

Research Insights
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GAME-BASED ACQUISITION OF CULTURAL NORM MANNERS AND ETIQUETTE WITH 6 – 7 YEAR-OLD CHILDREN

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Abstract. The acquisition of natural and truly courteous manners in accordance with contemporary etiquette, freed from the artificiality of eras long passed, is the prerequisite for a successful, independent and creative individual. The hereby presented survey is theoretical-experimental research in four parts. The first part deals with the theoretical analysis and brings forth several aspects of the study. It also examines the specificity of the acquisition of good-manner rules as well as decent behaviour at pre-school age as a significant part of the whole educational process. It focuses on play-learning as a strategy for the implementation of the above-mentioned. The synergetic character of play-learning, being in full accordance with a certain leading activity, age peculiarities and pedagogical strategies for the amplification of a child, is brought forth. The second part determines the importance of the issue among various current kindergarten curricula by means of comparative analysis. The third part presents the results of an interview with 21 kindergarten teachers from small towns and villages. The fourth part realizes the diagnostics upon the level of cultural norms and etiquette acquisition among 20 children and presents a model for stimulating cultural norm manners and speech etiquette based on play-learning in kindergarten environment.

Keywords: cultural norm manners; etiquette; speech etiquette; game; play-learning; kindergarten

1. Introduction

Various views on the essence of culture as well as the defining of the concept “*culture*” – originating from Latin and bearing meanings, such as *processing, cultivating, combination of spiritual and material values, upbringing, education, high level of development of a thing*, encompass the width of its consideration. The scope of the width involves not only the elite art – knowledge and objects (“*artefacts*”) in the field of classical music, opera, ballet, art and sculpture, architecture, literature, history and so on, but also the mastering of cultural norm manners, speaking manners and register.

The attention in the hereby presented article is focused on the mastering of etiquette and cultural norm manners of 6 – 7 year-olds in several simultaneous contexts:

- The realization of the fact that the necessity of etiquette acquisition is directed by the aspiration for order and harmony as well as better and easier social communication (Kolev, Tafkov, Pozharaliev, 2005).

- The etiquette – seen as a combination of written and unwritten rules, conceived by society of a certain historical period as a necessity to regulate the behaviour within the social environment – requires abiding to rules.

- Accounting the point posed by Kuznetsov: “the contemporary etiquette – this is a somewhat code of good manners and rules of behaviour. It lies in the way one introduces themselves, the way they greet one another, the behaviour appropriate for the theatre, shop, public transport; the way one visits or invites friends; the regulations for organizing diplomatic receptions or family gatherings, the way one sets the table...” (Kuznetsov, 2005: 5).

- The parameters provided for cultural norm manners among active systems for child education in pre-school age viewed from a comparative perspective.

- The acquisition of etiquette, the mastering of the rules of good manners and speech in pre-school age seen as a significant part of the overall educational process.

- The values of cultural norm manners and the necessity for their development to be started in pre-school age by teachers.

- The significance of play-learning as well as the proper choice of games for stimulation of cultural norm manners and etiquette acquisition.

- Play-learning viewed from the perspective of a pedagogical strategy together with getting acquainted with good pedagogical practices.

One of the parameters of cultural norm manners is *the etiquette* (originating in French: *etiquette* – a sign) – it is a behaviour **code**, a **set** of unwritten, yet widely-accepted **rules and regulations** in a certain social group as well as a set of rules and regulations for communication, behaviour and conduct in private, professional and social environment.

Another parameter of cultural norm manners is the essence of the etiquette as a building part of the outer culture of the society:

- those regulations which gain the characteristics of strictly regulated **cere-mony** and under the following of which a significant role plays a certain form of behaviour;

- **the regulations**, adopted by society in a certain historical period, which meet the need for a **regulator** of the behaviour within the social environment and play the role of a **stimulator** for following the norms adopted.

The necessity of introducing etiquette is directed by the desire to achieve order, system and harmony so as to facilitate social communication (Kolev, Tafkov, Pozharaliev, 2005: 178).

The concept of **play-learning**, analysed in an earlier publication (Zlateva, 2017) as a simultaneous progress of the activities **playing** and **learning** by means of various games repeated over and over again, includes specific accentuation on the games following rules, or autodidactic games.

Play-learning is a result of a directed learning of information selected by the teacher through a collection of suitable autodidactic games which the child plays in the company of the teacher in their role of a co-player. In addition, play-learning involves self-dependent practice of children on their initiative where the main activity is the game and the learning appears to be a concomitant activity and result.

Play-learning is shown synergetically at simultaneously progressive games and processes of:

- unintentional learning, mastering, modification, classification, differentiation and transformation of information;
- mastering of present and developing of new miscellaneous skills;
- acquisition of competences.

It is in the process of games that play-learning is realized directly as well as indirectly as a result of subject-subject relationships among the playing subjects – adult/s and a child/ren; a child – child/ren; and the subject-object relationships of the playing child. It is to the greatest extent the game that is not just the directing activity for pre-school time but is actually the life of the child that realizes play-learning. In the period of kindergarten, the greatest merits of the educational environment are the opportunity to give the child numerous occasions to play together with other children. The realization of play-learning is developed in the specially appointed playing ground in the study-hall, the specialized halls for activity, artistic, artistic-creative activity, and the playground in the kindergarten as well as the game opportunities which parks, sports halls and specialized centres give where children can go as a group.

