EXPECTATIONS OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF POWER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS: FUTURE TEACHERS’ VISION

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Abstract

In the article the authors analyse future teachers’ professional visions, identifying what relationships with students in the educational process they expect to create. A clear personal vision is important at the beginning of every activity because it gives sense to the work and can become a powerful stimulus in the improvement of the current situation. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) believes that the teacher-student relationship is the core of the education process [5]. It has been noticed that the teacher-student relationship is one of the most problematic fields as far as the pedagogical activity and education-friendly environment are concerned.

The traditional concept of education justifies the hierarchical model of the teacher-student power relationship. In the modern educational process a democratic relationship becomes an aspiration. Its importance arises not only on ontological level but also on epistemological level. The democratic teacher-student relationship foresees their equal participation in cognitive processes, the aspiration to empower the experiences of the marginalized subjects in the construction of new knowledge based on epistemic diversity.

Quite often the previous learning process of future teachers has quite many elements of traditional education. It impacts the professional visions created by them. This impact in the research has a twofold manifestation. One of the variants to create the relationship with students is to maintain the model of traditional power relationships demonstrating one’s epistemic authority as a pedagogue, maintaining the control centred in the hands of the teacher. Another variant is to critically reflect on and evaluate the known models of power relationship in the educational process and foresee the opportunities of transformation responding to the newly constructed expectations of the new participants of the educational process. Future teachers in the creation of their professional vision have to reflect on contradictory experiences, therefore, the expectations of the teacher-student relationship substantiate the coexistence of different discourses. In order to reveal the tendencies of the change of power relationships in the educational process in the article the problem question is analysed – what expectations of the transformation of power relationships do future pedagogues reflect on in their professional visions?

The analysis of future teachers’ professional visions is performed by means of interpretative phenomenology when both the importance of the meanings constructed by future teachers and the researchers’ interpretations based on their experience and knowledge are emphasized [26]. The authors of the article justify the analysis of the research results with the perspective of critical theory. It not only indicates the importance of future teachers’ reflectivity analysing the models of the teacher-student relationship but also gives preconditions for the change in the social order, in this case, for the transformation of the educational process.

Keywords: Power relationship, future teachers, expectations of transformation, professional vision.

1 INTRODUCTION

The interrelations of the participants of the educational process is an important field, on which depend both the way the participants feel and the teaching and learning outcomes. Referring to the representative of critical theory, the philosopher M. Foucault [7], [9] to analyse the social activity and relationships of various subjects it is expedient to use the element of power. The identification of the expression of power permits to find a new perspective of analysis that usually more clearly reveals implicit things. In the educational practice power mechanisms function probably in one of the subtlest ways, therefore, they are recognized with difficulty. The theoreticians of education [28], [6] notice the need for bigger reflectivity identifying power relationships in the educational process and transforming them.
In the traditional educational process power relationship is characterized by the hierarchical distribution of roles among teachers and students. It is evident not only speaking about the situation of communication at school but also about cognitive processes. The hierarchical model of power relationship is supported by the existing conviction that truth is objective and the teacher, as the one who knows more, can transfer it to the ignorant student. Such a situation confronts both with the idea of the construction of social knowledge that is today more and more emphasized and with the democratic principles clearly declared in society. Thus, the necessity of the transformation of power relationship in the educational process is actualized. A new critically thinking generation of teachers can contribute to it to the greatest extent.

The importance of critical thinking and reflectivity in the process of teacher training is widely discussed [14]. To get the desired power relationship established in educational reality it is expedient to bravely transform the situation that is established but not responding to the challenges of time any more. It requires a far-sighted and broad vision. Scientific cognition of the teacher’s professional vision is emphasized by different scientists [20], [4], [25], [17], [22], etc. A professional vision is a way to create and later to develop the authentic practice of pedagogical activity [17]. T. Seidel, K. Sturmer [25] name the creation/possession of the teacher’s professional vision as the element of the structure of his/her competences that can be developed in the process of teacher training. The creation of the professional vision and reflecting on it become important to a future teacher himself/herself as the action that stimulates the understanding of the pedagogical activity [4]. It is important that future teachers create their professional vision already during their studies. Thus, they would have enough time to reflect on their vision well, they would have opportunities to discuss about it with theoreticians and practitioners of education and, in case of need, to correct it before starting their pedagogical activity. Creating a personal vision of their professional activity future teachers have a possibility to reflect on their aims, guided by which they construct their future independent pedagogical activity. The creation of the professional vision is an opportunity for future teachers to rethink the motives of their choice of the teacher’s profession.

