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## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS OF ACQUIRING SOCIOCULTURAL EXPERIENCE: THE HERMENEUTIC ASPECT

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**Abstract.** The article addresses the issue of the individual's socialization, the usage of interpretative mechanisms in order to gain sociocultural experience. The process of interiorization of cultural experience is analyzed from the perspective of the hermeneutic paradigm. The interpretative mechanisms (semiotization, narrativization) make it possible to explain the formation of the individual's model of the world, which is, on the one hand, a representation of culture and, on the other, a reflection of the individual's subjective experience. Reproductive interpretation is acquiring sociocultural experience that does not involve contemplation. Productive interpretation involves contemplating experience, assigning new meanings to it, which ensures the individual's development and facilitates the process of gaining new experience.

**Keywords:** socialization, sociocultural experience, interpretation, mechanisms of semiotization and narrativization, interiorization, hermeneutic paradigm, model of the world.

A person coming to this world becomes an inseparable part of culture, which is a complex system with its own rules, laws, norms that are recorded in various cultural texts and are the representation of sociocultural experience. Each individual has to find their place in the world, to acquire the main sociocultural schemas created in the process of social interaction and legitimized by institutions of socialization. In other words, the individual gets involved in the process of socialization.

The mega, macro, mezzo, and micro factors in socialization are discussed in theoretical literature. The social pedagogic (traditional, institutional, stylized, interpersonal) and psychological mechanisms of socialization (imprinting, imitation, reflection, identification) and the levels of socialization ('the organism – the environment', 'the subject – the object', 'the individual - society') are established. The content of socialization is defined as the process of identity formation in the sphere of the individual's activities, communication, and consciousness; as adopting the system of knowledge, norms, and values (I. Kon), social experience, social qualities and traits, social roles (A. Ruchka), psychological patterns and behaviors (L. Yasna).

According to classic socialization theories, there are two stages of acquiring social experience: the adaptive stage (adaptation, acquiring existing norms, roles, patterns, forms of behaviour) and the phase of interiorization (inner, active acquisition of attitudes, values, guidelines, adopting the system of roles, etc.).

Classic approaches to the theory of socialization focus mainly on the adaptive stage. These are the biogenetic approach (G. S. Hall, A. Gesell), the sociogenetic approach (R. Benedict, M. Mead, U. Bronfenbrenner, A. Bandura), the psychoanalytic approach (S. Freud), the cognitivist approach

(J. Piaget, L. Kohlberg). The mechanisms of the active acquiring of social experience is but fragmentarily discussed. The purpose of this article is to analyze a new approach to the interpretation of the mechanisms of acquiring sociocultural experience, to demonstrate how the use of the hermeneutic paradigm can help to explain the mechanisms of interiorization of social experience.

Personal experience has but a small share in the formation of our ideas about the world. Almost everything we believe to be our own is the result of interpretation of other people's experience passed directly or transmitted through texts of culture. Reproductive interpretation means that other people's experience is acquired automatically, that the process does not involve comprehension, reflection. The individual, especially in their childhood, does not acquire their parents', teachers', close people's experience critically. Productive interpretation presupposes contemplating the experience of others, giving it new meaning. This kind of new experience is the schema for the individual's perception, assessment, interpretation of the world; it also affects the formation of other people's experience. Thus the active stage of socialization presupposes that the individual not only acquires, but also creates new experience. Old experience is passed from person to person, from generation to generation; the process always involves creation of new experience; it is accumulated, recorded in texts of culture, and gets the status of sociocultural phenomenon. The individual's experience is more than personal experience; at the same time, it is the intersubjective world of culture.

Culture plays a major role in creating personal experience, as it is condensed, organized experience of humanity, the basis for our comprehension of the world. Accumulation, organization, systematization of meanings in culture is an important condition of both personality development and the development of culture [6, p. 51]. Sociocultural texts containing the main meanings, patterns, models provide the individual with schemas of interpretation that underlie the process of systematization, organization of their subjective experience. In other words, sociocultural factors affect the individual's comprehension of themselves, their environment, and the general reality. Sociocultural texts are divided into symbolic, which contain the basic symbolic meanings of culture (myths, fairy and folk tales, fiction, music, works of art); metaphorical, which contribute to the creation of new meanings; theoretical (conceptual), which contain the main concepts of culture – norms, requirements, rules (ideology, various theories, etc.).

