

УДК 159.922.7

## Source and Driving Forces for Development

**Boris D. Elkonin\***

*Institute of the Russian Academy of Education  
the Laboratory of the Junior School Psychology of Psychological  
4 build., 9 Mohovaya st., Moscow, 125009 Russia <sup>1</sup>*

Received 04.11.2011, received in revised form 11.11.2011, accepted 23.11.2012

*Based on the classic for the Russian children's psychology attitudes about the contradiction of the ideal form and the level of somatic organization of a child, the idea about the causes of the development, as the question why when you reach certain key points of development, the process does not stop and does not turn into the functioning according to the already known schemes, but develops further, is researched and developed. It is alleged that the development of an action as the development of the world has two focusing and two completions. Firstly, the completion of the development in the construction of an individual action and, secondly, its completion in the construction of the combined, mutual action. The importance of realizing that mediacy – transferring samples – is not completed by the formation of the separate cultural skills, but finds its fullness by being included into the management of the nature of movement, finding its rhythm and measure – the step of development, is emphasized.*

*Keywords: activity, the source of activity, action, subjectivity, the model, the driving forces of development.*

### The original question

The subject of the driving forces is the key subject for all the classical theories and all the periodizations of ontogeny. In Soviet psychology the key thesis about driving force, the source and the conditions of development are presented in the book by D.B. Elkonin "Child Psychology", published in 1960. These thesis concerns leading activity as the driving force of child's development, the environment – the medium of ideal forms (cultural norms) – as the source of development and the level of somatic organization of a child as a condition of development (Elkonin, 1960: p. 16 – 19).

Later, having developed a well-known periodization of ontogeny, D.B. Elkonin added his own ideas about the driving forces of development. He stated that the driving force of the deployment of activities, and, consequently, the driving force of development is the difference (inconsistency, contradiction) of motivational-semantic and operational-technical aspects of activity, in other words mismatch and the problematic relationship between the meaning and the mode of action (Elkonin, 1989: p. 490).

The thesis about the essential contradictions of the meaning and the mode of action requires clarification of the question about the driving

\* Corresponding author E-mail address: [belconin@bk.ru](mailto:belconin@bk.ru)

<sup>1</sup> © Siberian Federal University. All rights reserved

forces of development. This question can be understood in two ways. Firstly, it is referred to the causes of appearance of the mental new developments and, consequently, the emergence of the new possibilities of action.

All the representatives of Vygotsky's school and not only them have been studying this question. Another interpretation of the same question is its understanding as the question of the causes of the development step, as the question of why when you reach a certain key point, the development process does not stop and does not turn into the operation according to the already known schemes, but develops further. The question is not answered even if you indicate to the cultural programme as the defined sequence of the growing-up stages. It is not answered if we are discussing development, but not a consistent adaptation to the externally defined patterns of behavior.

I believe that the thesis about the necessary difference between the meaning and the mode of action is crucial in answering the question about the driving forces in its second interpretation, crucial to understand **the way, the step of development appears.**

### **The source of personal activity**

**The source of activity as personal activity is the situation of human involvement in creation or recreation of personal activity.** In this case we should emphasize two issues: firstly, specifically involvement, as human activity is made only in the form of *joint* action (Elkonin, 1989) and, secondly, we mean specifically *creation* of personal activity, in contrast to its involvement into subjection to some kind of alien force. The situation is creation of personal activity is the situation of overcoming of an alien impact in personal activity. It is this situation that creates overcoming of *personal* activity and connected with it *feeling* of personal activity,

which is represented as a feeling of our body – well-being. It appears in the *rhythm* of acting, during transition of efforts, it means within the limits, during effort-not effort and not effort-effort transition (Elkonin, 2010). Only at the “point” of appearance of the feeling of personal activity (in M.M. Bakhtin's words “... the feeling of self-generating activity ...” (Bakhtin, 1975)), one becomes involved into the source of personal activity – becomes its *subject*.

Subjectivity and the conditions of its origin – the essence of the word, which define the main direction, the axis, and the motif of the deployment of research and development practices in L.S. Vygotsky's school.