A. Lefstein, J. Snell [20] point out that the teacher’s professional vision becomes contextualized because its content also depends on the political context, in which it is created. The aforementioned scientists emphasize that for the creation of the teacher’s professional vision the national policy of the country stimulating constant professional development and at the same time the transformation of social knowledge is especially important. It is evident that professional visions become the examples of the projected educational practice that reflect future teachers’ social skills, social sensitivity, attitudes, etc. N. Meschede, A. Fiebranz, K. Möller, M. Steffensky [22] relate the professional vision to the content of teachers’ pedagogical knowledge and their beliefs. It should be noted that the creation of the professional vision already in the process of getting ready to become a teacher is considered a possibility to know the relation between pedagogical professional knowledge, beliefs, and the construction of actual pedagogical practice.

The aim of the research is to reveal what expectations for the transformation of power relationships are expressed by future teachers while creating their professional visions.

2 TRANSFORMATION OF POWER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The phenomenon of power is multifaceted and not always easily identified. It is like this when the teacher-student power relationship is concerned as well. Power is not something that is given externally. It is being constructed as the relationship develops. According to M. Foucault [8], power only exists in action. Scientists emphasize different types of power and their expression in the educational context. They speak about coercive power, legitimate power, reward power, expert power, and referent power [27]. Certain types of power, e.g., coercive power, referent power in the traditional educational process manifest themselves especially evidently. The traditional teacher-student power relationship has an asymmetrical and hierarchical character. Such a relationship is reproduced from generation to generation. Mei-Yee Wong [21] analysing the insights of the scientists focusing on the ideological analysis of power relationships in education notices that schools can be defined “as a significant agent of cultural and economic reproduction, reproducing existing power relations and, in turn, causing inequity” (pp. 249).

In the educational process power relationships especially depend on the supported epistemology – cognitive theory. The attitude towards the nature of knowledge determines power distribution as well. The relations between knowledge and power was emphasized both by M. Foucault and the authors
who refer to his philosophy [2]. Understanding the importance of knowledge in the plane of the teacher-student relationship the importance of expert power manifests itself. In epistemology as in cognitive theory there is a lot of room for the problems of truth. According to M. Foucault [9], truth is not free in its nature because its production is transfused by power relationships. Traditionally education is understood as a process of the transfer/takeover of objective knowledge and truth, where the teacher gains the position of the only epistemic authority who, consequently, has power at his/her disposition.

Today the theoreticians and practitioners of education increasingly doubt the possibility and importance of the transfer/takeover of knowledge. It is noticed how difficult it is to find the only authoritative source of knowledge. It is not possible to transfer knowledge directly, it is achieved by constructing [19]. Understanding power relationship as a social construct and employing critical thinking the reality of education becomes an environment for the transformation of the teacher-student relationship. The insight by M. Foucault that „there are no relations of power without resistances” [8] (pp. 142) does not lose its relevance.

The aspiration of the school of today is the democratic relationship. The relations between democracy and education were already analysed by the philosopher J. Dewey [3]. He considered democracy not only as the form of state governance but also as the form of social life in general. According to the philosopher, the teacher-student relationship is rather formalized and limited, because it does not manifest itself in pure form in other environments. It is difficult to admit that the teacher only teaches and the student only learns. The modern pedagogy emphasizes the teacher-student interaction and the opportunities to collaborate equally in the cognitive process. The teacher establishes favourable conditions of the educational process and provides support that permits students to develop their abilities. In the social construction of knowledge even non-traditional agents can become a source of cognition and they can get involved in the educational process. To describe the contemporary teacher’s role the term “facilitator” is suitable, which means that the teacher renounces his/her position of epistemic authority.