Texts of culture serve several functions, the main ones being (1) transmissive function (transmitting cultural values, meanings, norms, interpretative schemas, concepts, models, etc.); (2) regulatory function (regulating self-expression, activity, assessments, interpretations of the members of a given cultural community); (3) cognitive function (acquiring knowledge, traditions, ideas, etc.); (4) affective function (emotionally acquiring cultural experience in the process of interaction with texts of culture); (5) developmental function (enriching discourse repertoire). For example, the fairy tale as a cultural text is a 'condensed' synthetic form of symbolic, metaphorical knowledge, which can transform into scientific-theoretical schemas. The more a child is immersed in the world of fairy tales, the more scientific-theoretical contents he/she can comprehend, crystallize. That is to say, the fairy tales can create new meanings and even 'possible' worlds. The main purpose of the fairy tale is to transmit knowledge about the laws of the culture in which it belongs. The fairy tale may be regarded as text – the script text, a perfect model of relations as a product of the people's spiritual culture, the cultural pattern of family life, the manifestation of the archetypes of collective consciousness. I believe the fairy tale may be regarded as discourse text; its perception is a communicative event between the storyteller (an adult) and the addressee (a child). The fairy tale is a bearer of meanings, schemas, concepts, which are symbolically recorded in it. The child acquires them listening to the storyteller, who may give them a new interpretation. Gradually, the child starts comprehending, interpreting, retelling, reconstructing these meanings and schemas, thus they develop into latent structures of experience. Actually, all fairy tales help the child to comprehend context-dependent patterns of behaviour and variations in relations with other people and the environment. The degree of constructive effect of acquired schemas on the child's self-expression depends on interpretation competence of the storyteller, on their ability to comprehend and explain the content and the meaning of actions, the characters' behaviour; obviously, it depends on the addressee as well.

Culture is defined as an inherent in any stable community complex of specific and more or less standardized methods and forms of social integration, regulation of behaviour, cognition, communication, assessment and symbolic designation of the environment, which is the basis for self-identification of the individual and society [6, p. 51]. The individual accepts a ready-made, standardized schema of a cultural pattern provided by their teachers, reputable persons as undisputable rules of action in any social situation. Such cultural schemas get the individual involved in social reality and help them to adapt to it.

For the purpose of this study, culture is defined in terms of post-structuralism and postmodernism: it is text created by people in a particular temporal and social context; it is filled with meanings, which function as schemas of perception and comprehension of reality. Thus culture is textual space teeming with meanings, which create new meanings, primary narratives on the basis of other texts, possibly even those of other cultures and subcultures, which ensures its development.

Any text is an entangled web of many cultural codes, which an author uses both consciously and subconsciously. The cultural code is a code of human knowledge, social assumptions, opinions, etc. Text woven from many equally important codes, in its turn, weaves into a boundless fabric of culture; text is memory, and it 'remembers' not only the past and present but also the culture of the future. Comprehending texts of culture, the individual develops as a discourse subject, which is the basis for acquiring social and cultural experience through comprehension, interpretation, and internalization of the most significant texts of a culture. Interpreting texts of culture, which contain the basic cultural meanings, norms, values, the individual themselves becomes a work of culture; thus there emerges a specific creation – a new image of culture. In such a way the individual not only acquires sociocultural experience, but also constructs it, fills it with new meanings. For example, contemplating a work of art or studying a scientific text, the individual interprets it through the prism of their own system of schemas, attributive processes; they signify the images of perception or information; as a result, the latter can get new meanings.

The hermeneutic paradigm enables us to analyze the psychic reality of the individual, their personal experience as text. This text or textual structure is the frame that organizes and systematizes personal experience. Post-structuralism suggests that both human consciousness, human actions, events in one's life may be determined by the totality of comprehended and interpreted texts; P. Ricoeur develops this idea and explains that an action can be read since it is formed from signs, rules, norms, meanings. Like signs, actions can have different contents each time acquiring new meanings; and it takes special effort to comprehend them [4].

From postmodern perspective, reality is text constructed on the basis of cultural patterns and produced by the individual with the help of language. That is, any human culturally determined reality is of textual nature. The postmodernists focus on the fact that our language constitutes our world and our beliefs. It is through language that our world view is constructed; each time we speak, we create reality [7, p. 150-152].

The categories of language are of social nature, as they are formed in the process of social interaction in a particular sociocultural environment. The researches by E. Sapir, B. Whorf, H. Hoijer prove that the world is categorized differently in different languages and cultures. That is why I regard language as a means of constructing reality. According to Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, the individual's world view is determined by the structure of their language. The individual's speech, actions, deeds reflect their experience constructed from various meanings with the help of the interpretation.