The specificity of play-learning in pre-school age results from the synchronicity with the changing difficulty of the game in accordance with its origin, the different aspectual participation in each game from the perspective of age and the dependence upon various factors, such as:

- The level of difficulty of a certain type of game as well as the adequacy towards the age capabilities of the child.
- The width of development of game interaction of the playing subjects and its significance for the individual child.
- The opportunities for the manifestation of the individual and unique peculiarities of every child so as the atmosphere of learning from each other to be created.
- The personal motivation of the playing child to learn while playing.

- The attractive attitude of the reference group as well as the influence of the role-model of significant co-player/s.

- The level of satisfaction in the process of playing, the positive experience and the durability of its effect.

The factors presented do not exhaust the full specificity of play-learning, yet it is sure that the influence of each and every one of them or a combination of them results from factors which can sound, in general terms, similar to Winnie the Pooh's philosophy – the more, the better, or:

- The greater extent of the play activity to present a desired motif for playing, i.e. to provoke towards voluntarily chosen activity, significant for the player is, the more the capacity of play-learning becomes.

- Fulfilling the necessity for learning new things increases with the greater extent to which the game keeps the interest towards itself and offers play-learning through variation of discovery, game strategies, overcoming of obstacles, manifestation of chances, case solutions.

- The more the game offers new knowledge in an entertaining form which is also adequate to the age of the child, the more the extent to which the game implements effective learning with durable effect is.

- The more the game offers new knowledge in an interesting and entertaining form, adequate to the age of the child and with level of difficulty orientated towards “the scope of near development”, towards the unknown today, yet achievable tomorrow, the more effective durable learning is.

2. Experimental study of the pedagogical conditions of acquisition of etiquette and cultural norm manners with 6 – 7 year-old children in kindergarten

The subject of the study is the process of etiquette acquisition and cultural norm manners with 6 – 7 year olds through play-learning in the environment of the kindergarten.

The aim of this theoretical-experimental study is to estimate:

1. The provision of programs for the acquisition of etiquette and cultural norm manners in the environment of the kindergarten.

2. The level of etiquette and cultural forms present with the 6-7 year olds.

3. The presence of good practices.

4. The pedagogical evaluation of the opportunities for etiquette and cultural norm manners acquisition.

Tasks of the study to be fulfilled:

1. Analysis of the theoretical background with up-to-date aspects and a selection of good pedagogical practices for the mastering of etiquette and cultural norm manners.

2. Comparative analysis of the contents planned, related to etiquette and cultural norm manners in various curricula and educational systems for the year prior to school.

3. Diagnostics of the level of mastering etiquette and cultural norm manners with 6 – 7 year olds.

4. Examination of the pedagogical estimate in relation to the realization of cultural norm manners and etiquette acquisition in games.

5. Structuring of a model for the stimulation of cultural norm manners and speech etiquette, based on play-learning for 6 – 7 year-old children, which at hand lies on the ground of a selection of games and creation of new autodidactic ones.

3. Cultural norm manners and etiquette in pre-school age

Throughout the history of philosophy, culture is traditionally seen first and foremost as mental (Belova, Boyadzhieva, Dimitrova, Sapundzhieva, 1997: 244). Mental culture encompasses the processes and the results of intellectual activities – knowledge and education, morality, ethics, aesthetics, art, literature, etc. (Manolova, 2008: 12).

The value orientations seen as a basic element of mental culture as well as the systems of their formations are a major aim and function of culture itself. This means that culture gives life to the system/s of education, through the process of which cultural content is rendered.

A significant component of mental culture and the general knowledge of a person is the term **cultural norm manners**. *Cultural norm manners* are a variable of *etiquette* or *formality*, mentioning that for more than a century the term *etiquette* gains popularity.

In a broad sense, cultural norm manners include *formality* – the outer culture, good conduct with people and generally good behaviour in public places, *the way of life* – the manifestation of personal needs and interests, informal relationships of people, the organization of free time, hygiene, aesthetic taste, *the culture of speech* – grammatically-correct, clear and neat expression of thoughts which excludes obscenity and rudeness.

Cultural norm manners, with universal and national characteristics, are a basic regulator of human relationships. It is at first place a socially necessary and valuable quality for society which is based on loyalty, delicacy and politeness and which guarantees the abolition of barriers through communication and understanding of others.

Cultural norm manners, good conduct, abiding to the rules of etiquette are not just outer behavioural manifestations. They are the expressions of inner values of culture and the morals of the individual, their spirituality and life attitude. It is this interdependence that the implicit connection between the cultural norm manners and education result from, related at hand to the morals and values, the adequate intercultural communication and position in society.

The cultural norm manners are not just a combination of knowledge and acquired skills. These manners are to be mastered from the early days of childhood and are the result of permanent, continuous and insistent educational influence as well as active interaction of the child with the family and the social environment. It is therefore necessary the responsibility for this to be shared between family and educational institutions – day-care, kindergarten and school. “*The family, where the child is born, bred and educated, as well as the social environment, where children’s further upbringing continues, are the two fundamental models of cultural norm manners*” (Atanasov, 1970).

Yet, if the question is – when is the time of the building of cultural norm manners – the reference dates back to the time when everything starts – childhood, the way Antoine de Saint-Exupéry summarizes in simple yet philosophical manner: “Where do I come from? I come from my Childhood” (Exupéry, 2003).

