

Artículo de investigación

**DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL CULTURAL AND AESTHETIC PERCEPTION BY MEANS OF PERFORMING ART**

Формирование культурно-эстетического восприятия личности средствами театрального искусства  
DESARROLLO DE LA PERCEPCIÓN PERSONAL CULTURAL Y ESTÉTICA MEDIANTE EL ARTE EJECUTIVO

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**Abstract**

The paper addresses the problem of development of aesthetic perception in an individual by means of performing art. The potential of performing art and the special aspects of aesthetic perception development are revealed through a case study involving the primary school children. Defined is the concept of 'aesthetic perception', as well as the criteria and levels of its development; revealed are the psychological mechanisms of influence of performing art, being poly-artistic at its core, on the development of cultural and aesthetic perception in an individual. Described is the process of diagnosing and shaping aesthetic perception in primary school children through stage and creative activities. Delivered are the results of research on the problem reflecting the positive dynamics revealed in the experimental participants.

**Keywords:** aesthetic perception, primary school children, means of performing art.

**Аннотация**

Статья посвящена проблеме формирования эстетического восприятия личности средствами театрального искусства. Раскрыт потенциал театрального искусства, особенности формирования эстетического восприятия на примере обучающихся в начальной школе. Дано понятие «эстетическое восприятие», выявлены критерии и уровни его сформированности, психологические механизмы влияния полихудожественного по своей сути театрального искусства на процесс формирования культурно-эстетического восприятия личности. Охарактеризован процесс диагностики и формирования эстетического восприятия у обучающихся начальных классов посредством театрально-творческой деятельности. Представлены результаты исследовательской работы по проблеме, отражающие положительную динамику у испытуемых в экспериментальной группе.

**Ключевые слова:** эстетическое восприятие, младшие школьники, средства театрального искусства.

**Resumen**

El artículo aborda el problema del desarrollo de la percepción estética en un individuo por medio del arte escénico. El potencial del arte escénico y los aspectos especiales del desarrollo de la percepción estética se

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revelan a través de un estudio de caso que involucra a los niños de la escuela primaria. Definido es el concepto de "percepción estética", así como los criterios y niveles de su desarrollo; Se revelan los mecanismos psicológicos de influencia del arte escénico, que son poli- artísticos en su núcleo, en el desarrollo de la percepción cultural y estética en un individuo. Se describe el proceso de diagnóstico y configuración de la percepción estética en los niños de la escuela primaria a través de actividades escénicas y creativas. Se entregan los resultados de la investigación sobre el problema que refleja la dinámica positiva revelada en los participantes experimentales.

**Palabras clave:** percepción estética, niños de primaria, medios de realizar arte.

## Introduction

An abundant spiritual life of an individual is related to the special aspects of their aesthetic development, the ability to feel strongly and deeply, to be in harmony with nature and society. The problem of making 'a human being out of man' in the contemporary world is of particular relevance on the sidelines of an advanced alteration in social, political and other conditions of human existence and development. Adoption of information technology, pragmatization of all aspects of life leads to displacement of the aesthetic components of the environment, hence the cultural and spiritual deformation of a human.

A necessary precondition for the development of aesthetic culture in an individual is the development of cultural and aesthetic perception. It is thanks to the developed perception of beauty in the environment and art that a person is able to discover beauty in himself. The personal development of aesthetic perception acquires particular relevance at a younger school age, because through their own experience of creative activity children comprehend the content of art, its figurative language, which is distinguished by a special aesthetic expressiveness. Taking into account the emotionally coloured memories obtained by a younger schoolchild in the process of aesthetic perception, communication with an aesthetic object, a younger schoolchild gradually begins to form a moral-aesthetic position subsequently determining the emergence of his cultural-aesthetic attitude to reality as a system of the most important personal qualities.

## Materials and Methods

To determine the level of aesthetic perception development in primary school children, we identified the following criteria: intellectual, emotional-sensual, need-behavioural.