The process of interpretation involves semiotization (signifying via a particular sign form). The mechanism of semiotization is the main element in the process of interpretation, the latter being an essential factor in gaining experience [3]. The hermeneutic procedure operates or is performed in a semiotic situation, it concerns objects of semiotic nature, and the very course of the procedure is actually a semiotic process.

The semiotic approach involves the mode of analysis determined not by the nature of the object, but by a peculiar scientific 'semiotizing' view of the world, i.e. highlighting and researching its semiotic structures [1, p. 6]. The semiotic view of the world means that everything is perceived as a sign which

codes something 'beyond it', symbolizes something hidden behind it, or signals the existence of this 'something'. The semiotic world view is culturally conditioned and created within the boundaries of a certain mental space (the picture of the world of a given community, culture).

The mental space is regarded as the system of beliefs, meanings; such systems are related to reality in different ways: some are based on the facts of life and scientific data and are updated as new knowledge about the world is obtained; others (such as literary works, myths, etc.) have a considerable amount of freedom in constructing reality, yet they save some of its features and patterns. It should be mentioned that the mental space as the system of beliefs about oneself, others, and the general world is a creation of an individual or a group of individuals as a collective creator. That is why the meaning of text is revealed only in the context of a particular mental space, within the frame of categorization typical of an individual, a community, or all humanity.

The model of the world is implicitly present in sign interpretation, it determines this interpretation. Each person has their own interpretation of meanings expressed in notions, constructs, concepts, which represent universal, cultural, historical, and socially-oriented systems of meanings. These systems intertwine to form an individual semantic system, which is the basis of the individual's personal experience, the representation of their model of the world. Even an illusory personal system of meanings affects the individual's perception and awareness of the world, determines their life choices, actions, style of life.

The individual's model of the world is nothing more than the imprint, the structure of the dominating texts of culture, a picture of the world structure, a holistic image of the world resulting from the totality of the individual's activities, their contacts with the world. The model of the world is the psychic gestalt of the world that contains its description [5, p. 2]. According to Zh. Sokolovska, this model presupposes that there exist partial models with a relatively specific interpretation of the main system characteristics of reality. In the system of such individual views of the world, there crystalize and realize themselves certain category structures that make it possible for consciousness to comprehend the world [5, p. 6-7].

Under this approach, we may suggest that there exist the model of the world as a personal system of meanings, which reflect the collective form of the world, concrete knowledge; it is embodied in the sign system of language. In other words, the model of the world is the system of concepts, meanings of the individual's subjective experience, conditioned by the specificity of their attitude to reality. Concept is scientifically defined as a minimal verbalized unit of experience, a specific structure representing experience in consciousness, an intellectual formation that embodies mental and psychic resources of consciousness. In cognitology, the concept is the mediator between the word and the reality it belongs to; which is why the concept is the entire potential of the word's meaning comprising both the main content and the subjective content created by the individual and tested by them in practice.

The model of the world is a link between consciousness and life-sustaining activities, it is the 'world's semantic double'; the individual regards it as unconditionally authentic; it reflects the coexistence of the invariant and the variable, of the process and the result of cognition. The model of the world is a conceptual system continuously constructed by the individual, who reflects on the real or possible worlds; it is constructed in the process of interpersonal interaction, human activities; the ways and mechanisms of the interpretation of new knowledge are also included in it [2]. It means that the model of the world not only represents the totality of knowledge, but also provides the mechanisms for obtaining and interiorizing knowledge. The units of the conceptual system are concepts/meanings – all the individual knows, thinks about, or suggests in a given situation. The conceptual system is not only the result of external influences, it is the result of the individual's reflection on the structures of meaning [2].

Thus the theoretical analysis shows that the model of the world can be regarded as the continual system of concepts, meanings, which result from interpreting input during interpersonal interaction in a given context. They can be socially stereotypical, conformist or quite original, unconventional. The formation of the individual's model of the world is to a great extent determined by the interpretative mechanisms.

The main interpretative mechanisms are semiotization and narrativization. The process of semiotization is signifying reality through various cognitive structures laid over it, its structuralization and conceptualization, immersing in one's own experience, and making use of both internal (determined by the individual's abilities) and external (for example, information) resources [3, p. 92]. According to N. Chepeleva, the recipient can use the already existing interpretative patterns. These are cultural patterns, which serve as mechanisms of involvement in culture, and clichés, models formed by previous experience, which are sometimes mechanically applied to the text regardless of its content. Thus semiotization has two levels – passive reflection of reality through applying the already known cognitive structures, gender ideas, stereotypes or construction of reality through its transformation.

