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Word in the Teacher's Hands (Word as a Didactic Tool)

Słowo w rękach nauczyciela (słowo jako narzędzie dydaktyczne)

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ABSTRACT

The teacher is bound to the word. The word can be a carrier of information, but also, e.g., a mood, forming relationships in the classroom. Through the word, the teacher interacts with others, especially pupils. The word can teach, educate, learn, share, but it also has a negative aspect when it does not interest, does not develop, deceives and leads to quarrels. The word has (no) power, not only in the school environment. The paper shows whether and how dialogue takes place in a selected school practice. Non-participant observation has been chosen as the method to investigate dialogue in schools. It was observed how communication takes place, how and what questions are asked, how they are answered, the atmosphere in the classroom, the role of the teacher, etc. This provided concrete information on how dialogue takes place in practice, what its attributes might be. The specific context of the teaching situation was captured in order to make recommendations for developing effective communication and relationships in a school environment where group diversity is natural and desirable.

Keywords: word; dialogue; teacher; school; upbringing; education; pupil

WHAT IS A WORD? THE WORD (NOT ONLY) IN THE SCHOOL
ENVIRONMENT

Interaction is fundamental in the educational process. Interaction is also based on words, taking place through words and flowing into (or out of) words. Even interaction without words counts with words. The word is a possibility, the word is a way of connecting. A word is an expression, it is a linguistic unit. It carries meaning, clarifies, states, defines. "A word is an intuitively defined basic linguistic unit,

difficult to define due to its formal and functional diversity” (Bachmannová et al., 2002, p. 424). Then it is possible to continue: “Speech emerges from the space of the word (discourse), the essence of the person passes into a sign that cannot be separated from the word” (Olšovský, 2018, p. 371). If we want to communicate, we call upon language as a tool for transmitting messages. We show the content, or a hint of the content, of our consciousness. Language allows us to use signs to reveal the contents of consciousness that would remain hidden (or only half-hidden) without the use of language. This is aptly stated by Šmilauer (1966, pp. 12–13): “We assume that the speaker and the listener know the same language system. This system is constituted by words as signs for certain ideas (concepts) and their relations (and by means of them for certain sections of reality); words are combined into word-types according to whether they designate substances, their properties, events, or relationships, circumstances, or relations between them (...). Linguistic expressions are contents of consciousness transferred from the multidimensional content of the mind into a single time-line and expressed by the appropriate means of the language system (...). For the listener (reader) the procedure is the opposite: he/she hears (reads) a linguistic utterance, and by having mastery over the linguistic system (...) he/she creates contents of consciousness similar to the contents of the speaker’s consciousness”. The linguistic expression is usually a word. Meaning is the acquisition of meaning, the understanding of content. But also a measure of meaning, understanding, content. Meaning is the mental content of a linguistic expression, the information associated with the expression. Meaning is what a linguistic expression expresses, shows (Brukner, Filip, 1997, p. 372). The content of consciousness is not directly transferable, “it has to be expressed, the content of consciousness obviously cannot be directly shared with me, so in order to achieve such sharing, in order to express the content of consciousness, I have to mark this content with an expression (...), the only way I can find an expression that is suitable for this, that has a meaning that relates in some way to the actual content of consciousness” (Peregrin, 1994, p. 2). Significant is having some value, meaning, content. “Meaning must be something that exists prior to the actual act of expressing the content of consciousness and that makes such an act possible in the first place” (Peregrin, 1994, p. 2). Meaning takes on an intersubjective form, where it is established through others, the consciousness of others, in context. “Using the contents of consciousness we can explain the phenomenon of language – language arises in order to express these contents and is shaped by them. (...) language is a condition of conceptual thinking” (Peregrin, 1994, p. 3). Language has the ability to connect, to reveal meanings. A word is a linguistic expression, it is an instrument of language; it is through the word that meanings are made real. “In the quiet of silence, the word arises/expires – silence is thus the boundary of the word” (Olšovský, 2018, p. 371). Even silence has meaning, the world is shown and experienced in words, silence co-creates the boundaries of disclosure. “Through the word, being enters speech” (Olšovský, 2018, p. 372).