In pre-school age, the factors with greatest impact for mastering of cultural norm manners are *the family and the kindergarten*. The upbringing in accordance with good manners starts at home, in the family. “The family is the first teacher of the child in cultural norm manners. The example, by what is indicated the good example, is a particularly successful teacher” (Manolova, 2008: 7). The successful educational model is the one based upon positive example, not on moral admonitions and incessant pieces of advice which usually bore children and breed negligence. The role of the parents and the closest family is fundamental for rendering a certain code of behaviour – eating habits, talks between one another and over the phone, visiting and inviting guests, attitude towards the elderly, friends, neighbours, communication with the boss and colleagues, behaviour in social environment, in the restaurant, cinema, on the bus, etc. This fundamental role of the parents requires responsible attitude which ignores dual attitude, since “the cross-purposefulness between words and deeds in the behaviour of parents influences to a great extent the cross-purposefulness between the awareness of cultural norm manners, their understanding by children and the formation of habits for their implementation” (Atanasov, 1990: 12).

In support of parents in their efforts for their children to develop cultural norm manners and to acquire etiquette, one can find various textbooks for mastering the fundamentals of politeness. Such a textbook for cultural norm manners is presented in “*The Fundamentals of Politeness*” [*Azbuka na vezhlivostta*] (Vasileva-Gangnus, 1985). The author gives recommendations to parents and children by means of games, joy, wit and fairy-fantasies. The basic truths about the delicate and cultural norm communication between people are presented indirectly through fairy-tales, with the help of the fairy Hello or the three wise dwarfs. Forgotten rules are reminded to the child in a very nice way as well as judgements upon good and bad, deeds are realized and understood, gestures of kindness are stimulated. The reader/ listener/ is invited into “the most polite town out of all

fairy towns in the world” so that they can read about the interesting adventures of the inhabitants of the fairy town. Motifs of politeness are presented in a fascinating way. In a delicate yet provoking manner, the necessity of *self-dependent choice of cultural norm manners* of the polite person is introduced. The provoked commitment imperceptibly leads to learning that “the whole secret lies in that only towards the polite, well-behaved and good person others always treat well” (Vasileva-Gangnus, 1985: 20).

In the same context of parallel acquisition of civility awareness and the correct reference point of morals, of the development of reliable criteria for good and bad, there are other messages that are orientated towards the way we teach our child to be polite (Sening, 2004). With highlighting the aspect of politeness as highly significant, Sening relates it to kindness and responsibility. He supports the point of the mutual connection between good manners and moral values which a child acquires. The manifestations of consideration towards other people’s feelings, of respect, dignity and tactfulness are closely connected to self-confidence, self-control, justice and nobility. What is more, the authors relate the formation of cultural norm manners and the ability to communicate kindly with the development of the character of the individual (Sening, 2004: 7).

There are numerous authors who address their messages for mastering of good conduct directly to children. This is the method the Netherlandish writer Reynildis van Ditshyosen who persuades that the one to have acquired the basic principles feels confident everywhere and in all situations. She considers that politeness, friendliness and the ability to show respect makes it easier to communicate with different people on a daily basis. And with the posing of the topic of etiquette, Ditshyosen defines how children understand the notion of etiquette and good manners: “to listen to others, to help others, not to kick or hit others” (Ditshyosen, 2010: 9). The author considers the dialogue, the numerous examples and funny illustrations a reliable way to answer the questions a child introspectively wants to know when behaving in society – in kindergarten, at school, on the table, in a vehicle. She offers the reference point of the rules people are to keep. She provokes the realization of the necessity for children to keep rules and their estimate on the importance of cultural norm manners (Ditshyosen, 2010).

The duration of the process of mastering cultural norm manners requires the joint effort of family and kindergarten. The kindergarten, being the first educational institution with indisputable achievements as an assistant in the fulfilment of parental responsibility upon the socialization of the child, is a significant factor when mastering cultural norm manners. The interaction kindergarten – family is based on partnership in the Bulgarian educational system. The joint efforts of teachers and parents, united over the mutual cause of improving children’s behaviour and aimed at the mutual assistance are in fact manifestation of a partnership of traditions and innovations, characterized as a successful process.

The forms of the partnership kindergarten – family are various, and kindergartens offer a bounty of good practices. *The good practice of fifty* kindergartens in the Vratsa region is the currently functioning *Academy for parents*. Following one technological model, each of the kindergartens has preserved its unique personal attitude and “offers development of the pedagogical competences of the families in attractive ways, directed in a certain sequence” (Kostadinova, 2011:33). The pedagogical staff in kindergartens, functioning as immediate executors of the government policy for public pre-school education of children in pre-school age, realizes the positive experience of the interaction between kindergarten and family. They achieve this by means of combining traditional collective, group and individual forms of cooperation and innovative various forms of agreement between family and pedagogical staff. The formats of this agreement between kindergartens and family for the realization of a policy for achievement of cultural norm manners and mastering of etiquette include not only a room for the family and a direct telephone line, but also a variety of participations in:

- Joint projects on a regional, national and international scale;
- A round table with topic questions to be discussed;
- Official and role games;
- Sport competitions;
- Contests;
- Educational training sessions;
- Associations, foundations and non-government organizations.

