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Harnessing the Formative Potential of Literary Texts in Cultivating Values and Attitudes in Primary School Students

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Abstract: Education through and for values is an indispensable process in shaping the human being; only through the assimilation of values does an individual become a fully developed human entity. The issue of values education is highly relevant and represents an essential component of modern education. Education itself is a supreme human value, enabling individuals to access knowledge and become agents of their own transformation. The process of forming attitudes and values is complex and can be achieved through personal reflection, as well as through the provision of models and authentic experiences. This study explores the integration of values education into the teaching of Romanian language and literature at the primary education level, demonstrating that literature constitutes a fundamental tool for cultivating values. Through literary texts, students analyze various moral situations, develop empathy, and enhance their capacity for reflection, while internalizing attitudes and values. Carefully selected literary texts function as true “moral laboratories,” in which young readers experiment with different ways of being, assimilating essential values and attitudes such as kindness, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and courage. Thus, by designing and following well-structured pedagogical stages, the reading experience can be transformed into a solid foundation for the child’s moral and cultural development.

Keywords: values education; values; attitudes; literary text; value-based identity

1. Introduction

In the context of the social, cultural and technological transformations of contemporary society, education is called to respond not only to the need for intellectual formation of students, but also to the need for their moral and axiological development. Against the background of an increasingly acute crisis of values, manifested by the diminishing interest in fundamental values such as respect, responsibility, solidarity, tolerance or empathy, a crisis caused by the diversity of sources of information with different degrees of authenticity, by the growing influence of the digital environment, by the multiplication of controversial behavioural patterns and contradictory messages not always compatible with the values promoted by the family and the school, the importance of strengthening the formative dimension of the educational process is becoming more and more evident. Under these conditions, the school has the responsibility to contribute to the formation of a solid value identity, based on a coherent system of values and attitudes, educating personalities capable of adopting responsible behaviors, manifesting

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empathy, respect and civic spirit. The topicality of the problem is determined by the need to strengthen the value dimension of education: today's education can no longer aim exclusively at the transmission of knowledge, but must also contribute to the formation of a solid system of values and attitudes. The theme is also topical in that it responds to the growing concerns of pedagogical research for *axiological education*, considered one of the essential directions of the integral formation of the personality in the twenty-first century.

2. Purpose

In this context, this article aims to highlight the role and possibilities of capitalizing on the formative valences of the literary text in the cultivation of values and attitudes in primary school students, demonstrating that the reading experience can constitute an authentic framework for personality formation and development of the skills necessary for life in a democratic society based on fundamental human values. The research was developed within the research subprogram "Models of capitalization of neuroscience in personal development," code: 040111.

Education through and for values (*axiological education*) is an indispensable process for shaping the human being; only through the assimilation of values do individuals become full human beings. This has been approached by numerous theorists of pedagogy and philosophy, both internationally and in the Romanian space. John Dewey, American philosopher, psychologist and pedagogue, is frequently mentioned for his vision of how education should be anchored in social and democratic values. In Dewey's view, values are not abstract or eternal concepts, established a priori, but are constructed and modified through experience and practice. He believes that education itself is a social process of character formation. And the school should not be just an institution for memorizing information, but a social laboratory, where values are learned through active participation. In the author's conception, education has value only if it helps the student to shape his character through continuous reflection on his own experiences (Dewey, 1971).

The Romanian researcher Constantin Cucoș, a landmark in Romanian pedagogy, analyzed the axiological dimension of education in the context of religious and aesthetic education, emphasizing the role of values in the formation of personality (Cucoș, 1995). The Pedagogue Sorin Cristea perceives the axiological function of education as a cultural one, which represents "the formation-development of the human personality through the spiritual values accumulated and socially validated, in time and space" (Cristea, 1998, p. 192). The author F.R. Mogonea highlights that one of the important functions of education is the selection and transmission of values from society to the individual (Mogonea, 2010, p. 49). Explaining the concept of value, the scholar V. Pâslaru argues that "value in itself does not exist; value is born from man's attitude (relating) to things inside-outside" (Pâslaru, 2006, p. 6). The author treats value as an indispensable part of the educated and emphasizes the idea that education is the positive change of the human being. In the view of the scholar V. Pâslaru, "education itself is a supreme human value, thanks to which man, through knowledge, orients himself and becomes a factor of change" (Pâslaru, 2003, p. 25). The author Nina Puțuntean (Puțuntean, 2018) approaches the issue of education through values from an axiological and intercultural perspective, focusing on the development of literary axiology, that is, on the way values are transmitted through the literary text.

The process of forming attitudes and values is not carried out by directly transmitting information and accumulating knowledge, but by offering models, through personal reflection and dialogue. In the educational context, the cultivation of values takes place through the involvement of students in interactive learning activities and experiences, in which they analyze moral situations, express their

opinions and argue their points of view, this process focusing on the formation of the students' character and behavior. Primary education is an essential stage in the process of forming the child's value identity, because it is during this period the foundations of his moral, affective and social development are laid.

Through its specificity, the school discipline Romanian Language and Literature offers multiple opportunities for the integration of value education, and the literary text asserts itself in this endeavor as a privileged and particularly valuable tool, capable of facilitating the internalization of values and the development of attitudes necessary for the harmonious integration of the student into society. In the current context, characterized by the relativization of moral and cultural landmarks, literature can contribute to the consolidation of fundamental general-human values and to the development of students' ability to make responsible choices. Literature puts students in contact with diverse human experiences, with behavioral models and life situations that stimulate reflection, develop empathy and favor the internalization of values. Through reading, analysis and interpretation, students are put in a position to reflect on human experiences, on the relationships between characters and on the moral meanings of the facts presented, learning to aspire to goodness, beauty and truth as eternal values, and manifest empathy, respect for diversity, critical spirit and aesthetic sensitivity.

