements; music for story dances and exercises, built on the prin-

ciple of musical dramaturgy; mastering the ways of pair interaction of partners – depending on the characters whose images are conveyed by children according to the roles and with the jointly embodying plot; as well as a dictionary of movements with a description of generalized-imaginative meanings of dance and pantomimic movements [20; 22; 23]. Generalized-imaginative meanings of movements are understood as figurative content, which (potentially) can be expressed by one or another element, gesture in the structure of a holistic dance movement. For example, “kabluchki” (putting the foot on the heel) can express cheerful perkiness, boasting, “podkovyriwanie” (mockery), mechanicalness, angularity, etc. – specific meanings are determined by the combination of this element with the peculiarities of posture, positions or movements of the hands, facial expressions, etc. (see picture).



Picture. “Kabluchki” (placing the foot on the heel) as an expressive element of different imaginative meanings

Creativeness in dance is understood as improvisation – the simultaneous composition and performance of musical-motor images. Such a division, as well as the definition of the content of each of these types of children’s dance creativity, was proposed for the first time [18; 20]. Compositional creativeness is the embodiment of images through the language of movements, performed in ways unfamiliar to children in their training. Its components are the choice of movements, elements corresponding to the meaning (of the plot of dance and music); originality, variability of movements, their combinations; the originality of the trajectories of movement in space, with a mandatory condition that they correspond to the development of the musical image, plot and actions of the characters, including in interaction with a partner [21, pp. 16–17; 19]. Performing creativeness is an expressiveness, artistry, emotional living of musical-motor images, individual manner of transformation into characters’ images [18; 21; 23].

Creativeness is understood not only as a result, but also as a method of teaching (starting from the middle group): the “co-creation” of the teacher with the children in a joint improvisational dance with the characteristic plasticity of different characters; fragments of creativity in simple exercises with plot elements; later, with additions and complications, they were used in the compositions of plot studies and dancing performances (at an older age) [22].

The strategy of the approach: from acquaintance with the generalized-imaginative meanings of dance and pan-

² The transliteration from the Russian names of the movements and some figurative expressions was used because adequate translation in English were not find.

tomimic movements to their meaningful choice and emotional living in exercises, etudes to convey the personages' relationships and them characters according to the roles, the plot of the dance and the peculiarities of the music; and then – to the dance improvisation of the musical-plastic, dance image, where the combination of movements as coherent sequences is “directed” by the logic of the image-character, the context of the imaginary situation and peculiarities of musical dramaturgy [23].

Mastering the technique of movement does not preclude the development of expressiveness but follows it: meaning forms the character of the movement [23].

For the first time within the framework of pedagogical research a diagnosis of the features of preschoolers' dance creativeness was developed, which made it possible to prove a direct significant connection between the meaningful mastery of the movement language in the transmission of the figurative content of dance – in one side, and in other – of productive imagination, the levels of compositional and performing dance creativeness of preschoolers [20, p. 8].

Current Trends in Approaches to Dance Creativity of Preschoolers

Over the past quarter of a century, significant changes have taken place in domestic preschool education: the development of variable programs, standards of preschool education; development of additional education, the spread of choreographic studios for children, including preschoolers; development of an innovative movement of practitioners, etc. Access to translated literature on bodily and dance-motor practices, with attempts to adapt them to the capabilities of children, has been opened. All of this has had an impact on modern approaches to the development of dance creativity of preschoolers.

A relatively new (2022) textbook on the theory and methodology of musical education of preschoolers [33] reflects modern trends in understanding the nature of children's dance and dance creativity of preschoolers. Its authors continue to defend the main positions of the traditional approach [33, p. 165], although the influence of the other two approaches also takes place. In particular, the imagery of dance is recognized, which is not limited only to the peculiarities of music, it is pointed out that dance has its own expressive language, which children need to master from early childhood. However, this is only declared without explanation of how exactly to realize it in practice; children's dance is still considered as a type of musical and rhythmic movements; there are no characteristics of the nature of children's dance creativeness, etc. All taken together speaks of the eclecticism and contradictory of the provisions, which are characteristic of the currently prevailing approach to the dance creativity of preschoolers. One of the main reasons for these problems is the absence of methodologically guidance, the need for which L.S. Vygotsky spoke [13, p. 292].

Some influence on domestic approaches was exerted by foreign publications about children's creative dance.

We will describe them very briefly (leaving a detailed review for a separate publication).

Creativeness and dance education are increasingly becoming the object of attention of foreign researchers, who believe that dance education plays a decisive role in the development of children's creativity; internationally, there is growing community of researchers in dance education [41; 42]. There is a wide range of “methodological” approaches, which are understood as a set of research methods (including diagnostic, pedagogical) and differ in the basis of definitions of creativity – cognitive, psychological, sociocultural, etc. [41]. Most often, the purpose of research is to study the impact of dance education on the development of a child's personality in order to increase his academic performance, motivation for learning and creativity, that is, a dance is considered as a psychotherapeutic tool (which partly echoes the position of domestic supporters of the “Musical Movement” approach [1; 2]). Much attention is paid to the pedagogical practices of dance training and creativity, as well as the training of dance education teachers. Children's creative dance is considered as a means of self-expression of the child to music, contributing to physical, intellectual, aesthetic development and the release of resources for initiative and productive activity in the community of peers.

When teaching dance to preschoolers in kindergarten, not theoretical foundations are considered, but “effective strategies for the development of children's creativity” [42, p. 133], including the development of the ability to imitate (based on a sample demonstrated to adults, analysis of the process of dance movements, their differences in strength, amplitude, rhythm, etc.), enrichment of creative imagination children; the development of their musical perception; the combination of dance education with methods of developing creative abilities that are fascinating for children [42].

In general, it can be said that despite the great attention of foreign researchers to children's creative dance, the methodological foundations of their research are not distinguished by the unity of theoretical approaches. Apparently, a psychological crisis, the historical meaning of which L.S. Vygotsky had written [13], continues and is very clearly manifested in theoretical questions about children's dance creativeness.

The solution to the problems of children's dance creativity in modern domestic preschool education is seen not only in the development of an integral theory, but also in the dissemination of methods corresponding to this theory, which involves both the preparation of methodological manuals and the training of teachers and music directors of preschool education. However, formulating a holistic theory is the first and key step on this way.

Conclusions

The contradictions inherent in each of the three Russian approaches to the theory of dance creativity of pre-

schoolers indicate the insufficiency of the development of an integral methodological basis in each of them.

The application of the provisions of cultural-historical psychology in the analysis of these approaches has shown its productivity and the possibility of using it as a systematic methodological basis for solving the problems of the theory and practice of dance creativity of preschoolers.

The need to develop a balanced, consistent theory of dance creativity of preschoolers on the methodological basis of cultural-historical psychology, the system of provisions of which sets the direction and basic positions of such a theory, has been revealed. In particular, children's dance creativeness should be understood as a reflection of images of reality on the basis of the connection of imagination and emotions in improvisational action through the language of movements in an imagi-

nary situation with a double affective plane, under the following obligatory conditions: using the plot structure of dances with the interaction ("dialogue") of personages with different characters through the language of dance and pantomimic movements; selection of musical works for such dances, reflecting the development (dramaturgy) of dance images.

Dance creativeness of preschoolers is an independent artistic activity, not limited only to the tasks of active perception of music and the development of musicality of movements. With the improvisational nature of preschool children's dance creativeness, it is important to differentiate two its kinds: composing and performing, each of which receives intensive development if children consciously master the language of movements (dancing and pantomimical) as the main expressive means of dance.

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