But who shapes meaning, meanings in the school environment, the educational context? Who is responsible for creating and fostering a relationship with the word for pure thinking? Only the teacher? Of course not. But a whole range of more or less shared consciousness. Consciousnesses showing up (or hidden) in meanings. The teacher is a role model for the pupils, he/she should be. After the family, the school is usually the setting for significant socialization. The teacher as a guide takes his/her pupils on his/her way to knowledge. If he/she is authentic in his/her words, actions and feelings, he/she is on the right track. There is no infallible individual, already the journey on the school ground is often the destination (to the essence of humanity; see Braumová, 2022). The description of the transmission of moral attitudes to children, pupils, as aptly stated by Brezinka (1996, p. 159), serves well: “Just as we can only convey from knowledge what we ourselves know, and from skills what we ourselves can do, we cannot educate to moral convictions and attitudes unless the teacher himself/herself has them. Moral education can only succeed when the educator is morally credible, i.e. when his/her behavior is consistent with his/her words”. Then “it is generally true that every excellent educator has authority, but every educator who has authority may not also be an excellent teacher” (Grác, 1990, p. 222). It can be added that we can also convey what we do not know by joint inquiry, thinking, searching for ways. When the teacher is best seen not as an all-knowing authority, but as a guide who leads the way to knowledge. Authority, yes, but not stemming from power given by status, but from personality and teaching qualities (Braumová, 2022). “The interiorization of authority and its autonomization can thus be understood as a significant aspect of the moral maturity of the individual, which is manifested in the individual’s attitudes towards his/her existence and life circumstances. One of the qualities by which the moral maturity of an individual manifests itself is his/her responsibility” (Vališová et al., 2005, pp. 72–82). Authority is the influence, the power of a person who has reached, is reaching, a higher knowledge. He/she is able to live in harmony with himself/herself, from himself/herself, he/she is open to the truth, he/she is autonomous – authentic, he/she finds his/her identity – himself/herself (Olšovský, 2018, p. 23). He/she is variable in his/her openness to others, lives in certain conditions, is surrounded by certain individuals, lives in a certain time, but remains constant in his/her responsibility in looking at the truth (Braumová, 2022).

TRANSMISSIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVIST TEACHING

The traditional, transmissive approach to teaching is based mainly on factual knowledge and its memorization. This factual knowledge is passed (transmitted) to pupils as already verified and ready-made. And they are only expected to learn it (Pecina, Zormanová, 2009). The learner is passive or rather passive. He/she often enters the classroom as an empty vessel to be filled with data. That

is, the pupil knows nothing and the teacher is the bearer of the truth that he/she conveys to the pupils in school (Medková, 2012). The notion of the knowledge-based form of education seems to be outdated in today's society, unfortunately, it is often actually applied, either directly or, e.g., by the inability to implement a different model of approach to teaching. Of the methods that are used, the predominant ones are those in which the teacher is the bearer of information, who directs his/her action on the class, on the pupil. The application of methods that aim to develop communication, cooperation, problem solving or critical thinking skills are set aside (Molnár, 2007). This is where Maňák and Švec (2003) include mainly verbal methods (narration, explanation, lecture, work with text), illustratively demonstrative methods (demonstration and observation, work with pictures, instruction), and also practical skills methods (imitation, manipulation, skill building, production methods). According to Pecina and Zormanová (2009), the dominant method is usually the interpretation method in combination with the illustrative demonstrational method, because of its easy implementation and easy preparation. Of the organisational forms, frontal teaching is the most frequently applied. It is obvious that in this concept the pupil is rather a passive member of the educational process. He/she can answer questions and take part in the lesson, but a real dialogue, where understanding is achieved, is – it could be stated – not usually the case. The pupil is not a true discoverer, a person who is directed in his/her desire for knowledge towards his/her own discovery. He/she does not work with words as he/she could. The teacher quite accurately and deliberately sets the direction of his/her possibilities of acquiring information (not actual knowledge). True knowing may not occur (Braumová, 2022).

Constructivist teaching, on the other hand, considers precepts as tools for constructing knowledge. These are continuously worked with and rebuilt and integrated by the learner into existing and changing structures (Kalhous, Obst, 2002; Pecina, Zormanová, 2009). As in a hermeneutic circle, each piece of knowledge is the substrate for further knowledge and is understood from the whole context (and vice versa). Partial cognition influences further cognition. Thus, adherence to constructivist theory requires teachers to change their view of their individual roles and modify existing materials and activities (Woods et al., 2021). Preconceptions go through a certain evolution. They are not all active at once. At first, we speak of (constructed) naive precepts, which are formed in childhood and have a great influence on the future cognition of the individual. It is during the educational process that a picture of the world is formed. Then the applicability of naive precepts is tested. The child verifies the validity, or invalidity, of naive preconceptions in concrete life. Through this experience and activity, the child confirms or reconstructs the preconceptions. Over time, when the child concludes during verification that a given naive precept is not valid, and can accept this fact, the reconstruction of the precept occurs and is built into existing structures,

as well as the whole life (Bertrand, 1998; Pecina, Zormanová, 2009). The pupil does not enter the classroom as an empty vessel to be filled with data (Medková, 2012). The goal of teaching should therefore be to move from naive preconceptions to concepts closer to reality, so that pupils do not completely abandon their existing worldview, but only to form themselves and their cognition, especially through words (Braumová, 2022). In the transmissive approach, this cannot be done, there is no critical insight into the process of cognition, the information is transmitted as ready-made. In the same way, the learner either “knows” or “does not know”. Of the methods used in constructivist teaching, the predominant ones are those that direct the pupil towards his/her own activity, independence, imagination, creativity, logical thinking. And this is in cooperation with others, so dialogue, brainstorming, debate, discussion, manipulative methods, project-based learning, didactic play are essential (Grecmanová, Urbanovská, Novotný, 2000; Skalková, 2007). Of the organizational forms, group cooperative forms are more often applied, where the main effort is the development of communication and social skills, as well as the pupils' recognition that complex and unstructured tasks can be solved more easily in a team (Grecmanová et al., 2000; Skalková, 2007). In constructivism, space is opened for self-paced learning, where the teacher as a guide monitors and corrects the direction, rather than strictly leading it. The teacher leaves room for the pupils themselves to discover the world, although he/she does not stand in opposition to a transmissive conception, does not stand in opposition to any conception. He/she only directs himself/herself and the pupils towards knowledge and essence, whatever path he/she chooses. Equipped with expertise, he/she changes methods, approaches, forms, etc. Guided by his/her own intuition and the pupil's openness to growth, he/she uses the possibility of words (Braumová, 2022).