By achieving this global aim, another good example of *positive pedagogical practice* when acquiring cultural norm manners which appears to be an antipode to aggressive behaviour is the practice with one kindergarten in Shumen – “Brezichka” (Koleva, Atanasova: 2013). In a *purposeful* two-year research “In the land of Goodland”, the staff from the kindergarten succeeds in creating positive and good-natured relationships by means of interactive games and the magical power of fairy-tales. The approach is not named play-learning, yet its essence presupposes and achieves exactly this. In the form of games, children learn to face the challenges in a good-natured way. It is in games that children learn to communicate with appropriate vocabulary, to use proper tone and language, to understand the effect of their words. It is in games where the rule: “It is not only important what you are saying, but also how you are saying it” is kept. *Play-learning* is orientated towards the awareness of the importance of good manners and reflection; it helps realize that the good word heals and is a shortcut to friendship. The personal proficiency of the child in everyday communication with others clearly shows them that only when they express their cultural norm manners with everyone – children of the same age, friends and adults – at home or when out, they can feel the respect and love of the others as well. The confirmation of satisfaction in a child provoked from the delicate and courteous relationships when commu-

nicating is the result of combining the pedagogical example of patience, tactfulness and kind-heartedness and the revealing of the “secret” of politeness through games. This combination guarantees psychological comfort and subconscious realization of the cultural norm manners as “second nature” of the child. Together with this effect in the realization of the project, the experience of the kindergarten points that due to the purposeful play-learning children tend to express their best sides the most, and therefore the aggression diminishes.

Another *good pedagogical practice* for mastering of etiquette and cultural norm manners has been realized in kindergarten № 12 “Pinokio” in Varna (Atanasova, Madzharova, 2010). The chosen strategy *combines the game and the humour*, by means of humoristic works – poetry and prose, short literary forms – fables, tongue-twisters, conundrums and humoristic songs. Through the everyday interaction with works from humoristic literature from various genres available, the circle of children’s idea of cultural relationships broadens. The indirect presentation of non-cultural behaviour and its derision, which fully complies with the Bulgarian traditional literary works, achieves motivation towards good manners and speech etiquette. The proposed model of cultural norm manners in kindergarten is a combination of *humoristic lyrics, folk tales, fables, tongue-twisters, conundrum, humoristic songs and games*. In addition to the capacity of the *humoristic lyrics*, fruitful basis for education of cultural norm manners is added in a short and compact way by means of *folk tales*. At the typical confrontation of good and bad in tales, the target for derision are stupidity and illiteracy, laziness, lie, all types of sins, and distorted virtues. Together with *fables* – characterized with their strict, vivid, neat and close-to-colloquial language as well as irony, reaching the point of exposure – *fairies, tongue-twisters, conundrums, humoristic songs and the game*, the model of cultural norm manners is successful. Getting aware of the texts as a result of their analysis, understanding the life wisdom in: “*The one who does good, good will find*” and “*Politeness does not cost you anything, but gives you everything*.” and their rendering into the games of children, creates a unity between words and deeds, thus helping the manifestations of cultural norm manners.

As a result of their pedagogical work, Atanasova and Madzharova come up to the conclusion that approach based on purposeful choice of humoristic literary works as well as the motivating of children to artfully interpret them in the game prove to be effective when related to the acquisition of cultural norm manners and speech etiquette.

Another productive approach is offered by Prodanova (Prodanova, 1995: 34) who suggests that the acquisition of cultural norm manners and etiquette is the result of deliberately organized interaction with children or the so called “pedagogically organized environment”, the way Amonashvili – one of the greatest humanitarian pedagogical researchers – would call it. It is in the base of that

organized environment that a system of games is structured which combines the eliciting of rules for cultural norm manners and the creating of the environment for their compliance in everyday life. The deduced rules and their public announcement – the systematization in aesthetically offered pictures, illustrations, albums and other pictorial means – are used not only in specially organized intentional situations, but also in everyday work with children. The basic criteria which pedagogical researchers use to estimate the presence and manifestation of speech etiquette and cultural norm manners are as follows: the ability to speak in an even tone of voice, the usage of polite forms, such as “You”, “Please”, “Thank you”, “Here you are”, and “Sorry”, the ability to show decent behaviour with meals as well as the capability of keeping the order in a certain place.

Another important part of the pedagogically organized environment is the literary works. They offer various plots and reasons for thinking over the relationships of different personages and the living together with their deeds, which greatly influences children and serve as role-models for behaviour. The extent to which the proper choice of a literary work is seen as important is constantly proven in reality. Suitable collections are suggested to be: *“Read to me once again”*, *“A source of beauty and patriotism – folk works in kindergarten and primary school”* as well as *“Amazing times”*.

An important part of the organized pedagogical environment which has ensured the stimulating of formation of cultural norm manners with children is the *intentional combination of games* with various means, such as: *studies, puppet theatre performances, fairy-tales, short stories, poems, video and DVD films, songs, colouring books with suitable texts, proverbs and sayings*.

The reasons for the classification of the proposed approach as good are several:

Firstly – the already mentioned emphasis on the combination of rules, atmosphere and system of games.

Secondly – upon ignoring the lack of information about the system of games, being the most essential, children are to be offered play-learning – the pedagogical competence with structuring the system of games.

Thirdly – the ability to recognize the mutual effort of *teachers* who work with one and the same group of children, *of children themselves* and their active participation, and the *pedagogical community of the kindergarten and the parents*.

To sum up: the proposed approach of deliberate abiding to rules and unintentional transfer of a specially structured system of games within the process of playing which is conditionally named “Lessons of politeness” suggests:

1. Repeated reminding and ratification of a cultural norm.
2. Self-dependent acquisition of the rules of cultural norm manners and etiquette through various games.
3. System of games which presupposes play-learning.

4. United efforts of the child, the group of children and the teachers.
5. Transfer of play-learning in family environment.

With its potential to guarantee suitable environment the proposed approach regulates the behaviour and makes the process of cultural norm acquisition effective.