For L.S. Vygotsky mediation – creation of an attribution of a situation of behavior – is a universal form of overcoming *stimulus* relationship with the environment, stimulus forms of influence on a person and control of a person's behavior, i.e., within the limit – overcoming the stimulus organization of the world. Stimulus, provocative in its nature do not leave any room for the activity, in which deeply felt corporality is being recreated and tested.

For A.N. Leontiev the major transformation, that characterizes the creation of the psyche, is the transformation of a stimulus into the *subject*, which defines the transition to the sensation. It is this transformation that A.N. Leontiev recreated in his experimental work (Leontiev, 1981).

For A.V. Zaporozhets the condition of creation of voluntary movement is its transformation from insensible to sensible. This transformation was also recreated experimentally (Zaporozhets, 1960).

The experiments which were conducted under direction of A.N. Leontiev and A.V. Zaporozhets (conducted in-parallel the late 50's of the last century, but never matched with each other (Zaporozhets, 1960: p. 52 – 90), (Leontiev, 1981:

p. 161 – 218)), revealed the two sides of the same act.

A.V. Zaporozhets, studying the feeling of personal movement, modeled it, making a kind of screening of the rhythm of deep sensibility (vegetative rhythm), i.e. its visible display, and showed that the feeling of self-motion occurs in the samples of such a screening.

A.N. Leontiev, not studying the feeling of self-motion in the public, nevertheless demonstrated that, for example, pitch distinction (hearing) happens in cases where the display is being tested and recreated in a special audible voice, or even tactile intoning. Such a test and reconstruction A.N. Leontiev called the assimilation of an action to the subject. In such a way the category of objectivity was introduced. It is important that, in this case, the “object” displays, screens, and thereby objectifies and retains implicit and labile feeling. It is also important that this very “subject” is not given, but should be detected and reconstructed in specific tests.

He two sides of the act which was studied are the following: a) detection and reconstruction of the externally represented internal forces (A.V. Zaporozhets) and b) the detection and reconstruction of the reflection (image), which manifests an inner force (A.N. Leontiev). The internal assimilation (playback) and externally-effective creation of its (specifically its) image – are the two desired characteristics of the joint action, in which the subjected activity appears.

The joint action should originate the situation and the space, in which corporality (well-being) and the image are in the mode of mutual testing (mutual reflection) and the game with their reversibility appears. We can say that in such spaces the reciprocity of corporality and its image are modeled. However, this space is formed not as “a main scheme” but as “a live model”, a concentrate of life events. This model is not removed from the reality of life, but vice

versa, concentrates reality, revealing its hidden completeness and verity (Heidegger, 2005), (Heidegger, 1992). Ontogeny can be represented as a rhythmic shift of these models and “playgrounds” – *the rhythm of the development of the Events of recreation of the Source of personal activity*. In such a representation, D.B. Elkonin’s guess about the nature of the psyche is becoming clear. In his scientific diaries D.B. Elkonin wrote: “*The essence, the meaning* [highlighted by the author – B.E.] of the mental activity lies not in the fact that it occurs internally, but in the fact that it is the activity which carries out a specific function – the action in reality according to a model. This is the essence of the case. We should comprehend mental activity as an internal activity. This is the only way to study it” (Elkonin, 2004: p. 22).

*The driving forces of development – are the essential forces by which the life models are systematically reconstructed – the events of recreation of the Source of personal activity.*

### **The duality of development**

It was mentioned that a model in which reciprocity of well-being and its image are recreated is constructed in a special joint action. In other researches, I call this action *mediation*, and I believe that it has the form of a *test-productive action* (Elkonin, 2010). It is its development- modeling that sets the rhythm of development. However, the action in its completion can not be presented and introduced for the development. Its development involves the inclusion into its creation, being in it, in its development, not only before it. The development of such an action is taking place in the World, the creation and definition of *one’s own in the World*. M. Heidegger (after E. Husserl) named such development *intentionality*. We will clarify the structure of intentionality, and, thus, the structure of the situation of connection of well-being and the image and, thus, the structure of the Source

of Activity – the situation of “the beginning” of activity.