(NO) POWER OF WORD. WHAT IS WORD FOR A TEACHER?

The word is a didactic tool. It can/must be. The teacher is bound to the word, the word can be a carrier of information, but also, e.g., of mood, forming relationships in the classroom. Through the word, the teacher interacts with others, the pupils (not only). With the word, he/she can teach, educate, get to know, share, etc. but also disinterest, not develop, deceive, be in conflict, etc. The word has (no) power, not only in the school environment. At a time when human values often suffer from a cumbersome grasp and definition, does teaching care about the meaning of upbringing and education? When the educator and the educated are in an equal relationship, when one influences the other, when neither seeks absolute truth but are in truth by being together (in speech) truly and presently. How can this sense be practically grasped? By direct confrontation with oneself, with others, by a responsibility to dialogue? After all, it is dialogue, conversation, speech, that should be (even in a school setting) an exercise, an

experience of trying to grasp one's own ideas. "The basic element of dialogue is openness, an attitude of openness towards the other (the situation of me-you). Human existence is a dialogical event, its persistence can lead to a certain mediation" (Olšovský, 2018, p. 67). Through dialogue I can create and shape my own understanding. Already in Socrates' conception, everyone is educable through logos, i.e. speech enabling understanding (Platon, 1971). In dialogue, understanding can come from within the participants in the dialogue. If one does not assume someone else's knowledge, there is an independent, self-knowledge, a knowing of oneself – "a true theoretical-scientific grasp of reality (...), true knowledge is authentic, it leads from what is on the surface to what is hidden in the depths and what is yet to be uncovered and clarified" (Olšovský, 2018, p. 304). In dialogue, the teacher should not be an all-knowing expert, a bearer of truth and all valid statements. Rather, he/she should be a guide, a facilitator and a "watchdog" of the dialogue. When he/she should encourage the pupil in the process of cognition, by asking questions, answering, searching for connections, ambiguities, revealing, showing, co-discovering. However, not from a position of power or his/her own sense of absolute knowledge, but from the position of a partner in the cognitive process. In openness to collaborative inquiry, eager to deepen the capacity to reason – in the pupil and in oneself. He/she should be able to present problems, dilemmas (taking into account the developmental peculiarities of the pupils), not to act as an authority, but to challenge the pupils to think. Not to teach them what to think, how to think, how to ponder.

Dialogue as creative thinking in speech is about learning to explore in dialogue, especially in the realm of language. The teacher should be a seeker of knowledge, to be part of the process of seeking with each pupil entrusted to him/her. Showing the pupil to grasp the world in this creative way. To let speech approach the pupils. The teacher should be aware of the Socratic "knowing of not knowing", of the awareness of one's own (un)knowing and the impossibility of grasping everything, the truth (Platon, 1971). Upbringing and education should be a journey, a process of cultivation of the individual, everyone should strive for reflection, co-reflection. Dialogue can be a tool in this endeavour, where the participant in the dialogue does not merely take on someone else's knowledge, but in the process of enquiry is led to his/her own knowledge. Thus, letting speech come to the heart, educating through (and because of) it. The teacher does not have to be a philosopher, but should be philosopher-like in his/her courage to seek the higher principle of the school, in the search for the ability to capture his/her own thoughts and those of his/her pupils, each time anew and openly (Braumová, 2022).

To teach then is nothing other than to learn to see (Rybák, 2019, p. 338), to teach others to see, i.e. the uneducated person within the tradition lives in a prison-cave in which he/she is dependent on beliefs, on pre-established ways of seeing in which his possibilities are relabelled (Rybák, 2019, p. 339). Then, knowledge is also

pre-established; the pre-established ways of seeing do not allow for new, undefined, possible ways of seeing. It is therefore more than necessary to call to oneself openness, the ability to unlock meaning as pure possibility by liberating oneself (Rybák, 2019, p. 339). From what, what am I liberating myself in education? From my believing self. It enables me to be able to understand the other as other (including “myself”), to understand that my perspective is not the only possible one, but at the same time that each of my experiences is not random in its core of meaning, it has its justification from its meaning-giving source, which always somehow illuminates and makes intelligible to me not just a single thing or problem, but the whole world (Rybák, 2019, p. 339). Then we must speak of context, where meaning is only formed in the context of the whole world, of relationships, meetings and gatherings, whether through or without words, hints of words, revealing meanings, etc. It is necessary to be able not to define oneself, others and knowledge only through conscious sources, to open oneself to new experiences, to modify one's sources, to place them (oneself) again and again in a changing source (experiential) framework.