The intellectual criterion is a set of cognitive abilities, with the help of which a child can characterize the beautiful (good) and ugly (evil) in life and art, express their value judgement. To

diagnose this criterion, we used the following methods: the MEDIS methodology adapted for younger schoolchildren (express diagnostics of intellectual abilities of preschool children) (Syrotyuk, 2014) and a test task "Think up a story" proposed by E.M. Torshilova and T.V. Morozova to evaluate creative perception characteristics as indicators of the child's overall development (Torshilova, Morozova, 2001). Express diagnostics of intellectual abilities, which includes Subtest 1 - assessment of the general awareness of a child, their vocabulary; Subtest 2 - understanding of quantitative and qualitative ratios; Subtest 3 - finding the odd one out, the level of logical thinking identification; Subtest 4 - evaluation of mathematical abilities. By applying this methodology, we identified the areas of intellectual activity of primary schoolchildren developed at a proper level and the areas that require additional efforts aimed at their further development. The test task "Thinks up a story" is aimed at fixing the creative manifestations of younger schoolchildren in a verbal form. This task allows us to direct the imagination of a younger schoolchild to create a plot based on the picture offered, deliberately depicting an inexplicit dramatic situation. The main indicators for evaluation were fantasy and empathy.

The emotional-sensual criterion includes the following parameters: "an adequate response to various phenomena of the surrounding reality; differentiation and adequate interpretation of other people's emotional states; the range of emotions comprehended and experienced, the intensity and depth of the experience, the level of transmission of the emotional state in terms of speech, the terminological availability of the language; adequate manifestation of the emotional state in the communicative sphere" (Minaeva, 2003). Diagnostics included implementations of five tasks: the task to study the aspects of the use of mimics and pantomimic by children to demonstrate a given emotion; task to study expressiveness of speech; task to study children's perception of graphic images of emotions; task to study children's understanding

of the emotional states of people; task to study children's understanding of their emotional state.

To diagnose the need-behavioural criterion, an adapted version of the "Determination of artistic and aesthetic needs" method by V.S. Avanesov (Practical Course on Developmental Psychology, 2002) and an expert assessment method were used for indicators such as: an active participation in creative activity, initiative and responsibility for decision-making, the predominance of cultural and aesthetic needs when choosing leisure activities.

## Discussion

Theoretical and methodological basis of this study are the works of specialists in the area under study: L.S. Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 2013), A.N. Leontyev (Leontyev, 2014), D.S. Likhachev (Likhachev, 2015), L.P. Pechko (Pechko, 2008), S.L. Rubinstein (Rubinstein, 2014) and others.

In the context of the theory of aesthetic education, the main means of aesthetic development is the real-life communication between a person and Art, which cannot and should not be limited to contemplation. It necessarily involves an active inclusion of an individual in the cultural and aesthetic artistic creativity, among the varieties of which stage creativity, poly-artistic in its content, occupies a special place.

Attempts to understand the nature of aesthetic perception were undertaken in the ancient times. According to the ancient philosophers, the basis of aesthetic perception was beauty, which was considered as a proportionate phenomenon possessing organic integrity and serving as a single source of pleasure.

Aesthetic perception is currently defined as a person's ability to purposefully perceive, feel, properly understand and appreciate beauty in the surrounding reality (in nature, social life, work, and the art phenomena).

N.I. Kiyaschenko notes that a person's success in a particular field of activity is associated with the breadth and depth of development of his/her abilities (Kiyaschenko, 1971). Holistic development of creative abilities of an individual is the ultimate goal and the main task of the aesthetic perception development of the young generation. By using the means of art as the key pillar of culture, it is necessary to develop personal qualities and skills that would allow an

individual to become a creator of aesthetic values, a creator of culture.

Based on the research by Yu.S. Lyubimova (Lyubimova, 2015), it is possible to distinguish several areas of development of cultural and aesthetic perception in younger schoolchildren, which include:

1. Compulsive creation and expansion of the existing stock of aesthetic knowledge (i.e. sensory-acquired knowledge) about the types and genres of art, cultural objects, cultural events, aesthetic phenomena of reality, etc. This course of development contributes to the development in pupils the cultural and aesthetic interest in the perception of reality, which is based on positive emotions, vivid impressions arising during the dynamic poly-artistic activities. The subject matter of this activity contributes to the accumulation by younger schoolchildren of acoustic, colour and plastic impressions, acquaintance with images of natural phenomena, diversity of human feelings and emotions, with images-forms, whose cultural and aesthetic meanings (sometimes unexpected) are revealed in materials and textures (a vivid example is theatrical toys, scenery, costumes). Tactile sensations, taste, smell, colour, light, sound, and the related associations form in a pupil sensuous-emotional experience that cannot be separated from practical activities.