In the development of an action as the development of the World, there are *two* focusing and *two* completions. Firstly, the completion of the development in the formation of an individual action and, secondly, its completion in the formation of the joint, mutual action (Elkonin, 2010: p. 211 – 215). In the different completions of the action of mediation there are different aspects of the development itself – different aspects of “one’s own”. Firstly, the action is formed as the development of a World by *a person*, or rather as development of the certain means (physical and external) of development of the World. Here, the World is becoming one’s own – sensible, visible and represented in words. Secondly, and this is very important, the World is being developed in a sense, that an individual becomes *the part of the World*, and the World **admits** an individual as Its Own. This second aspect of the development in the studies of I.S. Vygotsky and his followers was only assumed, but was never revealed. But the personality – a Face and a Name – appears only here, in *approving* someone as a source of action.

For example, I could not but begin to write this work, if I had not been *recognized* and approved as one of the “players in the field” of cultural-historical psychology, i.e., would not have been *taken* into their “team”. However, when I’m writing this study and develop, or redevelop the schemes of cultural-historical psychology, I understand that the study is going to be *completed*, it will succeed, when it will be accepted and recognized, and my ability to be a “player” in this field, i.e. “to be in...” will be approved.

The simple act of communication also has these two sides: looking at another person, as if “feeling” and becoming acquainted with the person, I am, having become acquainted with a

person, at the same time, lay myself open to a *person’s opinion*, feel his gaze and is visible by a person.

*Every product and creation, including human image as a product, are dually established, directed and completed: to the development of a different by oneself and to the development of oneself by a different.* This duality and never predetermined measure of reciprocity of the two sides of development taken in advance, is the intrigue of One’s own.

Reciprocity of the corporality and the image is played out as a model to build the situation of connection: a) call of an action (gesture), which is aimed at oneself and b) the formation of an action “from” oneself to a different. The first one is formed as a special appeal – as a *challenge of the approval* of entering into the state of activity (“You are here with us”) and as a statement of its completion (“It is done”, “You can”). It is here One’s own-Different appears. The second one is formed as the introduction of the backbones-limits of activity (samples), the product of its step and rhythm (Elkonin, 2010a). At this point the sensible bearing of the personal efforts and One’s own corporality appears.

The reality which D.B. Elkonin defined as the development of motivational and semantic aspect of an action has the form of *a challenge of a statement* of a person as the Source of one’s own activity – as its subject. A statement and a challenge is the essence of the practice of the meaning of an action (Elkoniniva, 2004), the practice of addressing to the World (the Other) as a carrier of the image-idea of an action. What was called the motive is phenomenally fulfilled as an image of impulsion, breakthrough into activity and as an image of fullness of completeness of its fragment, the completeness of what was done. The meaning and motivation are outplayed in the models of “entry” into activity (vigilance, ambition, strong-willed attitude) and are held in

the images of a hero (feat) or in the image of a loving person (smiles, tenderness, etc.)

The essence of the presented scheme of understanding of the motivational-semantic aspect of action lies in the fact that the meaning and the motive are understood not as materialized energy – the subject of an external action, which defines its performance. They are understood practically and effectively – as images – topics (Elkonin, 2010: p. 45 – 54) and the energy of the transition field – the images of the Event.

Understanding of the operational and technical aspects of an action should also be reconstructed. D.B. Elkonin himself started this reconstruction, and he included the meaning of example and the formation of the personal mode of action by a child into choosing the made of action (Elkonin, 1989: p. 130 – 141), and this reconstruction should be continued.

Firstly, the mode of action is not one-dimensional, it is three-dimensional and includes experience and testing of the basis, testing of the situations (the field) and testing of the direction of an action (Elkonin, 2010: p. 233 – 252), (Egorova, 2009). The transitions of the levels (between the basis, the field and the direction) determine the completeness of the mode of action.

Secondly, the appearance of the new levels in the mode of action is possible only with immersion of the basic samples of acting into *an element* of the certain progression (e.g., the element of walking, or the element of finding the meaning in the speech) (Elkonin, 2010). Only in such an element the rhythm of action is formed. It this element, similar to the energy of an element intention appears, and this intention merges with an action itself.