The young school age is a sensitive period for the internalization of values, when students are receptive to models and examples. The educational interventions carried out at this stage have a significant impact on the development of the child's value identity. The formation of attitudes and values through literary texts in primary classes is an essential component of linguistic and literary-artistic education, contributing to the development of the student's personality and to shaping his moral and cultural profile. Within this process, values are fundamental landmarks that guide students' judgments, behaviors and social relationships, being expressed and manifested through attitudes gradually formed in relevant educational contexts.

It should be emphasized that the formation-development of values through literary texts is not reduced only to the actual reading, but is much more complex. In the process of interacting with the text, young readers apply their own life experiences and establish connections between an action in the text and an extratextual norm. In this way, the words, thoughts and actions of the characters acquire meaning, and the text becomes a carrier of values. In order to cultivate values and form lasting attitudes in primary school students, literary texts must be seen as "moral laboratories", from which the student not only reads/learns a story, but practices, through empathy, various ways of being, assimilating essential values and attitudes such as kindness, justice, sincerity, responsibility, courage, honesty, tolerance, empathy, respect, dignity, etc. national identity, love of country and nation. The stability of attitudes develops over time through the active participation of students and the integration of values into meaningful learning activities, manifesting at both affective and behavioral levels in how students act in real-life situations, in accordance with the cultivated values.

The formative valences of the literary text go beyond the aesthetic dimension of reading, contributing to the cultivation of fundamental values such as kindness, justice, sincerity, responsibility, respect and solidarity. By identifying with the characters, analyzing moral conflicts and interpreting the messages conveyed by literary works, students develop their ability to understand themselves and those around them, gradually building a system of value benchmarks necessary for harmonious integration into society.

To this end, for education through and for values, accessible literary texts with a clear message are recommended in primary classes, such as: *stories* with meaning about friendship, generosity, courage and responsibility, *restories based on the works of the classics* or contemporary works, adapted to the

age of the children, which transmit moral values such as kindness, courage, responsibility and respect, *fables* with simple and clear teachings to help children distinguish between good and evil; *short stories* with explicit morals, suitable for young school age; *texts adapted* from established works, such as *The Little Prince* (A. de Saint-Exupéry), *Oliver Twist* (Ch. Dickens), retold in an accessible language, which familiarizes children with great literature in an age-appropriate form; *modern stories* with current themes, such as: acceptance of diversity, protection of nature, empathy, which stimulate reflection and civic involvement of students; *Short poems*, with simple images and a pleasant rhythm, which convey values such as love and care for nature, respect for the family or solidarity.

Since the conference held its work during the *Eurovision Song Contest 2026*, and the representative of our country conquered the public both through the performance and the message of the song, awakening a sense of pride, we set out to approach the message of the song from the perspective of the values promoted. Even if one cannot speak of a literary value of the text in which rhythm is emphasized, and the lyrics are written in a hybrid, modern style, with intercultural influences, specific to contemporary pop-rap music, it conveys an accentuated message of pride of the nation and the country. The style of the text includes an amalgam of linguistic registers and cultural codes: words, expressions and phrases with symbolic value from Romanian alternate with expressions from Spanish, Italian, English and French (“te amo”, “mi casa es su casa”, “salute a tutti”, “asseyez-vous”), which suggests the idea of an open dialogue with other cultures of the world and emphasizes the feeling of belonging to the European family. Seen from the perspective of values, the text promotes:

- love for the nation and pride for the country: “E una, e nova, Republica Moldova = It’s one, it’s new, the Republic of Moldova.”
- openness to diversity, to freedom of mobility and the desire to integrate into the European community, suggested by the enumeration of diverse geographical spaces (“Soroca, Europa, Palma de Mallorca”).
- the aspiration of unification with the country, from which customs still separate us: “Patria-mamă, te amo, forever ne cheamă/ La lucru, la zeamă,/ noi trecem vamă = The motherland, I love you, forever calls us/ To work, to juice,/ we pass customs.”
- hospitality (“mi casa es su casa”, “Asseyez-vous la masă = Sit down at the table”).
- Receptivity, empathy and willingness to help: (“Moldova is on duty”) ERC.

Thus, through the text of his play “Viva, Moldova,” Satoshi promotes a set of values relevant to contemporary society, combining traditional elements with diverse cultural influences.

3. Conclusion

In the conditions of a crisis of values, which affects the postmodern society, the school is called to offer axiological landmarks that support the harmonious development of the child. The increase in the phenomena of intolerance, aggressiveness and individualism highlights the need to develop socio-emotional and moral skills from the first years of school. Therefore, the cultivation of critical thinking and value discernment becomes a necessity from the first years of schooling. To this end, the literature provides authentic contexts for understanding human relationships and practicing prosocial behaviors. Through literary texts, students can understand the importance of cooperation, respect for rules, social involvement and taking personal responsibility. Thus, the literary text constitutes a privileged

educational tool, since it facilitates the contact of students with diverse human experiences, stimulates moral reflection and allows the exploration of the consequences of different choices and behaviors.

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