Culture and reality are qualitatively dependent on each other. On the one hand, the socio-economic possibilities of the surrounding reality ensure the prosperity of culture, i.e. the level of consciousness development of each individual and society as a whole. On the other hand, culture is a powerful factor that influences an individual's aesthetic consciousness. Culture contributes to the formation of a person's attitude to certain events of reality, helping to make the right decisions in situations of choice, creating moral foundations for the development and manifestation of cultural and aesthetic sustainability in various spheres of life. The cultural and aesthetic potential of an individual is based on their acceptance of artistic values and determines the creative behaviour of an individual accordingly.

2. The second course of the cultural and aesthetic perception development is related to the formation of significant socio-psychological qualities in schoolchildren.

These qualities are important for personal development, since they provide a thoughtful, reflective, evaluative emotional experience of what is happening, the ability to separate the “good” from the “pseudo-good”, allow an individual to evaluate aesthetically significant objects and phenomena, and enjoy them. The core of the pupils' cultural-aesthetic attitude to the components of the surrounding reality as an indicator of the level of their cultural-aesthetic development lies in a deeply meaningful experience, which manifests itself in an activity relation (i.e. a deed, behaviour) as a range of senses-standards revealed through observing and communicating, in the process of experiencing the good, the funny, the tragic, etc. The adequacy of these experiences lies at the heart of the aesthetic education of an individual. Moreover, the attributes of aesthetic education can include the following: intelligence, ability to recognize aesthetic feelings, the ability to formulate aesthetic judgements, the ability to give an adequate aesthetic treatment of the phenomena of art and life. The aesthetic assessment should be considered as such, which, above all, is based on certain aesthetic principles of human, on a deep understanding of the essence and significance of the aesthetic, which makes it possible to analyse, prove and argue their choice. Thus, cultural and aesthetic perception can also be understood as the ability of a pupil to critically evaluate actions, results of creative activity, etc.

3. The third course of development of cultural and aesthetic perception in younger schoolchildren is associated with the development of their creative abilities that constitute the basis of creative activity.

Therefore, an individual should not only understand the beauty of the surrounding reality, but also actively participate in the creation of cultural and aesthetic environment around them. The culture of perception of the surrounding reality, which is hidden behind the melody, colour, form, semantic connotation, is the foundation of the basic culture of an individual manifested in their cultural and aesthetic attitude to the world.

Aesthetic feelings as a component of aesthetic perception are socially determined subjective experiences that arise as a result of a person's evaluative attitude towards aesthetic phenomena

or objects that can arouse in a person's feelings of spiritual pleasure or aversion, sublime feelings, laughter, horror or fear.

The next constituent of aesthetic perception is the aesthetic sense. A.I. Burov considers the aesthetic sense as a relatively stable personal trait, where the captured norms and preferences act as personal criteria for the aesthetic evaluation of objects or phenomena (Burov, 1975 and Burov, 1956).

D.B. Nemensky defines the aesthetic sense as “a thirst for communication with genuine art” (Nemensky, 2012).

Drama classes help the younger schoolchildren believe in themselves, that they can express their thoughts and feelings in different ways, thus, they learn to look at the world aesthetically perceiving it.

Dipping into stage and creative activities, a younger schoolchild acquires the ability to aesthetically perceive themselves and the surrounding reality through a stage image, the peculiarity of which lies in originality, individuality and uniqueness. Pedagogically valuable is the fact that a pupil finds challenging, and at the same time, interesting the process of “crystallizing” the stage image on the basis of fantasy, the process of “bringing to perfection” (refinement of some details, elements of colour or composition).

Performing art being a synthetic, poly-artistic art form has a special language - the language of gestures, colours, sounds and symbols, which a culturally and aesthetically educated person with intelligence, an ability to associate and a cultural aesthetic sense can understand, which seems absolutely impossible without a developed cultural and aesthetic perception.

To increase the level of aesthetic perception development in younger schoolchildren, we used the potential of performing art, as this art form contributes to successful building of a sociocultural behavioural model for a growing person in the contemporary world, introducing them to spiritual values; it introduces them to literature, music, visual arts, the rules of etiquette; it develops culturological competence in a younger schoolchild.

The fact that performing art contributes to a younger schoolchildren creative development through improvement of their creative skills in a performance with a certain 'fixed role' state

(experiencing joy, anger, sadness, grief, etc.) is undeniable. When working on the role, a pupil tries to find new images or modifies those he has already mastered, making them expressively precise, thereby activating his creative and critical thinking.