Looking at the socio-cultural conditioning of the educational process, Bourdieu considers social status as fundamental and works with the term “cultural advantage”. According to him, the status of the family has a major impact on the education and learning of a given child. It can be said that he agrees “that children from higher status have therefore access to a specific type of ‘cultural capital’ compared to others, which is moreover positively sanctioned by most of the social institutions that ensure the selection of individuals: school, employment system” (Matějů et al., 1991, p. 17). Yes, one can be inclined to such a claim. To a large extent, the family background depends on schooling and education of the child. In the same way, the teacher also has a certain social and cultural status. But one cannot entirely accept the view that this status in a child is unchangeable. It is the teacher, even today, by his/her socio-cultural status, who can nurture and define the status of the word in the educational process. It can “move” the inequalities in the approach to pupils. It can move towards inclusion. While the school cannot be seen as independent of social structures, it can be seen as more dependent on the personalities of teachers (to some extent) and their socio-cultural settings and sensibilities. Another author who addresses sociological determinants in education is Bernstein. According to him, language is a set of rules that govern all linguistic codes. However, the choice of a language code is a matter of culture acting through social relations. Different forms of language or codes represent a form of social relationship. The layers of society thus govern the process of knowledge distribution in society. This implies that knowledge is made available only to a certain layer of society (see Růžička, Vašát, 2012). Regarding language as the main means of communication, one can agree with Bernstein that differences in the way of communication have a major influence on success in school (Knausová, 2006). However, here too the personality of

the teacher is mentioned as crucial, how he/she will cope with any differences. In inclusive education, which the higher principle of school automatically implies, which is what we are currently aiming for, it is a prerequisite and a necessity to adapt codes, language, communication to all. Therefore, the division into restricted and developed codes may be unnecessary. Such selection and defining of differences deny the individual approach to the individual as such, where any way of communication is possible. The diversity of language codes is natural, existing, not interfering with the educational process. In discourse analysis it is no different; social practice and its influence on language, and vice versa, cannot be denied. Van Dijk highlights the social and cognitive aspects of discourse – the context of discourse. Context in this conception does not only refer to the social situation, environment or structure in which discourse is realized, as is common in the interactionist paradigm. Context is cognitivized in this concept. It becomes a subjective mental model of a particular communicative situation. It is not the external environment in which the situation takes place, rather it is the content of the minds of the individual participants. And it is these mental definitions of the situation in the minds of the participants in the communicative situation that govern both the production and the understanding of discourse, and van Dijk calls them mental models in general, and event and context models in particular. These models then play a mediating role between discursive and social structures (Prokopová, Orságová, Martinková, 2014, p. 31). The impossibility of achieving a universal interpretation is emphasized (Prokopová et al., 2014) because everyone approaches the word from a different perspective, which is in line with the described process of upbringing and education as a way of coming to knowledge hand in hand with the learner and the word (singular, in context, social reality) – a way of dialogue.

RESEARCH SURVEY

Research on teacher-pupil dialogue in schools has included various aspects of pedagogy and interpersonal communication. Studies have addressed, e.g., the impact of dialogic teaching and learning on social development (García-Carrión et al., 2020) or, e.g., the issue of pupils' status in dialogic teaching (Lukášová, Pavelková, 2017), dialogic theory of teaching thinking (Wegerif, 2018) or the role of non-verbal communication in the teacher-pupil relationship (Dobrescu, Lupu, 2015).

The exploration of dialogue is multilayered. We can and should look at it through different lenses. The research presented here aimed to investigate whether and how dialogue takes place in school practice. And it built on research and findings that had already been carried out. For example, as early as 1972, Mareš used the term “pseudodialogue” at the base of the investigation to refer to the method of asking closed questions that the teacher sends towards the pupils

without really caring whether they understand the topic and are active. In a similar sense, Šed'ová uses the term "illusory dialogue". Pupils respond by completing the task, responding with agreement or disagreement. More questions follow without real reflection and understanding. If a pupil answers incorrectly, he/she is warned, but no clue follows to encourage the correct answer or thinking. In the European context we can, e.g., monitor – in the British educational scholarship the effort to find and describe the opposite of the above, namely authentic instructional dialogue that has the potential to act as a scaffold to support pupils' thinking, has been culminating since the early 1990s. Mercer and Littleton (2007) state that such dialogue occurs when teachers use questions not only to test students' knowledge but also to guide their understanding (Šed'ová, 2009, p. 17).

The investigation aims to find out how the word is treated in teaching units where the teachers themselves declare that their teaching is based precisely on dialogue, as well as to discover opportunities to develop dialogue in the classroom. The research survey was carried out in primary schools in the Ústí Region of the Czech Republic, specifically in fifth grades, in the period 2020–2023. The development of spoken speech, including dialogic speech, falls within the acquisition of social communication competences. In this period, pupils need to learn dialogue in order to be able to further develop this skill. In the preparatory phase of the survey, teachers of the school level concerned were interviewed. Those teachers were selected who considered themselves to have a teaching approach based on dialogue. They believed that their teaching was dialogical. It was investigated whether dialogic teaching is practiced in primary schools from the teachers' own perspective. A total of 24 primary school teachers of fifth grade were contacted. Although some of them assumed that they had dialogue-based teaching, they lacked the will to participate in the research. Therefore, a total of 10 teachers were included in the probing survey and were observed several times (at least four times).