4. Program provision of the acquisition of etiquette and cultural norm manners in the kindergarten

The hereby presented study realizes monitoring of the school curricula of four current programs with the objective of estimating the program provision and the extent to which it is expected for 6 – 7 year-olds to acquire etiquette and cultural norm manners in the pre-school group of the kindergarten:

1. “Hand in hand” [Raka za raka].
2. “I will be a student in 1st grade” [Az shte bada uchenik].
3. “Molivko”.
4. “Hello, school” [Zdravey uchilishte].

As a result of the performed comparative analysis of the application of the curricula in most school-educational institutions, it has been found out that there is no specifically designed part for mastering of etiquette and cultural norm manners, and together with that different level of the planning of the problem is proposed.

The different provision of cultural norm manners and etiquette in the investigated programs and curricula does not fully present the overall situation in the Bulgarian pre-school education system, but the sample of popular educational curricula shows several tendencies:

The first tendency is a failure of both the volume of planned situations and game variants. The reason for this finding is the numerical expressions of its part. To the greatest extent, the acquisition of etiquette and cultural norm manners is provided in the curriculum of “Hello, School” [Zdravey uchilishte] – 12%, “Hand in hand” [Raka za raka] Curriculum – 8,56%, in “I will be a student in 1st grade” [Az shte bada uchenik] – 7,54% and in the “Molivko „Curriculum – 5,61%.

The graphic representation of the results is shown in Figure 1 and presents the volume of the investigated problem in relation to the total program volume:

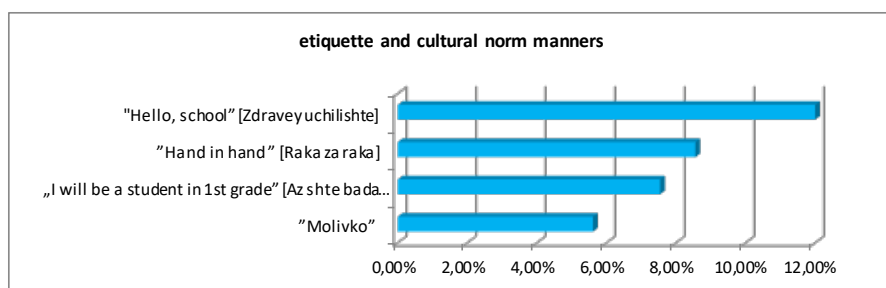


Figure 1

The second tendency as a result of the content analysis is the accentuated grouping of the curriculum into three large groups – cultural norm manners, speech etiquette and cultural and hygienic habits, presented in Figure 2:

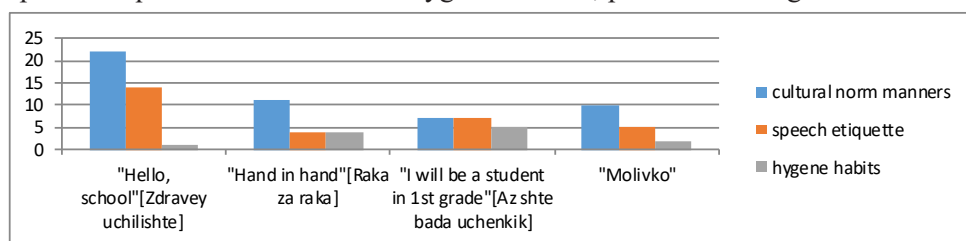


Figure 2

The main assertion, as a result of the curricula analyzed, is that the balance of significant issues cannot be fully solved, no matter how much their rate per cent is changed. The decision to acquire skills in a timely manner, in the case of cultural norm manners and etiquette, is to significantly increase the share of game and play-learning so as to overcome the paradoxical inconsistency with proven truths found in research all around the world concerning the importance of the sensitive age.

5. Etiquette and cultural norm manners with 6 – 7 year old children – diagnostics

The study encompasses a random excerpt of 20 children aged 6 – 7 who attend a state kindergarten. Children show a good overall physical and mental development. They live in a family environment with two parents who are committed to the development and upbringing of their children. The diagnostics for establishing the level of cultural norm manners and the use of etiquette with speech communication includes three individual topic interviews. The selection

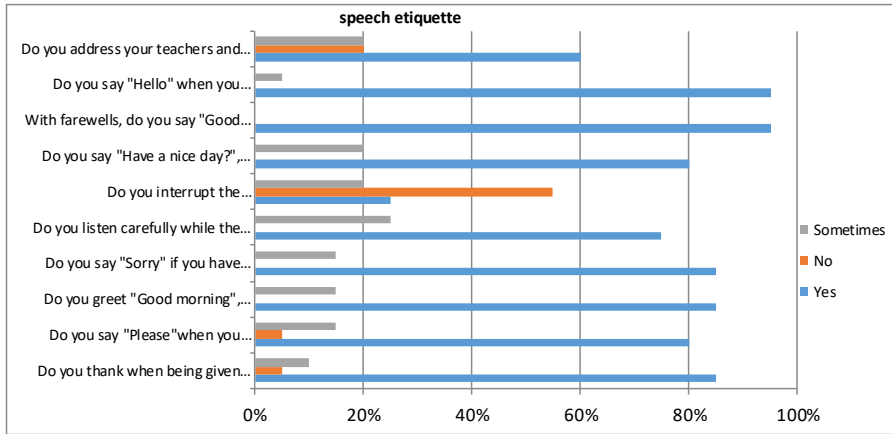


Figure 3

of topics is in full accordance with the established grouping of topics in the analyzed curricula – cultural norm manners, speech etiquette and cultural and hygiene habits.

The results of speech etiquette manifestations appear to be the diagnostics of: the use of “You” as a form of communicating with strangers or in an official address to someone, the presence of a cultural habit for starting a telephone conversation, courteous greetings when meetings or saying goodbye, the ability to hear, to apologize, to ask for something and express gratitude, and are summarized in Figure 3.