The essence of stage and creative activities as a means of students' creative development also lies in the fact that this type of activity contains a 'creative problem-solving task'. In staging, actions are not given in a ready-made format. The pupils sometimes have to write the lines themselves thinking over the reasons that explain the characters' behaviour. The staging process sometimes differs greatly from the process during rehearsals. The ability to ad lib lines, to support a stage partner in an episode if they have forgotten their lines or failed to cope with anxiety, can also characterize the level of pupils' creative development. Working with the literary material helps a child-artist to reconstruct the stage image by means of movements, gestures, and facial mobility. Thus, a younger schoolchild learns to analyse a performing-creative situation and select the appropriate means of expression to settle it.

During the formative phase of the experiment, the schoolchildren took part in staging the fairy tales as follows: The Cat's House (Russian: Koshkin dom), ¿Who Said 'Meow'?, Cipollino (or Tale of Cipollino), Dunno in the Sunny City, The Three Little Pigs, The Ugly Duckling, etc.

## Results.

To determine the level of aesthetic perception development, we carried out a comprehensive diagnosis of the criteria we identified using the above methods.

The primary school children at School No. 85 (Ulyanovsk (the Russian Federation)) – a municipal budgetary general education institution, and the younger schoolchildren at Gloria Center – the Cultural and Language Supplementary Education Center, Ulyanovsk (the Russian Federation) participated in the experiment to identify an aesthetic perception development level. The total number of the experimental participants was 116, of these, 59 children constituted the experimental group, and 57 – the control group. Thus, at the start of the experiment, the following results were obtained in the experimental group: of 59 children (100%), a high level of aesthetic perception was developed in 7 people, i.e. 11.87%; 11 people had an average level, i.e. 18.64%; a low level was

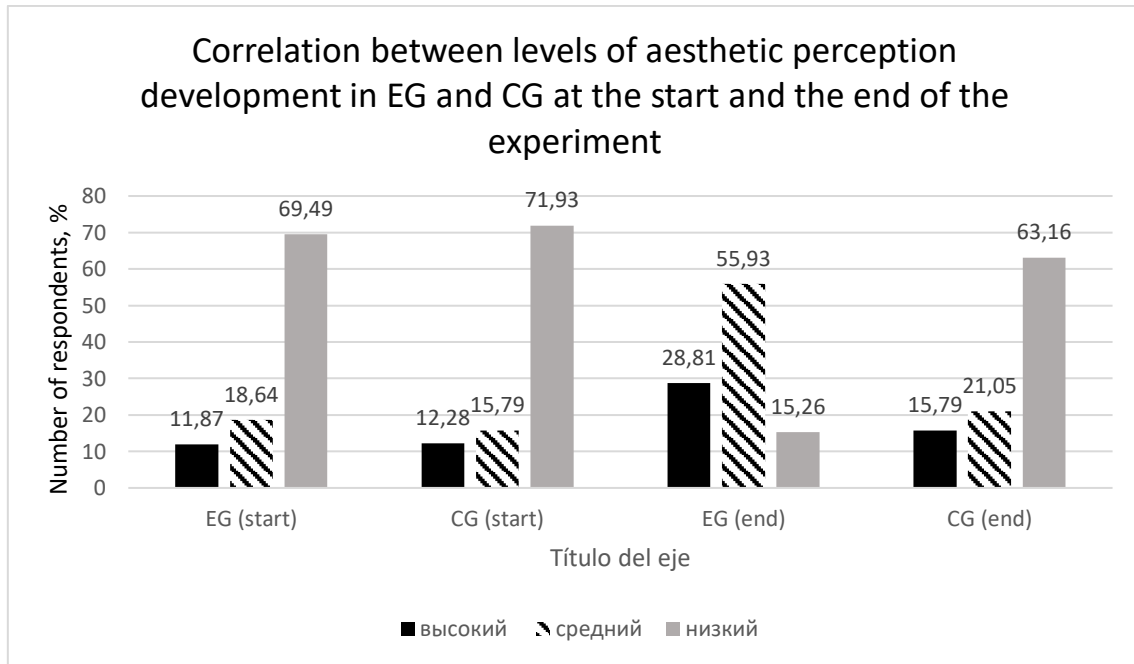
defined in 41 people, i.e. 69.49%. The following results were obtained in the control group: of 57 people (100%), a high level of aesthetic perception was developed in 7 people (12.28%); an average level – 9 people (5.79%); a low level – 41 people (71.93%). The results from this study indicate that a low level of aesthetic perception is predominant in both the experimental and the control groups (41 people per group).