The first stage of the research survey identified when dialogue was not negotiated during specific teaching units. Repeated observations of three teachers in practice captured what could be identified as the reasons for the absence of dialogue. For example, the following aspects of non-dialogue were discovered: minimal or inappropriate motivation of pupils; excessive use of irony, which at times led to ridiculing the pupil(s); not engaging pupils with the word; listening to only some pupils (the most active ones); insisting on one's point of view, even to arguing – not being able to co-question; not going deeper into the topic – settling for the "right" answer; not connecting the group; not following the sequence of questions in order to get to more cognitively challenging questions; inciting discord; existence of an environment of fear, mistrust; power position of the teacher; unwillingness to work with error, etc. It would be interesting to see how many teachers believe they are implementing dialogic teaching, although this may not be the case. The information gathered by the survey served to outline what

the word, if not used appropriately, can do (the word in education can do): not to label; not to name; not to teach; not to educate; not to interest; not to perceive; not to be in harmony; to cheat; to deceive; to be in discord; not to respect; not to doubt; to insult; to make unsure; to hurt; to despise; not to accept; not to invite contact; not to serve listening and dialogue; not to connect; to divide; to create an environment of fear, danger, discomfort, being powerful (at the expense of self, others); denying context, interpretation, freedom; increasing (or creating) the risk of ineffectiveness in the educational process; not motivating; preventing learning; being and making others passive in the educational process; not encouraging; striving for excellence; treating error negatively; not being in touch with You – not strengthening the relationship! It can be summarized that although the teachers mentioned above claimed to implement dialogue in their teaching, even considered the teaching unit as representative (successful), it is necessary to mention the key finding of the observation: there was no relational level between the teacher and all the pupils, which was based on respect, communication, dialogue as a principle. These teachers, although they obviously tried, were not able to stay in relationship. The pupils were shy, distrustful, intolerant of others' mistakes, but above all they were not courageous in asserting themselves and their opinions. They were not gregarious. Dialogue is based on natural "branching", nothing was displayed from when one supported the other.

Thus, the research survey continued with seven more teachers for whom dialogic teaching was confirmed by observation. The data were analyzed in depth. Non-participant observation was chosen as the method of investigating dialogic teaching in schools. It was observed how communication takes place, how and what questions are asked, how they are answered, the atmosphere in the classroom, the role of the teacher, etc. This provided concrete information on how dialogue takes place in practice, what its attributes might be. Through non-participant observation, the specific context of the teaching situation – aspects of the behaviour of the teacher and the pupil(s) in the context of the spoken word – can be captured. This capture of specifics is done perceptually, specifically visually and aurally. All findings were recorded on a recording sheet and classified according to predetermined observational criteria. Both partial findings and the dialogue as a whole were analyzed. The evaluative aspect of a particular behavioural trait was also recorded and analysed in detail and systematically. Here it was mainly a matter of identifying what makes a dialogue a dialogue.

The observational criteria fell into thematic units, e.g. pupil involvement (activity, frequency, distribution), climate (inclusiveness, respect), teaching (topic, approach), motivation (courage), teacher's role, word in the hands of the teacher, word in the hands of the pupil(s), non-verbal expressions, way of working with the question, context of discourse, sociological determinants. It was then necessary to discover the parameters of a functional dialogue between teacher

and pupil(s) and thus describe the opportunities for developing dialogic teaching – to capture possible recommendations for developing effective communication and relationships in a school environment where group diversity is natural and desirable. Through probing observation, the possible basic and sub-parameters of functional dialogue between teacher and pupil(s) were discovered in this particular survey. The findings can contribute to further research as a stimulus (motivation), but also as a certain informative basis for the development of dialogic teaching. Possibly to debate its possible form. It is a collection of findings that could fill the mosaic of the definition of school dialogue as such.

The following parameters were included in the analyses (the most important ones are listed): motivation, empathy, activity, the ability to dwell on the issue, allowing sufficient time, interaction, relating to each other, respect, diversity of views, elements of constructivism, understanding, affectionate humour, “encouraging sentences”, interesting and unconventional responses, interest in the pupils, listening, appropriate language, cognitive correspondence of question and answer, interval between question and answer, “silent” speaking, thinking, silence, patience, creativity, focus and perceive, mental presence, sophisticated manner.

There was no lack of motivation, both verbal and non-verbal, at the beginning of the teacher-pupil meeting. Motivation was aimed at the goal of the lesson, but also helped to strengthen the classroom climate, positive mood. Motivation most often served to strengthen the desire to explore and learn together.

The consistency of non-verbal expressions with what was said was captured. The teacher and his/her speeches seemed credible.

Words were treated with empathy. An encouraging and non-directive tone was observed in the voice. Communication was open, yet unforced.

Pupils were active. This reflected the teacher's exceptional skill.