The semiotization of the textual model of the world results in the creation of narrative structures, which the subject of interpretation can comprehend – they make it possible to comprehend oneself, other people, social reality as a whole. Narrative structure is quite a flexible model, which enables the individual to comprehend reality, to adapt to it, as it is part of this reality. It operates as an open and a varied research schema that allows the individual to get close to the border of ever-changing and ever self-replicating reality. It means that available resources (so-called context of interpretation) are an important indicator of interpretative ability; these may be both external resources (texts of culture in the broad sense of the word, those shared by a given community) and internal resources – mobilization of the individual's intellectual resources, systems of interpretative schemas, concepts.

The systems of interpretative schemas, concepts embodied in narrative structures of experience are responsible for the individual's subjective categorization; they play the role of so-called 'comprehension framework' (V. Zhorniak's terminology) or 'interpretational schemas' (N. Chepeleva's terminology), 'frame systems' (E. Goffman's terminology), 'cognitive representations' (H. Thome's and U. Lehr's terminology); they determine motivation and are used in everyday life for interpretation and comprehension of events, actions; they operate as guidelines.

Interpretative schemas can be both stereotypical, created by culture, mechanically – without reflection – adopted by the individual, and productive, constructed by the individual themselves. Stereotypical, 'ready-made' schemas of self-perception, perception of others, and life in general narrow the space for self-experimentation, self-realization, self-expression, forecasting the future. The creation of so-called productive interpretative schemas is to a great degree determined by the individual's reflective capacity and interpretative competence. Though in everyday situations, whatever the individual's reflective capacity, they often use stereotypical, 'previously acquired' and tested schemas mimicking the interpretations of their neighbours, family members, reputable persons. Primary interpretative schemas are the initial step in creating complex, semantic, basic ones. According to T. Tytarenko, they are the basis of a new identity, as they are rooted in clear, vivid, consistent images of oneself and other people. They can become resource schemas for the individual on condition that they are fully comprehended and interpreted [3].

In a particular situation, a certain system of interpretative schemas proves to be the most relevant one and tentatively provides an answer to the question about what is going on. In the process of semiotization and narrativization, basic (nuclear), semantic interpretative schemas are created; I call them concepts/meanings. These schemas are not subject to verification; they are of personal nature and they have sovereign properties. They can be borrowed from society at large in the form of a particular cultural pattern or alternatively be constructed by the individual.

In summary, the formation of subjective experience is a complex process of semiotization and narrativization. The effectiveness and the level of semiotization depend on narrativization competence. Narrativization is constructing reality in the form of narration meant for the other, including the inner other. In this way, the narrative text of interpretation that can work both at the productive and the reproductive levels of semiotization is created. The productive level of interpretation is responsible for the author's narrative, while the reproductive interpretation constructs reality from the narrations with which the individual is already familiar [3, p. 42].

The individual perceives the world through the prism of their own experience, personal system of meanings, system of interpretative schemas, concepts. The main mechanism of comprehending reality

under the hermeneutic paradigm is interpretation, which in a particular context enables the individual to signify reality and assign new meanings to it. In the process of semiotization, there occurs conceptualization of reality; it may be both passive representation and reinterpretation. The semiotic procedures result in the creation of the textual model of the world that determines the individual's experience. The textual model of the world has a narrative form, it contains a complex system of interpretative schemas, concepts. Thus semiotization and narrativization are the mechanisms of socialization, which involves interiorization of social experience.

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Заграй Лариса. Соціально - психологічні механізми засвоєння соціокультурного досвіду: герменевтичний аспект. *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника*, 4 (2) (2017), 97–103.

У статті розглянуто проблему соціалізації особистості, висвітлено питання засвоєння соціокультурного досвіду за допомогою інтерпретативних механізмів. Обґрунтовано необхідність

звернення до герменевтичної парадигми у поясненні процесу інтеріоризації соціокультурного досвіду. Пояснено на основі інтерпретативних механізмів (семіотизації, наративізації) особливості формування моделі світу особистості, яка є, з одного боку, відбитком культури, з другого – відбитком суб'єктивного досвіду індивіда. Репродуктивна інтерпретація передбачає засвоєння соціокультурного досвіду без осмислення, рефлексії. Продуктивна інтерпретація передбачає переосмислення досвіду, надання йому нового смислу, що забезпечує розвиток особистості, сприяє появі нового досвіду.

**Ключові слова:** соціалізація, соціокультурний досвід, інтерпретація, механізми семіотизації і наративізації, інтеріоризація, герменевтична парадигма, модель світу.