In the educational process the transformation of hierarchical relationships is also often interfered by the assessment system based on tests and knowledge examination when the teacher’s subjectivity is inevitable. Examination in order to ensure control should be eliminated encouraging democratic relationships. Standards, tests, and accountability are not supported by these teachers who give priority to the constructivist and pragmatic model of learning [12], and democratic relationship. According to J. Dewey, knowledge is not understood as a result of a precise reflection of the world but as a method of experimental research, using which people analyse the problems they face. Therefore, all the participants of education equally participate not only constructing knowledge but also assessing this process and its outcomes.

Actualizing democratic relationships particular attention is paid to communication and collaboration, and social consensus. Already J. Dewey [3] noticed that communication had an important educational meaning, helped students acquire more experience and more different experience, got learning closer to social reality. Collaboration is not possible supporting hierarchical relationships. The representative of critical theory [7], [9], [10], [11] emphasize the importance of the transformation of power relationships, recognition and elimination of the situations of marginalization, necessity of the development of critical thinking in the participants of the educational process.

3 METHODOLOGY

To obtain the data of the empirical research a written survey was conducted. 23 students of one of the universities of Lithuania who are preparing to become teachers and who voluntarily agreed to participate in the survey, participated in it and presented their professional visions. The research took place in March-April, 2019. During the survey the students were asked to freely describe how they imagine their future pedagogical activity, relationship with learners, to justify on what the projects of their future activity are based.

Following the ethics of research the confidentiality of the research participants was assured. Presenting their professional visions they were not asked to indicate their name or surname or other personal data. The professional vision of every participant was encoded and only its number was presented in the data of the article (e.g., PV (pedagogical vision) 5).

The empirical research is based on the paradigm of critical theory which foresees that in the research it is attempted not only to reveal reality as a construct of social agents but also to establish
preconditions for the change of social order [13]. The understanding that the social world is being constructed already presupposes the possibility of its change that is the best expressed by the ideas of the critical paradigm.

The interpretative phenomenological analysis applied to analyse the texts of the professional visions of future teachers emphasizes not only the importance of the meanings constructed by the research participants but also the researchers’ interpretations based on their experience and possessed knowledge [26]. For the interpretation of the research data the ideas of various authors justifying the theory of power relationship were used. Such an analysis is based on the conviction of A. Y. Jackson and L. A. Mazzei [16] that while interpreting the research results it is worth using already named philosophical concepts and thus letting the theories “act”, “employing” them.

The results of the empirical research are structured distinguishing the topics expressing different power relationships predominant in the professional visions. The excerpts of the texts of the research participants authentically illustrating the professional expectations of future teachers have also been presented. Analysing the research data the authors identified the meanings of the transformation of the teacher-student relationship that are related to the development of democratic relationship. The process of the transformation of meanings is based on reflecting on the school experience in the context of the teacher-student relationship. Future teachers reflecting on the experience of their learning at school and the teacher-student relationship that was predominant there identify twofold meanings of power relationship. Some of them reflect small transformations and are more related to taking over the experience, the others express the expectations for a strong change in the teacher-student relationship.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Asymmetrical teacher-student power relationship

Projecting the visions of their professional activity, future teachers present the models of their relationship with students they expect to construct in the educational process. In the present subchapter of the article that presents the results of the research the researchers focus on the asymmetrical teacher-student power relationship distinguished by future teachers. It is not abundantly identified in the professional visions, nevertheless, analysing the results of the research, it is possible to distinguish three main topics reflecting asymmetrical power relationship:

- ensuring control applying coercive power;
- knowledge transfer as the expression of expert power;
- coexistence of different discourses projecting power relationship.

It should be noticed that in the first two topics the teacher’s role and his/her exceptional power he/she refers to when constructing the relationship with students are especially emphasized. The third topic distinguished in the professional visions reflects the confusion of power relationships, when alongside with the predominant hierarchical model of relationships the democratic manifestations occur as well.