A significant finding was that a person seeking dialogue must be able to dwell on the issue. Teachers who dwelt in the question were able to explore the question itself with the pupils. They were able to dwell in uncertainty together. And they openly discussed the question itself. They refined the question together so that the questioning was understood. Attempts were made to view the topic from different perspectives and contexts. This was despite the fact that no clear answer was assumed or required.

Teachers were flexible in their thinking and in the way they asked questions. They were learning how to handle the question, along with the pupils. They were open to different forms of interpretation. Pupils were encouraged to persist in the process of dealing with the question and subsequent answers. They were not encouraged to make premature judgments.

Allowing sufficient time was a central aspect of the dialogues observed. It was clear that the dialogue itself was the goal, not merely a means to an end – a response. This active dwelling in the question proved absolutely essential and

defined the subsequent form of the dialogue. It proved to be the cornerstone of the process of joint exploration and dialogue construction.

The teacher was consciously and purposefully interacting with all pupils. His/her authority was manifested precisely in the conscious management of education. He/she related to each pupil consciously; it was clear that each of them was part of the learning process.

Teachers respected their pupils, and pupils respected teachers. Everyone was given space to express themselves.

Openness to a diversity of views was evident. Of course, pupils were not forced to express themselves. As was the case with the communication of the non-dialogues. The word here was a tool for interaction, a didactic tool. Often it was not the content of the message that mattered, but primarily the way of relating to the word. Not only knowledge was conveyed, but also impressions, meanings, dreams, desires. It was a whole range of showing the world in words and through words.

The teaching was rather constructive, the transmission had no place in the observed teaching. It was teaching with elements of constructivism. It was clear that precepts and the principle of sequencing were being worked with. The exact role of precepts in the dialogue was not monitored. There was a purposeful pursuit of understanding.

Affectionate humour was widely noted, humour that respected the ability, age and disposition of the pupils. "Encouraging sentences" were used to reinforce a positive classroom climate.

Furthermore, interesting and unconventional responses were welcomed, with due (not exaggerated) regard to the individual progress of each pupil. The teacher's interest in the pupils was evident from these expressions, and rapport, mutual bonding was perceived, and all in varying degrees. Knowledge of the personalities of individual pupils was a prerequisite. A striving for relationality was evident in such moments, a certain genuineness to approaching self and other. The use of words with a positive charge, a positive direction, was frequent (not excessive).

Teachers strived for openness to imperfection – including their own. The goal was not perfection, but an effort to stay together and learn from each other.

Listening, and supporting it, was an essential monitored attribute. Listening and speaking are the two fundamental pillars of language that lead pupils to communicative literacy. Communication codes were linked, the teacher and learners used the same language codes that the listener (learner) actually heard, thus communicating together. Listening was also done with the body (open attitude, speeches, etc.), then with the mind. There was a combination of types of listening. Listening with social, informational, critical and listening for pleasure elements was abundant (Palenčárová, Šebesta, 2006, p. 48). Teachers showed how

to be good listeners in practice. They led their pupils to do this by their own implementation/example. They simply listened.

Sociological attributes – appropriate language was used not only according to age but also according to the actual expressions and abilities of the pupils. During dialogue, social relationship was created by using adequate language codes. It was evident that the teachers adapted the language to be understood by each member of the group. These teachers were able to use words to reduce pupils' inequalities in comprehension. Likewise, they encouraged increasing and modifying vocabulary through kindness. They non-violently incorporated new words and contexts into pupils' active speech.

The cognitive correspondence of question and answer was taken into account (Gavora, 2003). It was counted on that the teacher asked questions with the expectation of answers at a similar cognitive level. Thus, he/she adapted the way and form of asking questions. He/she followed a sequence in order to get to more cognitively challenging questions, hence the answers. If cognitively undemanding questions are still asked, the dialogue function of enhancing reasoning ability (escalation of difficulty) is not fulfilled.

The interval between question and answer was important. In dialogue, an immediate answer is not expected. Nor does the teacher have to respond immediately. Gambell (1983) found that teachers wait an average of one second for a response when asking questions. Similarly, after answering within one second, the teacher most often responds with praise, another question, or a comment on what was said (after Palenčárová, Šebesta, 2006). Unfortunately, space for thinking, for silent reflection before answering, is not provided.

However, dialogue is also based on "silent" speaking, thinking. This is equally true for pupils and teachers. The teacher is a role model, showing how dialogue can be carried out, so it is desirable to allow time for reflection. The teachers observed were able to manage time functionally, working evenly with thinking and communicating out loud. It was evident that dialogic teaching is a process, with each group handling time differently. The composition of the group, the mood, as well as the given topic were influential.

The teachers under observation continuously analysed the events. Thus, responses were continuously adjusted.

It was evident that silence was important in dialogic teaching. In all observations, it was consciously and purposefully handled. It accompanied what was said, somewhere it had its own significance – respite, tension reduction, space for reflection, transfer of emotions, etc. Silence was not a "scarecrow", an expectation of failure, etc. Silence was handled according to the needs of both the teacher and the specific group of pupils.

