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The teacher's authority in education

Introduction. The concept of authority

The considerations concerning the teacher undertaken in all currents of pedagogical research prove the great importance assigned to him/her in the process of upbringing and education. Scientific and technical progress has fundamentally influenced the position of the teacher and his/her authority in contemporary pedagogy. The concept of authority was and still is the subject of discourses in pedagogy, sociology, and psychology. The definitions determining authority are not closed, it is difficult to find the boundaries of designates in them, they are rather contextual, depending on the environment in which they are used. Authority is one of the foundations of social coexistence, it manifests itself naturally in childhood and school age, accompanying people in the process of self-education throughout their lives (Nita, 2008, p. 62).

In *The Pedagogical Encyclopedia*, authority is presented as "advice, will, importance, moral seriousness, importance" (Pomykało, 1996: 35). The dictionary of the contemporary Polish language refers to a person who inspires general trust, is an expert in some field or an oracle in moral matters, who enjoys respect and influences the behavior and thinking of other people (Dunaj, 1996: 32).

W. Okoń considers *authority* "the influence of a person or organization enjoying a general reputation on a specific sphere of social life" (Okoń, 1981: 27).

T. Gordon interprets authority in two ways:

- Knowledge, experience, competences (someone is an authority in their field, an authoritative specialist has been appointed, a statement based on the authority).
- Power, the right to control, indicate, punish the violation of the rules of conduct (Gordon, 1994: 176).

In sociological terms, authority is "the subject of authority needed by people to be able to follow an example from it, obtain advice or guidance from it, and receive decisions on the right conduct. An authority is a living model of competence in matters relevant to the efforts to establish oneself in the social environment or to maintain identity" (The Encyclopedia of Sociology, 1998: 48).

The psychological concept of authority refers to its definition as "social recognition and respect attributed to a person, social group, or institution. The source of authority may be skills and knowledge, personal characteristics, ways of acting, acting in accordance with generally respected values, as well as social position or position" (Szewczuk, 1998: 27).

Therefore, the authority is an essential part of the upbringing process, it is an ordering factor that signals that in the environment of every human being there are people whose knowledge, moral competences and life experience allow them to help in specific situations.

The essence of teacher authority

The authority of the teacher in contemporary pedagogy is most often interpreted as respect, trust and regard for the educator, who is considered a scientific expert, advisor, guide in difficulties and a source of pedagogical influence. The teacher is seen as a role model for students who are willing to identify with them. This relationship occurs thanks to the search for dialogue between the teacher and the student (Pilch, 2003: 254). The authority is determined by the teacher himself/herself, who competently gives directions acceptable to students with understanding and confidence, as well as students acting as co-responsible persons who admire the teacher and consider his/her behavior valuable and worth following. The interaction of the teacher and the student is based on positive feelings and reactions, i.e. mutual acceptance and the search for dialogue, while respecting the expectations and identity of each party (Szempruch, 2013: 120, 121). The specificity of the phenomenon of authority refers to the teacher who, by developing his emotional competences, becomes an authority for the student. The sources of his authority can be found in the sphere of intangible assets. It is based on pedagogical ideals, teaching effectiveness, personality, charisma, empathy, and openness to young people (Laska, 2007, pp. 233-234).

The authority refers to the classification of the criteria of formality and naturalness. The formal authority can be treated as a psychological basis that conditions the emergence and shaping of the informal authority, and it is obtained as a result of institutional and legal conditions. The natural authority, otherwise known as the true authority, is related to the individual qualities of an individual. He/She is highly valued due to belonging to an informal group and with the subjective requirements set for its members. Maintaining such authority is associated with compassion and meeting human needs (Marcińczyk, 1991: 89).

M. Łobocki distinguished between the liberating authority and the subjugating authority. The liberating authority refers to an inspiring and constructive educator who influences the pupils, motivates them to take independent actions and increases the sense of responsibility for their own development. The liberating authority, in turn, refers to motivating and mobilizing students and is of particular importance in working with them. The subjugating authority ruthlessly subordinates the pupils, applying force to them, issuing arbitrary prohibitions, there is no compromise in it.

This author also makes a different classification, defining the concept of authority as:

- Internal authority, which is the voluntary submission to a person out of admiration and appreciation for him/her.
- External authority resulting from the formal subordination of others due to the position in the hierarchy of power or function (Łobocki, 1994: 5-9).

The authority of a teacher is related to the conditions that constitute a structural whole that determines the quality and level of their work. Those are:

1. External conditions, independent directly from the teacher.
2. Internal determinants, dependent on the teacher, include behavior towards students and colleagues.
3. Factors partially dependent on the teacher, i.e. the rank of the school and the profession in the local community (Pilch, 2003: 261).

The teacher should remember that authority is not an inherent feature of his/her professional role. It should be positive and liberating in order to have a positive impact on the students.

Considerations on the pedagogical authority

The tendency to challenge oneself is one of the most important properties of human functioning. When we mean challenges in the teacher's work, we can relate them to working with students. The recognition of the teaching profession in terms of authority is a kind of structure relating to the personality and psychological predispositions of a teacher, not just qualifications.