Thirdly, the development of the mode on the level of formation of the *personal* situation and the field of action, involves the separation of “my action” and “an action which was performed by me” and it involves individualization of an action

and emancipation from the person, who controls an action. Here the field of personal action and the field of compatibility (often conflict) appears (Elkonin, 2010). The basis of formation of the personal field of action – the basis of the speed of its expansion – will be the subject of the next crisis. Not only procedural and technical definition of the basis of action is in conflict with its “motivational-semantic” aspect. It is in the conflict with it by *situational and field mode* of action – direct self-centered expansion of the field and formation of the new situations as *one's own* situations. It is in this “point”, the World presented by the Others demands to reassert the “right” to action-intention, as if asking, “Who are *you* to try, how *can* you be the source of your progress?”

In the analysis of the mode of action the element of motion was neglected, with the help of this element action-intention is formed and the field of action is established. In the analysis of the motivational-semantic aspect of an action, energy-efficient, and corresponding to it spatial-topical form of *phenomena* (intentionality) of the meaning and motive was neglected – the *challenge of the confirmation of subjectivity*, confirmation of an individual as the source of action, i.e. an individual as “I am” were neglected as well.

I believe that these omissions have not only “individual-mental” (“teachers could not figure out”), but the cultural and historical background. The form of culture and the form of its representation on all its levels assumed the given subordination of the already formed, and given in samples cultural patterns. In the “field of upbringing” there were supposed to be the emphasis and direct transmittance of the norms as “meanings” – the “values”, you have to fight for, but in the field of “education” there was no (and there is not) supposed to be involvement into the element of promotion and expansion

of the field of action. In this type of culture the development of the mode and development the meaning are parallel, and development of a place in the World has a transformed form of adaptation to the different types of regulations. D.B. Elkonin's thesis about the meaning and the mode as connected aspects of an action and acquisition of a place in society by this action – is the beginning of the project of a new culture.

### **The driving forces for development**

Specifications of understanding of the meaning and the mode of action, given in the previous section, give us an opportunity to get to the idea of the driving forces of development. Let me remind, that only those “forces”, which recreate the *models* of testing of the method or the point of action are considered. Let me also remind, that the “forces” which define the progress itself and the step of development are considered.

The question that should be answered is the question of how the acting out of a model of one type (e.g. a model of development of the meaning) leads to the problem of the development of a model of another type. Thus, the question about the driving forces comes to the question of how one model starts the development of the other.

It is important to emphasize that in this light, research and analysis should come to the “point” of transmission of one model to another, the “point” of appearance of the substance of a new action, and do not remain in the consideration of the development post festum, at the point, where a new model has already emerged and is being implemented.

Another note is also important. In order to discuss the driving forces in accordance with the special requirements, it is necessary to find those functional systems, which, when started functioning, are capable of further *self-development* i.e., those that require development of the opportunities, rather than special formation.

At this stage I can consider the transition of one model to the development of another only in two age groups – infancy and early childhood, that form the age, which D.B. Elkonin called the age of infancy.

Direct emotional communication of a child and an adult in the first six month of child's life is introduced by the widely known and discussed phenomenon. The basic phenomenon – emergence, keeping and further appearance of a smile, and later – elation when a child sees an adult. The space of emotional contact is consistently growing – the “contact” distance is increasing, appears an adult's coming and leaving the “circle” of communication, and the angles of rotation of a child's head and body, associated with it, are increasing.

It is important to emphasize that in the reciprocity of a child and an adult, there is no and there can not be any separation of *activation* and *movement* (tonus and kinetics), i.e. differentiation of the state of activity and the activity itself (movement). There is no distinction not only because a child is small, but, and this is important, because the model of direct-emotional communication and its nature, does not distinguish between a state and a movement. In this absence of distinction a movement is *manifestation* of a state. Everything is a gesture. The distinction between a state and its manifestation in love or hatred at the same moment will not be love or hatred, but their theatrical training. The absence of distinction between the state of activation and movement, and, correspondingly, between a gesture and a movement, an intention and a movement are the *positive* characteristics of the dynamic field of the direct emotionality.