As it can be seen from the figure, cultural habits are manifested to a different extent. The formed cultural habits prevail the lack of habits. The biggest part is asserted to the cultural start of a telephone conversation and courteous farewells. High percentage – 95% – is the speech etiquette upon saying thank you, apologizing and greeting, and the smallest – 60% is the proportion of the use of the polite form “You”.

The summarized results of the diagnostics of cultural and hygiene habits are shown in Figure 4:

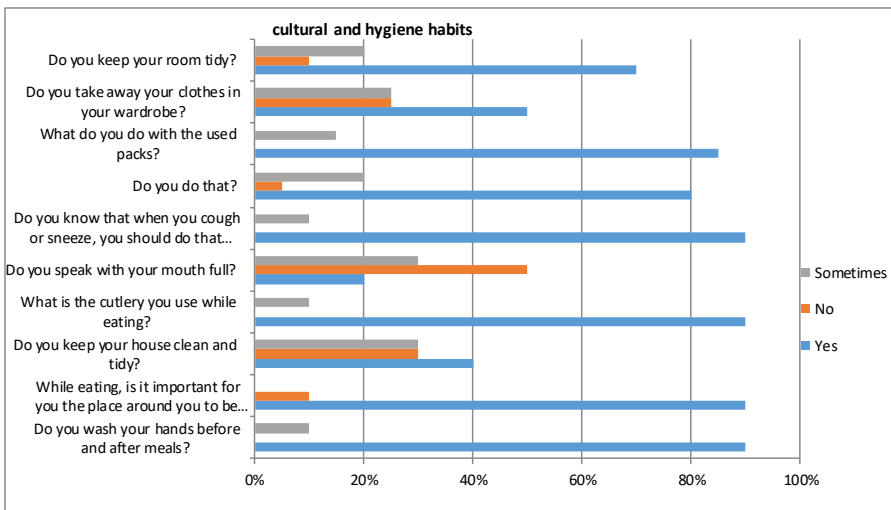


Figure 4

The diagnostics of cultural and hygiene habits ascertains:

- The greatest extent of formed habits for cultural behaviour with meals - hand washing before meals, cleanliness of eating and the use of cutlery - present in 90% of the children surveyed.

- The ones informed that upon coughing and sneezing, they are to use a napkin, a handkerchief, they are to cover themselves with a hand in search for discretion – are also 90%.

- The habit of cultural manners during meals is present with 80% of the children, and the habit needs assertion with 20%.

- The per cent of children who do not speak with their mouth full is 50%, yet with 20% it is a rare case, and with 30% this habit is not formed.

- The cultural habit of throwing away rubbish in a specially appointed place is formed with 85% of the children, and with 15% it does not happen regularly.

- The keeping of the child's room clean and tidy is a habit for 70% of the children, 20% do not clean it regularly, and with 10% the habit is not formed.

- The taking away of the clothes in a wardrobe is a self-dependent habit with 50% of the children, with 25% it is a rare occasion, yet 25% do not consider it a personal responsibility and do not perform it.

The assertion of the level of cultural norm manners in public places presents the greatest readiness to manifest care towards adults and sick people, animals and plants in nature, which is registered with 90% of the children surveyed, which at hand is in full accordance with children's innocence and wisdom. Their readiness to keep silence in public places and not to raise their voice in a shop, theater, cinema or elsewhere is present with 80% of the children, which is equal

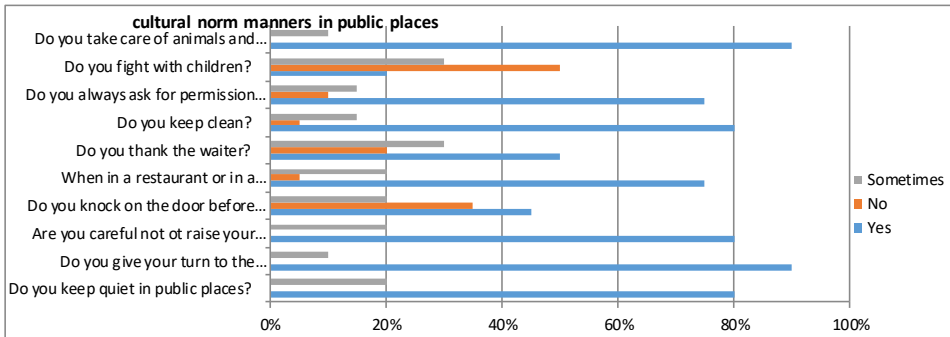


Figure 5

to the percentage related to keeping clean in a public place. The children who do not want to disturb others are 75%, and this is also the percentage of children asking for permission to use an object, belonging to someone else. Gratitude towards a waiter is present with 50% of the children and with 30% – it happens only occasionally. Children's self-assessment of the knocking-on-doors habit before entering somewhere is formed with 45%, yet for 20% it sometimes happens. Testing the child's attitude towards physical assault presents disapproval with 50% of the children, 30% use it as self-defence, which they regret later, and for 20% of the children it is an admitted behaviour that could be seen as a violent family or movies model. The detailed results of the survey can be seen in Figure 5.