The teacher's personality occupies an important place in pedeutology, and the search for the ideal educational personality has become an undoubted challenge in the changing educational reality. Personality interpreted as "the whole of permanent mental characteristics and internal mechanisms regulating human behavior" (Szymczak, 1978) emphasizes the value of educators who educate and educate the future generation to independence in a world of constant development demonstrating a large amount of knowledge, didactic and educational skills and a high level of morality and competence.

Therefore, pedagogical authority means the attributes and competences of the educator, which increase the possibility of influencing the pupils, thus facilitating the development of their knowledge, attitudes, values and skills (Szempruch, 2013: 120). Teachers belong to people who should have instructions in the field of knowledge and professional specialization (scientific authority) and observe the norms and rules of conduct towards the student (moral authority). Assuming that upbringing is a concept with a very broad meaning, and while upbringing we aim at creating and consolidating in the individual conditions allowing for action in accordance with social expectations (Gerstmann, 1982: 1982: 9), teachers should enjoy recognition among students - the authority that allows them to exercise positive influence on the subject of education.

Pedagogical literature points to the authority as a reflection of norms and values recognized by society. Upbringing understood as an influence of adults on the young generation also contains norms and values. Thus, it can be concluded that the authority and education are equivalent phenomena (Kron, 1996: 14). The authority is indispensable in the process of education, and being educated by authority makes the pupils look like the teachers who initiate this process.

The greatest role in education is played by a democratic authority based on understanding, kindness and subjectivity, although informal authority is also emphasized, in which the behavior of the teacher with students is important. They observe the educator's behavior and at the same time establish their own opinion

about him/her. Thanks to the authority, students submit to adults in a favorable manner, allowing them to protect against failure, which facilitates success.

A man has a natural need to follow others, so the effectiveness of upbringing should be based on referring to positive models. The authority is a factor that stimulates the subjectivity of an individual, and, together with the upbringing process, they constitute mutually balanced processes. The authority is unquestionably determined by the values and norms that the educator passes on to children and according to which he conducts the entire didactic and educational process. The relationship between the child and the teacher, based on proper communication, is one of the foundations of the authority building. The analysis of the interaction between the teacher and students shows that the following functions have the greatest impact on the formation of proper communication: motivational and inspirational, the aim of which is to create a proper atmosphere of commitment and community, and the informational and organizational function, based on transmitting messages from the teacher and the student (Sztejnberg, 2001: 94). The use of a specific set of communication features by teachers may contribute to greater involvement of students in working on themselves. Offering your attention, commitment, and the pupil's time allows for the development of positive contact and building authority among the students. Although the authority is not immediately inscribed in the teacher's work, it may result from identification with the profession, i.e. passion and calling. "Teaching is a profession driven by values, the essence of which is to make changes - it is primarily developing students and ultimately developing society as a whole" (Day, 2006: 37).

The teaching vocation to the profession has a significant impact on the quality of life and permanent changes in the behavior of students. Passion leads to positive and targeted action, it is associated with impartiality and understanding, and finally with authority. Therefore, an educator striving for authority should represent knowledge and moral seriousness, which combines the compliance of the determined truths and knowledge with the whole personal life, in which the essence of the role is played by a personality open to the future.

Authority in upbringing

The role and importance of authority in education has been variously assessed and interpreted. The pedagogical research undertaken with a naturalistic (Jan Jakub Rousseau, Elen Key, Aleksander S. Neill) and postmodern (Zbigniew Kwieciński, Lech Witkowski, Tomasz Szkudlarek, Zbyszko Melosik) orientations reduces its value and even negates it. The representatives of cultural pedagogy (Emile Durkheim, Georg Kerschensteiner, Sergiusz Hessen, Bogdan Nawroczyński, Bogdan Suchodolski, Max Weber, Robert Merton), personalistic pedagogy (Emanuel Moinier, Sergiusz Hessen), or Christian pedagogy (Stefan Kunowski, Franciszek Blachnicki, Luigi Giussani) treat authority as one of the most important and irreplaceable features of a good educator (Rynio, 2011, p. 29). E. Badura, having examined the authority of the teacher, showed that it results from the joint search and dialogue between the teacher and the student. She concluded that the higher the level of emotional balance in students' perception, the higher the teacher's authority (Badura, 1981, p. 69). On the basis of her research, Professor Maria Dudzikowa confirmed the view

of Ronald Meighan (1993) that there are many teachers who believe that students are not entitled and competent to issue judgments and opinions about the teacher and school. This weakens discipline and undermines the teacher's authority, hence "threatened authority complex" can be attributed to them and they are not likely to become a real authority (Dudzikowa, 1995, p. 7; 1996 b, p. 165; 2007 d, p. 172). In relations with such teachers, students begin to show regressive behaviors, which, as Marek Motyka and Krzysztof Mudyń (1984) write, lead to a sense of harm or violation of personal dignity. Regressive activity manifests itself in behavior that is seemingly irrational and more primitive than the experience, skills and abilities indicate (Dudzikowa, 1995, p. 7; 1996 a, pp. 35-36; 2007 d, p. 173). The research of Professor Maria Dudzikowa shows that apart from the complex of endangered authority, the phenomenon of abuse of authority can be distinguished. The author agrees with M. Bocheński (1993) that a person may extend authority to areas where he is not entitled to, and as a result of false manipulations may also become a false authority. It is difficult to assume that there are people who are authorities for everyone in all areas (Dudzikowa 2007, pp. 173-174).