In child's corporality the supported combination of activation and movement turns into the combination of perception and movement, sensory and motor skills. A child sees an adult distantly and turns the body and the head more and

more, and breaks the records of these “distantly” and “more”, extending the corporal field, because of the direct sensor-motor connection.

According to B.A. Arkhipov’s (Arkhipov; Arkhipov et al. 2010) experience and data, an increase in the angles of eyes’ and body’s rotation is symmetrically displayed in the other “parts” of the body and starts the formation of a new body axis, its field and body support – the functional systems of posture and movement. A child independently begins to crawl and walk, but his vision and movement are not separated, and tonic and kinetic basis in the movement are not separated as well. A child is in **the element** of movement, and only in the case of unpleasant incidents the elements of control are activated. These incidents are becoming the subject of special concern of an adult. The situation of communication and the type of challenge are changing. From the situation of support of a child’s activity, an adult comes to the situation of a child’s escort, i.e. to the situation of limiting of a child’s activity to a certain extend (this situation can be named “existential situation of development”, distinguishing it, thus, from the “social situation”)... It is here, in this situation – the place of development of child’s basic activities, i.e. the place of transfer of the behavioral examples to a child. It concerns *action*, because an example with the meaning of the limits between “allowed” and “forbidden”, “right” and “wrong” gives basics and guidelines of activity *control* and forms of its fragmentation and completion. As the limits, an example gives artificial basics as intensifiers of the natural ones and, thus, requires the division of a basis and a movement, and therefore – the division of an image and the way of acting, which leads to the separation of a single sensor-motor field. The separation of the sensor-motor field leads to the accentuation of the tonic-kinetic transition (in the form of basis) and to its reconstruction. The step and the rhythm of movement appear, and

together with it appears the feeling of personal effort.

As it was mentioned earlier, it is important that the examples are fully and meaningfully included into a child’s life, i.e. mediation becomes complete only when it is plunged into an element – the energy of development of the hidden order of movement. Being plunged, in order to open the hitherto hidden order – the rhythm of movement in relation to the composition of its space, the places of the basic orienting points of movement (Elkonin, 2010).

In such a way one model (the leading activity) gradually becomes the other. It becomes, because as a *by-product* (Ponomarev, 1967), it starts self-development, the spontaneous formation of a different functional system. Self-development, extension of the field of “work” of this new functional system “captures” the field is its origin and sets new challenges in it, thus, leading to the appearance of a new model of activity testing. *Only in the case of appearance of the element of formation of corporality within direct emotional communication it can be stated that direct emotional communication is the driving force of development.* Summarizing what was said by L.S. Vygotsky, it is possible to state *that only that cultural form of behavior, inside which the new natural form appears and develops, becomes the driving force of development* – the new object of further modeling and development. In the given example of the development of oneself by the World – the direct emotional challenge of an adult – the resilient material for the development of the World by oneself is formed.

In the formation and development of the new subject of development, the positive role of some indistinctions should be noticed and underlined: the combination of a state and manifestation that gives the directness of communication and which is reflected in the combination of sensory and motor basics of activity – in its spontaneity.

Another example of the age transition, interpreted as the transition of the models of subjectivity – is the transition from the tender age to pre-school age, from the development of the basics of a physical action to a role-playing game. I have already mentioned some aspects of this transition and, therefore, I will describe it briefly.

Once again I will emphasize the importance of understanding, that mediation – giving examples – is not finished by the formation of the separate cultural skills, but is completed by being included in the management of the element of movement, in finding its rhythm and measure, i.e. a step.

*Immersiveness of the element of movement is motivation.* Rhythmization of this element is recreation of intention, recreation of the personal energy of movement in one's corporality. At the same time, an intention of a child's movement is not separated from the image of the field of movement, it does not "live" differently than in the images of the fragments of the field, it is "inside" it. The phenomena of "inside" is called "the field behavior". The action, that energy exists as "objective desire" – an action-intention. In this action "I want" is not yet identified, not outplayed as a special condition and is not separated from "I can". A child lives in this "I want- I can", i.e. lives in direct demiurgic connection with the world.