6. The importance of cultural norm manners and etiquette in the pedagogical practice – a survey with kindergarten teachers

The range of the survey encompasses twenty-one kindergarten teachers on a random basis of four small settlements - two cities and two villages. The selection of the issues discussed makes it possible to take into account:

- The proficiency of the teachers, determined by the length of their work experience;
- The school system the teachers work with;
- The summarized pedagogical assessment of the importance of work on mastering cultural norm manners and etiquette in the kindergarten;
- Appreciation of the cooperation with parents in the joint idea to achieve cultural norm manners and to master forms of etiquette;
- The presence of priority aspects of etiquette in the practice of teachers (preference for cultural norm eating habits, speech etiquette, cultural and hygiene behavior);
- Assessment of the extent to which the mastery of cultural norm manners and etiquette is based on the game;

– What the games teachers prefer to use in their teaching process are.

The summarized analysis of the survey clearly determines the assessment of work on cultural and etiquette behavior in the pedagogical practice of kindergarten teachers as a very significant part of the overall care of child amplification. The relation of this finding to the long duration of the work experience of the 27 – 40 year-old kindergarten teachers, having participated in the survey, shows that for 57% of them it gains in importance. The choice of an educational system shows that only two teachers have chosen a different system from “I will be a student in 1st grade” [Az shte bada uchenik], one works on the “Molivko” system and the other on “Hand in hand” [Raka za raka].

All teachers share the opinion that mastering the standards of etiquette and culture of behaviour in kindergarten is very often based on the game. Some of the respondents have no preference for any etiquette norms, but in one way or another, they assure that etiquette norms should be a manifestation of sophisticated simplicity, yet they should not be seen as forms of servility or hypocrisy, especially in the frail childhood years. There are other teachers who share the view towards polite and kind attitude to children of the same age as well as adults, which they consider of great importance. Preferences for tolerant, tactful, and respectful attitude towards other people regardless of their age and nationality have been shared, which at hand requires persistent work with all participants in the pedagogical process – children, teachers, and parents. Preference towards speech etiquette have been registered, which is manifested by means of achieving of the capability to a calm and correct way of speaking, of using appropriate expressions in conversations with adults and children, of actively using: “Please”, “Thank you”, and “Here you are”. Health and hygiene habits as well as forms of communication and culture of behaviour have been preferred.

One can also observe a preference for cultural norm acquisition and mastering of etiquette forms - from puppet etudes, puppet theatres, deliberate and unintentional situations, fiction, children’s songs and many games such as:

Etudes: “The Sad Handkerchief” – posing a model for request, gratitude and farewell; “The kind word” – serving as a helper of speech etiquette; “The Rabbit Is Washing Himself” – stimulating the cultural and hygiene habits; “Piggy At Lunch” – a model for forming cultural eating habits.

Fiction and Health Reader: “How Do We Make Ourselves Hardy”, “Smoke Nicotine”, “Three Bears – Three Brothers”; “Vitamin Fair”; poems, fairy-tales, etc.

Game exercises: “Say The Right Word”, “Complete The Sentence”, “Magic”; “Keep Quiet”; “Talking Shops”; “You And I”; “Please”; “Hello”; “I Am Sorry”; “Who Knows Numerous Polite Words?”; “Mirror, Mirror”

Subject games: “In The Toy Shop”; “On The Bus”; “At A Restaurant”; “We Are Welcoming Guests”; “Join Us At A Performance”; “Mum, Dad And I In A

Restaurant”; “Mum, Dad And I In The Shop” – by means of distribution of roles from the field of communication (shop-assistants, waiters, customers), children master behaviour etiquette with ease and interest.

Drama play: “Don’t Do What They Do, So as Not to Be Made Fun Of” – for cultural manners and courtesy, “Good Neighbours” – for a friendly greeting, cultural invitation, speech etiquette.

Autodidactic Games: “The Magic Words”, “Thank You For The Wonderful...!”, “Good Morning”, “Applause for the Artists”, “In The Theatre”, “The Stop of Good”, “That’s the Way Mum Teaches Me”, “Mirror”, “I want to ask”, “I compose”, “Children From Distant Lands”.

Children songs and music games: “Three wonderful words”; “I can see you, I can look at you”.

The combination of games and appropriate songs enhances the effectiveness of games that create habits for cultural norm manners in full accordance with etiquette.

Attracting parental assistance towards the implementation of the studied problems with a certain number of the surveyed ones is related to the educational body “Cultural and national values”. When personal and official holidays, different customs and traditions, requiring adequate etiquette and interaction with children of the same age and adults on summarizing topics like “My Home”, “Holiday Calendar” are prepared, very good results are achieved, which are proven effective in games. Another proposed partnership format with parents is: “School for Parents”, as well as the use of specialized publications such as: “Education in Parenting”, by R. Zaharieva and others.

All teachers surveyed gave an explanatory answer to the question: Is there a particular source which you have used for choosing the appropriate games? The one-type answer that they did not use a specific source was complemented by a variety of references to various sources. For some, the source is the Internet, others use appropriate Teacher’s Books such as “373 Communicative Games in the Kindergarten”, “Puppet Etudes and Songs”, Gamebooks and Etudes such as “501 Children’s Activities” by Dey Hodges, “Speech development through autodidactic games”, written by Sl. Zlateva; others are based on personal experience as well as the experience of colleagues and deliberately include it in made-up situations.

The long-term work experience of teachers helps the realization the important cultural aspect of the formation of the childhood personality on the one hand. On the other hand, the diversity of sources used undoubtedly provokes a creative approach among teachers. Nevertheless, all teachers surveyed are equally positive about the need of a specialized edition of games that stimulate cultural norm manners and mastering of etiquette in a wide range of situations. Any specialized literature is the foundation and prerequisite for the formation of knowledge

and skills. According to teachers, with long as well as not so long experience, specialized editions, which are a selection of a variety of relevant games, a part of good practice, would greatly facilitate work to achieve etiquette and cultural norm manners.