The search for authority is a lifelong process. At its various stages, patterns are needed whose personality and attitude will shape the moral values of an individual. The child receives these types of patterns in the process of education. Therefore, authority in upbringing is a source of examples, attitudes "what the authority says is at least not indifferent to us, and even the most important until a certain period in life" (Bednarska, 2009: 59).

Authority in upbringing may also be limited. This is related to the teacher's inability to present a true image of himself/herself, which is often influenced by the size of the classes in which the teacher works. Assuming that building authority is a long-term process, it is important to ensure proper relations between educational entities and effective cooperation.

The ongoing process of building educational authority should be based on an educational bond and belonging. An important role here is the use of appropriate educational methods, the most popular of which is the modeling method. It is a representation-assimilation of the observed behavior. It is based on acquiring new behaviors or modifying those that were previously presented. Through observation, similarity occurs, which may be equated with imitating or using certain behaviors of the model. Behavioral effects may be similar to the behavior of the educator or "have only this feature in common with the behaviors represented by the model that they belong to the same broad class or a specific category of conduct" (Łobocki, 2003: 39). This method plays a significant role in the upbringing process, unconsciously influencing the copying of the behavior of children who copy positive models by imitating teachers.

- Authority in upbringing should be based on certain principles:
- Moderation in succumbing to other people's patterns of behavior - the position of an authority figure should not be the only decision made by the student. In order not to blur your own individuality, one should not over-identify with others. Excessive suggestibility can be an opportunity for manipulation by pseudo-authorities who make people dependent on their autocratic personality.
- Allowing authority to be used by interested persons - it is important to be convinced that the authority does not mind that we use its model when trying to multiply it.

- Maneuverability - an authority figure should also possess them.
- Getting to know people who we consider authorities to be good - distinguishing real authorities from false ones is possible thanks to the analysis of moral competences and qualifications of people who are an example for us (Żywczok, 2006: 38, 39).

In the case of educational work with students, authority becomes a condition of success.

The teacher, as an authority and role model for students, is able to exert a certain influence on students and expect socially desirable behaviors. Authority becomes the guarantor of respected values and accepted moral attitudes.

The tutoring teacher must be guided by the best interests of the child, support its development and creative activity, be aware of the psychophysical regularities at a given development stage of the child, adapt the requirements to the development possibilities and needs of children and adolescents, develop, stimulate the attention and curiosity of pupils, create the possibility of creative activities and participate in all these activities.

The analysis of the upbringing process in a modern school allows us to conclude that it is a process of high requirements and expected results. The teacher has to face challenges that often require a strong personality, comprehensive development and responsibility for the student. A teacher whose authority is based on educational leadership can do this. As J. Michalski emphasizes, "leaders should be guided by the needs of the group" (Michalski, 2020: 63). Upbringing authorities are also educational leaders reflecting values, norms, principles, morally directing towards objectivity and consistency in action.

Undoubtedly, the role of authority in the process of education is of fundamental importance. The upbringing process is inextricably linked with the influence of significant people on the behavior and attitudes of students. Thus, there is no education without authorities. They are, after all, the carriers of the appropriate values "(Kruk, 2005: 59). In a situation where the teacher is perceived as an authority, his/her personality traits, his/her attitude towards students, parents and himself/herself become more important. The values he/she represents and the attitudes that define him/her present an image of a pedagogue-educator-authority who, demanding a lot from himself/herself, may demand from others.

Summary

The current educational reality places demands on teachers of a high degree of complexity, and the teaching profession has become a profession with a high degree of social responsibility, in which the teacher-authority figure is the teacher involved in the work he or she does. Pedagogical authority is a kind of educational influence of a recognized person on other individuals. A real authority, as M. Dudzikowa writes, must impress with substantive knowledge, and at the same time be able to convey it in an interesting way, thus arousing students' commitment and increasing their motivation to learn. The teacher should find the value of each student by triggering constructive behavior and positive self-realization (Dudzikowa, 1995: 8). Being an authority is a challenge and at the same time a mission that should be met by teachers who care not only about their image, but most of all for the well-being of the child and the entire education.

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Abstract

The authority of the teacher is an important issue in contemporary pedeutology. It relates to the professionalism, vocation and personality of the educator. The relationship that teachers, considered to be an authority, will create with their students may affect not only the acquisition of knowledge, but most of all their perception of the surrounding reality. The article presents the key concepts of authority, its classification and criteria. The place of authority in education has been shown, paying attention to the process of its formation. Attention was paid to the democratic authority that allows for protection against failures, which facilitate the achievement of success for pupils. The principles on which the teacher's authority should be based were also shown.

Keywords: authority, education, teacher

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