One of the most evident ways to consolidate the asymmetrical power relationship emphasizing the supremacy of the teacher in the field of education is ensuring control. Analysing the professional visions of future teachers it is possible to encounter the manifestations of coercive power. Such power relationship is clearly illustrated by the excerpt of the professional vision of a future sports teacher:

*I assign physical punishments to disobedient children. We do push-ups, squats. It is not bad, they get physically stronger at the same time and start to understand that if you do not obey you will have to do an extra workout, although you are already exhausted* (PV 18).

It has been noticed that the future teacher positively evaluates children’s punishment in order to make them obey. Moreover, the teacher presents arguments and legitimizes power justifying that in such a way children get stronger. The future teacher ensures that it is not bad avoiding the alternative view on the situation. To the power relationship that is not critically reflected on it is characteristic that certain repressive measures (including punishments) are justified as unquestionable and necessary [7].

In future teachers’ visions knowledge transfer becomes the aspect that is frequent and reflecting the essence of education and relationship with students. Such an attitude reflects the expression of expert power. A traditionally understood process of knowledge transfer/takeover in the context of education
expresses the hierarchical model of power relationship where the teacher acts as epistemic authority [28], meanwhile the student acts as a subject lacking knowledge (and power as well).

The results of the research abundantly illustrate the exceptional attention of future teachers to knowledge accumulation and its transfer to students:

*The meaning of my pedagogical activity is to give children as much of my accumulated knowledge as I can. I hope and I will try to achieve that the children of the class I educate go the right way (PV 5).*

<...> to gain a bigger amount of knowledge and suitably transfer it to children (PV 3).

*Only when learners are listening to you attentively, they can learn something (PV 9).*

Moreover, in the students’ visions the “banking” attitude towards knowledge manifests itself (*as much of my accumulated knowledge as I can*), the invitation to change which was already made by the representative of critical theory P. Freire. In the author’s opinion, the traditional – “banking” – education usually makes people even more passive adapting them to the world, which they receive as already existing [10].

In the presented excerpts of professional visions the monopoly of objective truth (*the right way*) that belongs to epistemic authority is distinguished. The majority of the representatives of the philosophy of pragmatism [3], [24] had doubts about the meaning and profit of objective truth. The educational process, where truth is understood as an objective phenomenon but not as a socially constructed one, serves the continuity of the asymmetrical power relationship. It also indicates the respective forms of learning, where an active role is attributed to the teacher, meanwhile students are only passive listeners.

It is noticed that projecting their relationship with learners future teachers quite often permit the coexistence of different discourses reflecting the variety of power relationships. On the one hand, epistemic authority and traditional knowledge transfer from the teacher who knows a lot to the learner who does not is emphasized. However, in the same visions the ideas emphasizing democratic relationship and learners’ activeness are expressed.

*The meaning of my pedagogical activity is to give children as much of my accumulated knowledge as I can. <...> I would like children to learn freely and creatively (PV 5).*

The presented excerpt of the professional vision of a future teacher reflects a certain confusion existing in the educational reality of today. Here there is the intertwining of the concept of asymmetrical power relationship taken from the previous learning experience and the expectation formed by a new learning paradigm that the educational process must change, that teachers and students are equal partners of this process. It presupposes the opportunity for a more radical transformation of traditional power relationship, which will be more widely discussed in the following subchapters of the article presenting the results of the research.

### 4.2 The transformation of power relationships in the educational process

The results of the research confirm the thesis by M. Foucault [7] that there are “no relations of power without resistances” (pp. 142). Future teachers projecting their relationship with students quite often employ their previous negative experience of the educational process. They express the expectations that they would like to avoid a similar teacher-student relationship in their pedagogical activity. The researchers have identified three predominant topics in future teachers’ pedagogical visions expressing the expectations of the transformation of power relationship:

- elimination of relationship based on fear;
- transformation of reward power in the assessment process;
- involvement of non-traditional participants in the educational process.