The contribution to the selection of appropriate games is provided by those teachers who have shared which the games that made it possible to change the behaviour of children throughout their work experience have been. The suggestions are for various games such as the listed as well as some interactive games: "When and How to Greet", "Say the Good Word", "How To Ask And How To Apologize", Magic Mirror, "An Interview", "The Phone", "A Meeting", "Who Is Polite", as well as "Game-Fable" and "Guessing Games".

7. A model for game-based acquisition of cultural norm manners and etiquette with 6 – 7 year-old children

All games that offer *play-learning* of written and unwritten rules that help to comply with social and moral requirements for cultural norm manners at home and in public places have gained their place as a model for game-based learning. Games, which stimulate speech etiquette with their content, which help to establish careful, courteous, responsive, benevolent, and affectionate attitude to others, and help to master the rules of cultural norm manners, have found their place within the model. Moreover, ruled games are in the center of the proposed game-based model of cultural norm manners and etiquette acquisition.

The effectiveness of play-learning in accordance with the issues discussed is dependent on the combination of games and their volume in everyday life. The most important part with 6 – 7-year-olds takes the autodidactic game - the most genetically mature form of play. The autodidactic game, as a typical representative of a game of rules and expression of free, voluntary and desirable activity, offers the child-player to self-teach while studying intuitively, with the joy of the process from the position of an equal to the other players. The autodidactic game offers multiple repeatedness of the cognitive and educational potential of the game content through interest and atmosphere, sparing children's mental health, and provides play-learning through its structural components – title, game tasks and game rules.

The proper title has the potential to provoke interest towards the game. With its feature to provoke, direct, guide and suggest, the title is of interest in engaging in a certain game. By means of the game tasks given after the announcement of the title, interest is immediately increased. When these two aspects are posed, they manage to challenge directing to the specifics of gaming content. Game tasks motivating participation in the game, informing about game activities and focusing on the purpose of the game provoke play-learning. When interest arises, the effectiveness of play-learning is a consequence of well thought-out game

rules. Their function of regulating game activities, ensuring players' equality and driving the hidden educational potential is realized through short, clear and precise rules that regulate:

- How many players can take part in the game?
- How is the game supposed to start – who is the first to start and how are the others to get involved?
- What is the process of the game activity?
- What are the variables for choice?
- What are the bans and bonuses?
- What is the final of the game – how does it finish?

Accurately selected autodidactic games can encompass a wide range of etiquette components and cultural norm manners. Game content focused on game interaction can offer a culture of communication (dating, greeting, laughter). Another content can master cultural and hygiene habits (eating, dressing). The content of other games can form a culture of speech (talking with polite tone and listening with care, with respect, without interruption). Cultural norm manners and mastering of etiquette in a familiar and unfamiliar environment in a public place could be the game content of other games, both in a narrowly specialized manner and in various combinations with other components of etiquette and cultural norm manners.

The foundation of the game-based learning model is the autodidactic games, with a real game activity running over time according to the pattern set by the game rules. When the game activity is directed to the realization of the goal of the game, during the pursuit of which the game tasks concealing the educational effects of the game creator and containing the game result are implemented – the autodidactic, i.e. the ability of the game to train with its own content (Zlateva, 2009: 15), then there is play- learning present.

The model incorporates game exercises in autodidactic games, them being structurally identical to the autodidactic game, but guided by the teacher, which at hand provides repeatedness and help both in learning to follow rules and in mastering habits for cultural norm manners.

The indirect stimulation of topic-oriented plot-based role games and the creative organization of the game space for their deployment is the other element of the model.

The pedagogically responsible choice of appropriate literary works as well as the implementation of the technology of analysis and preparation for creative interpretation in the game dramatics as an independent child practice is an important additional element of the play-learning model. The game of dramatization facilitates the mastering of the general moral rules for a culture of communication, the ability to feel happy about the success of the other, to control your behaviour in public places, to keep public order, and to promote favorable cultural hygiene habits.

By means of music games the above-mentioned skills are complemented. With the combination of games and music, musical improvisations and pantomime, and as a result of the natural and accessible play-learning in musical games, the mastery of cultural norm manners and etiquette is achieved.

The proportion of games, their duration, the choice of their accomplishment - in succession or parallel, the frequency of playing, are dynamically variable quantities, subjectively variable depending on the preferences of the teacher, which characterizes the dynamics of the model.

The keeping of the intentional focus on all types of games, elements of the model, despite its dynamic variability, has the capacity to offer play-learning in a varied way as well as effective mastering of individual aspects of cultural norm manners and etiquette by means of taking into account the individual and unique abilities of the child.

NOTES

1. Sening, S. (2004). *Kak da nauchim deteto na dobri obnoski*.
2. Dora i neynata kizhka za dobri obnoski, Sofia: Kolibri.
3. Metodicheskoe rukovodstvo za realizirane na obrazovatelnoto sadarzhanie v podgotvitelnata grupa v detskata gradina i v uchilishteto, Sofia: Bulvest.
4. Kniga za uchitelya za podgotvitelna grupa v detskata gradina i v uchilishteto, Sofia: Prosveta.
5. Molivko. Didaktichna sistema za podgotvitelna grupa v detskata gradina (6-7), Veliko Tarnovo: Slovo.
6. Az shte bada uchenik. Prakticheskoe rukovodstvo za uchitelya za podgotvitelna grupa v detskata gradina i v uchilishte, Sofia: Izkustvo.

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