It is here, in regard to the naive demiurgic action-intention incidents that put it into

question arise. It may be lumbering machines, scary passers-by, a lift or an airplane, or it may be just father' or mother's prohibition to approach to the computer or to them when they work. Situations and events that L.S. Vygotsky called the "unrealizable tendencies" appear. Within action-intention, these situations can't be resolved and often transform into anxieties and fears.

Children role-playing game is a model of testing of *the event of intention*. The model of the test of intention in the form of impossible effort, i.e. in the form of a Hero and a feat. In this new model, a child initiates and tests *development of oneself by others as the one who can*, as the one who has the source in intentions in him/herself. In the game intentions and wishes are developed.

But what was described will not happen if the development of the examples of the corporal action will not inspire and not intensify the element of objective intention and spatial expansion.

And again: mediation, *overcoming of natural in cultural will become the driving force of development only in the case of generation of the new natural, new spontaneous* as its by-product. And this new spontaneous will provoke situations and tasks, which solution will require the enactment of a new model of subjectivity, and a new model of One's own. In this case a Game as the model of the development of intentions-impulses.

## References

Архипов Б.А. [B.A. Arkhipov] Формирование пространства и схемы тела в онтогенезе. Рукопись.

Архипов Б.А., Максимова Е.В., Семенова Н.Е. [B.A. Arkhipov, E.V. Maksimova, N.E. Semenova] Уровень тонической регуляции как основа формирования психики ребенка. Ж. «Психотерапия», №5, 2010. С. 24 – 33.

Бахтин М.М. [M.M. Bakhtin] Вопросы литературы и эстетики. (М., 1975).

Выготский Л.С. [L.S. Vygotsky] Собр. соч. в 6 т. (М., 1982-1984).



- Егорова А.А. [A.A. Egorova] Феномены построения способа действия // Культурно-историческая психология. 2009. № 1. С 96–102.
- Запорожец А.В. [A.V. Zaporozhets] Развитие произвольных движений (М., 1960).
- Леонтьев А.Н. [A.N. Leontiev] Проблемы развития психики (М., 1981).
- Пономарев Я.А. [Y.A. Ponomarev] Психика и интуиция (М., 1967).
- Хайдеггер М. [M. Heidegger] Исток художественного творения (М., 2005).
- Хайдеггер М. [M. Heidegger] Семинар в Ле Торе, 1969 // Вопросы философии. 1992. № 10. С. 123–151.
- Эльконин Б.Д. [B.D. Elkonin] Опосредствование. Действие. Развитие (Ижевск, 2010)
- Эльконин Б.Д. [B.D. Elkonin] Пространство опосредствования и развитие // Антропопрактис, 2010.
- Эльконин Д.Б. [B.D. Elkonin] Детская психология (М., 1960).
- Эльконин Д.Б. [B.D. Elkonin] Избранные психологические труды (М., 1989).
- Эльконин Д.Б. [B.D. Elkonin] Выдержки из научных дневников // Вопросы психологии, 2004. № 1. С. 9–22
- Эльконинова Л.И. [L.I. Elkoniniva] О единице сюжетно-ролевой игры // Вопросы психологии. 2004. №1. С. 68–79

## **Исток и движущие силы развития**

**Б.Д. Эльконин**

*Психологический институт*

*Российской академии образования*

*Лаборатория психологии младшего школьника*

*Россия 125009, Москва, ул. Моховая, 9, стр. 4*

---

*Опираясь на классические для отечественной детской психологии положения о противоречии идеальной формы и уровне соматической организации ребенка, критически осмысливается и развивается идея о причинах возникновения самого шага развития как вопроса о том, почему при достижении некоей ключевой точки процесс развития не останавливается, не превращается в функционирование по уже готовым схемам, а, наоборот, развертывается дальше. Утверждается, что в освоении действия как освоении Мира есть две фокусировки и два завершения. Во-первых, завершение освоения в построении индивидуального действия и, во-вторых, его завершение в построении совместного, совокупного действия. Подчеркивается важность понимания того, что опосредствование – передача образцов – не завершается формированием отдельных культурных навыков, а обретает свою полноту, будучи включенной в управление стихией движения, в обретение ею ритма и меры, т.е. шага развития.*

*Ключевые слова: активность, исток активности, действие, субъектность, модель, движущие силы развития.*

---