At the end of the formative phase of the experiment, which lasted 4 years and consisted in organizing the stage and creative activities of younger schoolchildren, a repeated diagnosis of their aesthetic perception development level was carried out using the proposed methods. At the end of the experiment, the following results were obtained in the experimental group: of 59 children (100%), a high level of aesthetic perception was developed in 17 people, i.e. 28.81%; 33 people had an average level, i.e. 55.93%; a low level was defined in 9 people, i.e. 15.26%. At the end of the experiment, the results obtained in the control group were as follows: of 57 children (100%), a high level of aesthetic perception was developed in 9 people, i.e. 15.79%; 12 people had an average level, i.e. 21.05%; a low level was defined in 36 people, i.e. 63.16%.

The diagnostics results have revealed the changes in both the control and experimental groups, with the most dramatic changes observed in the experimental group. Thus, the number of students in the experimental group, who demonstrated a low level of aesthetic perception reduced materially (from 41 people to 9 people), i.e. by 32 people (which makes 54.23%). However, such change in the control group was not so significant: the number of students with a low level of aesthetic perception decreased from 41 people to 36 people (i.e. by only 5 people (i.e. by 8.77%). The experimental group also showed some positive dynamics, which manifested itself in an increased number of students with high and medium levels of aesthetic perception. Thus, the number of students with a high level increased from 7 people (11.87%) to 17 people (28.81%), i.e. by 10 people (16.94%); the number of students with an average level increased from 11 people (18.64%) to 33 people (55.93%), i.e. by 22 people (37.29%). At the same time, the number of students in the control group with a high level of aesthetic perception increased from 7 people (12.28%) to 9 people (15.79%), i.e. only by 2 people (3.51%), the number of students with an average level increased from 9 people (15.79%) to 12 people (21.05%), i.e. for 3 people



(5.26%). The obtained results are conveniently illustrated in Diagram 1 below.



**Diagram 1.** The levels of aesthetic perception development in the experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG) at the start and the end of the experiment

### Conclusion

One of the key principles of the aesthetic perception development in younger schoolchildren is a task-oriented pedagogical aesthetic and educational impact.

Addressing the works of art, on the one hand, and the works of those who studied the psychological mechanisms of its perception, on the other hand, we experience a conscious aesthetic sense of deep unity and kinship with the cultural-aesthetic object and phenomenon as a subject of experience and living, with underlying perception of the sensual appearance of perceived things, objects, phenomena, revealing their inner life, something akin to our own, which allows us to find ourselves in the world and the world in ourselves. Pedagogical practice, which underestimates this fundamental principle of the full-fledged artistic and aesthetic development of a forming person, is obviously unproductive, deprived of methodological foundations, no matter how successfully, at first glance, it solves any educational tasks.

At the same time, it is obvious that the inner activity of the spirit does not 'freeze' in the area of the aesthetic experiences just described. The experience only then forms the basis of a deep

cultural and aesthetic perception, when it is embodied in an adequate, expressive image that captures, preserves the personal experience of an individual and makes it accessible to others. R. Tagore wrote about this in his letters. He praised 'poets in spirit', that is, people, although not writing poetry, but experiencing a poetic attitude to the world. Such an attitude is developed from an early age, when a child has not yet separated himself consciously and rigidly from the material world, he is still able to endow his surroundings with an inner life, character, and expressiveness based on the emotional response to various external sensual signs of things and interest in them.

From a pedagogical point of view, it is valuable that culturally-aesthetic perception in favourable, properly created conditions can be developed in almost everyone (especially at the sensitive age of 4-9 years). This fact allows us to assume that the age-specific artistic talent in children of this age is a normal age-related phenomenon (at the same time, it should be distinguished from the individual talent of a person).

The development of artistic talent is carried out through a person's involvement in a variety of artistic and creative activities, which develop the sensory sphere, provide a deep insight into

aesthetic phenomena, and gradually lead to an understanding of genuine art, the beauty of reality and the beautiful in the human person (Aryabkina, 2010). The result of aesthetic perception formation is the development of personal aesthetic sense and ideals, the ability to create the beauty, organize independent stage and creative activities, and actively participate in them, thereby being the creator of culture.

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