The positive charge here was patience and its strengthening through daily practice. It increased the activity of the less "passable" pupils, more of them could

answer, they had more courage to ask questions and inquire. Pupils' answers appeared to be more thoughtful.

Creativity in responses and the formation of a safe classroom climate were noted.

Similarly, there was evidence of how the ability to focus and perceive could be promoted through words. Refining meanings, thinking together using words required the mental presence of everyone in the group. Teachers were able to "watch" and nurture individual ability to concentrate. They worked with varying lengths and degrees of this ability. It was the silence and breathing space that helped the smooth transition from unfocused to focused and vice versa.

Standard language was used and there was no use of vulgarisms in speech. Teachers spoke in a sophisticated manner and encouraged their pupils to do so.

It can be summarized that upbringing and learning through the word and leading to the understanding of the word is based on the awareness of what the word (can) do in education. The research survey revealed (showed) that dialogue, the word, is able to (and often apparently can) in education: label, name, mark contents of consciousness, outline meanings, define, transfer contents of consciousness, meanings, definitions, perceive, receive oneself, enjoy (oneself), create new meanings in contact with others, vary, retain, act in context – change, other words, sentences, etc., connect – with self, others, meanings, strengthen knowledge, understanding, form natural authority, respect, strengthen relationships, build learning environments, partnerships, trust environments, empathize, be genuine, relate, give back, dream, be in the learning process as a changing and living process, encourage (self, others), motivate (to be creative, open, etc.), to enjoy, to rejoice, to make mistakes, to learn from mistakes, to be in kindness, to accept, to highlight the active engagement of pupils, to be in touch with You!

CONCLUSIONS

So how do we strengthen the art of teaching with words? Use teaching methods that build on dialogue, the word. But not only dialogical methods. Taking dialogue and contact with the word (the other) as a principle. As a general framework of how to enter into a relationship. Machovec emphasizes the prerequisites for dialogue: "the courage to 'open up', to put one's whole consciousness at the disposal of the other, to show concrete 'addressable' interest in the partner, personal involvement, not to apply external means – power" (Kolář, Šikulová, 2007, p. 123). Already Janoušek (1984, p. 172) adds risks, obstacles that prevent dialogue: "failure to meet task conditions – dialogue does not occur where each of the participants is concerned about something else, where there is no common goal and common action, failure to meet interaction conditions – dialogue does not occur where there is no effective interaction, i.e. where everyone holds their own position (everyone stands on their own) and does not want

to adapt and seek compromise, failure to meet relationship conditions – dialogue will not occur where the atmosphere is not suitable for it – there is a lack of trust and good mutual relations”. Educators can use various strategies to promote effective interaction in school. If the teacher leads the effective use of dialogue in the classroom, it allows the pupils to be active and perhaps reveal their cognitive processes and socialize through new ways of thinking. This and other aspects of dialogue in the school environment were addressed by the authors, who found that teachers must use pupils’ answers as an opportunity to strengthen their learning, not to search for and obtain a superficial right or wrong answer. Therefore, teachers need to provide opportunities for pupils to explain their answers and thoughts and to ask questions related to their answers. Conduct dialogue so that it deepens (Lukášová, Pavelková, 2017).

Considerations about the appropriateness of transmissive or constructivist teaching can disappear if we are willing to use elements of both concepts and require the existence of dialogue as a principle of attitude to the other. Such teaching could be described as supportive. However, the path to the pupil is not possible if there is a lack of will, effort and interest in the other person. If the participant (participants) is not able to lead, stay in the dialogue, if he/she is not able to listen, receive the other, if he/she does not choose a language that the other understands, knows the meanings of what is said, if he/she is not able to change himself/herself in the process when the dialogue is carried out. In line with the inclusive direction towards which schools are led, research approaches examining the impact of dialogic teaching are absolutely essential (García-Carrión et al., 2020). Interaction and a positive classroom climate must be based on dialogue as a principle of the educational process. In every contact with a pupil, it is necessary to consciously approach the responsibility for the word. Do not handle it haphazardly. Do not use the word as an instrument of power. Strive for conscious use of words with respect to the given situation. Specifically, in the classroom, strive for harmony, understanding, strengthening of this awareness, when each of the pupils understands that the word as such is a powerful, to a certain extent even powerless, tool in social interactions and the learning process. Only then can the teacher stay in the educational process without fear. He/she can and should call any teaching method to his/her aid. He/she can, even should, use the powers of improvisation, play with words, discover the undiscovered, search in words, behind words and beyond them. Because if he/she is aware of the pitfalls and importance of the word, its didactic potential, he/she is freed from fear, prejudices, inability to handle the word and fade. Because if the teacher is responsible and forgiving to the word and in the word, he/she need not fear that he/she will fail. The non-existence of absolute truth and the awareness that learning is a process allows teachers (and therefore pupils) to be imperfect, to work with mistakes, to change, the environment, pupils – their perception of reality. Error, making mistakes, is then a helper on the difficult teacher’s path. May the teacher realize this, allow himself/herself and the pupils. It is therefore

necessary to strive for a partnership and supportive relationship between teacher and pupil. The partnership relationship is based on the interpersonal dimension – the bond between people. The conditions for the emergence of such a relationship are: reality (authenticity) of the pedagogue (educator), acceptance of the pupil, empathic understanding, freedom from the threatening evaluation (Kolář, Šikulová, 2007, p. 45). The teacher must enter into a relationship with others for himself/herself. Only then will he/she (and his/her actions) be believable, he/she should be able to accept pupils as they are. To guide them with the aim of educating and teaching. Yes, that is correct. But not to disrespect and change them. He/she should strive for understanding, understanding of himself/herself, pupils in particular. To try to understand their ways of thinking, experiences, emotional mood, etc. He/she should definitely avoid a threatening evaluation, that is, an evaluation that contains elements of contempt, disrespect. Not to judge, to evaluate in a way that advances, develops, motivates the pupil, etc. – only in this way can a relationship be stable, only in this way can a relationship be a relationship, only in this way can you teach, be taught. The teacher should be able to stay in the question, ask questions, alone/together with the pupils. Because “by inquiring discernment abiding in question one can penetrate to the ground (truth, being) of what is revealed. A correctly posed question already shows the way to solving the problem” (Olšovský, 2018, p. 276). Even an unspoken question (intended) guides and directs, opens space for thinking.

The teacher is the one who should be able to leave the self-evident and certain “truths”. Leaving himself in places so that he can discover himself/herself through others, distance himself/herself and thereby get closer to himself/herself and others? To allow themselves the ambiguity of their own understanding, the ambiguity of such knowledge, its impossibility? Cognition is a process, so education is also a process, the teacher starts from faith in his/her own knowledge in order to be able to take a decisive step towards knowledge. Especially together with pupils. Even if often only because of them. Whether he/she calls for help, a question an answer, joint reasoning, etc., always at least a word – a tool of the art of teaching. The word can be a key pillar in the search for the foundations of education. Then the teacher is and will be a role model, an authority, when he/she will direct the school and the educational process towards higher principles – educated pupils. He/she can lead a dialogue, listen, establish relationships necessary for the process of learning, respect, trust, peace. Minimize the risks of embarrassment, fear, strengthen self-confidence, use the potential of words, be confident and firm in one’s actions (Braumová, 2022). Overall, a supportive teacher can stay in the educational process (he/she will not be alone in the educational process) and will be in contact with You (the pupil)! Which is a basic condition of the educational process.

It is therefore necessary to repeat similar surveys in order to search for and verify knowledge about functional dialogue in the school environment. It turns out, there tends to be a disconnection between the theoretical efforts of

educational scholarship to capture what is desired and “right” and what actually happens in classrooms. “Theoretical concepts of dialogic teaching operate with the idea of a flexible flow of communicative exchanges that is not overly controlled by a dominant teacher, while stimulating the intellect and encouraging engagement in communication. Empirical data show stabilized patterns fixing the communicative dominance of the teacher, based on the use of closed questions as a form of control of learned facts. This contradiction should become a challenge for further research on instructional dialogue” (Šed'ová, 2009, p. 25). The described investigation should contribute to this as well. There is a need to continue to debate the particularities that dialogue entails, even though we sometimes use different labels for the same thing. It is about substance. Because, as Sanders aptly states, a teacher never leaves his/her character at home, but everything he/she communicates or does in teaching stems from who he/she is and what he/she considers morally valuable (see Hábl, 2021). The more examples of good practice we find, the easier it will be (perhaps) to introduce the attributes of dialogue as a principle into general educational practice. It may amplify the effect arising from the belief in the importance of the word in education.

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ABSTRAKT

Nauczytel oddziałuje na dzieci werbalnie. Słowo może być nośnikiem informacji, ale także np. nastroju, może kształtować relacje w klasie. Poprzez słowa nauczyciel wchodzi w interakcje z innymi, zwłaszcza z uczniami. Słowo może uczyć, wychowywać, poznawać, dzielić się, ale też ma negatywny aspekt, kiedy nie zaciekawia, nie rozwija, oszukuje i prowadzi do klótni. Słowo ma zatem władzę i jej nie ma, nie tylko w środowisku szkolnym. W artykule pokazano, czy i w jaki sposób dochodzi do dialogu w edukacji szkolnej. Jako metodę badania dialogu w szkołach wybrano obserwację nieuczestniczącą. Monitorowano przebieg komunikacji oraz to, w jaki sposób i jakie pytania są zadawane przez uczniów, w jaki sposób udzielane są na nie odpowiedzi, jaka panuje atmosfera na zajęciach, jaką rolę pełni nauczyciel itp. W ten sposób uzyskano dane o tym, jak dialog przebiega w praktyce i co go cechuje. Uchwycono specyficzny kontekst sytuacji dydaktycznych, aby przedstawić zalecenia dotyczące rozwijania skutecznej komunikacji i kształtowania relacji w środowisku szkolnym, w którym różnorodność grupowa jest naturalna i pożądana.

Słowa kluczowe: słowo; dialog; nauczyciel; szkoła; wychowanie; edukacja; uczeń