Future teachers acquire quite a strong stimulus for the transformation of the teacher-student relationship when reflecting on their learning experience that was causing negative emotions:

*In the fifth form I had negative experience. The teacher of the Lithuanian language communicated with everyone with a raised voice, and if you did not understand the subject, she would get very angry and write bad marks and reprimand notes. There was a time when I felt so insecure during her classes that I was afraid of them and tried to avoid them. <...> I understand how important it is to create a physically and emotionally safe environment (PV 8).*
I would not like to take over the experience of such teachers, during whose classes learners were afraid to say a word, and when they gave a wrong answer to the question, they were humiliated and felt inferior (PV 21).

The student's previous learning experience illustrates a typical model of the demonstration of hierarchical power relationship. The teacher's raised voice and expressed anger show her supremacy against the learners not paying attention to the way they feel. Concerning such a relationship, J. Dewey [3] stated that "individuals quite often use others <...>, disregarding other people's feelings or moral attitudes, without asking for their consent and thinking only about the final result" (pp. 7). If such a relationship occurs, e.g., between a student and a teacher, they cannot be called a social group even if they act together.

The situation when one is afraid to say a word can be understood as the marginalization of certain subjects taking away the right for an authentic voice from them. The representatives of critical pedagogy notice that teachers play an important role empowering students' voice or eliminating such power [23]. The results of the research show the reflectivity of future teachers and their expectations to change the relationship based on negative emotions and the experiences of students' marginalization.

The results of the research also reveal how assessment becomes a sanctioning measure permitting the teacher to express his/her anger. The representatives of critical theory quite often point out that traditional learning often turns assessment into the process that is destructive, causing fear to students, manipulative, controlling, and sanctioning [7], [6]. The traditional assessment system looks for students' mistakes that are understood as a non-compliance to the truth presented by epistemic authority rather than stimulates the learning progress.

Noticing the problems of the teacher-student power relationship related to assessment future teachers emphasize a necessary change in this field:

I would try to change the “traditions” of assessment, to create the conditions for learners to improve, to correct themselves. To involve more different forms of assessment dismissing constant testing, I would also like to change the situation when only the teacher assesses the student. I would try to make the student to assess himself/herself more often, to assess peers (PV 6).

In the presented excerpt of the pedagogical vision the empowering character of assessment is revealed. In the process of such assessment the teacher-student relationship is transformed. The teacher turns from a punisher into a learning facilitator. New power relationship is also based on the expectation that the teacher will share reward power with other participants of the educational process (the student himself/herself, his/her classmates).

The involvement of various subjects in solving a certain issue is an excellent opportunity to transform the relationship of authoritarian power, not giving it to one person. Such an aspiration is highlighted by future teachers not only speaking about assessment but also about the educational process as a whole:

The problem faced is solved not only by the teacher alone but together with all the participants of education. Students’ parents, community members, social partners should be involved in the teaching/learning process as often as possible striving for collaboration, improvement of learners' knowledge and abilities, development of attitudes (PV 6).

The obtained results highlighted the expectation of the research participants to change the concept of the teacher as the only epistemic authority and hierarchical relationship related to it. Non-traditional participants actively involving in the educational process enrich it with their authentic experiences. Thus, truth gains the character of a social consensus widely discussed by the representatives of the theory of pragmatism supporting democratic relationships in the practice of education [3].

### 4.3 Democratic teacher-student relationship

The creation of democratic relationships in education can be projected striving for the expression of social freedom and social order in society as a respective result of the implementation of democracy. Democratic relationship in education comprises the dimension of the development of habits to care for others, creates personal features, the way of teaching/learning.

The research participants reflecting on the experience of their learning at school through the prism of the teacher-student relationship partially critically evaluate insufficient freedom of the teacher-student
relationship. However, the informants complement the aforementioned insufficiency of freedom of relationships with positive meanings of their school experience, which comprise the communicative and activity aspects and the aspect of the sense of community. Communicative and activity aspects reveal that at school future teachers observed and participated in democratic relationships, to which the expression of the teacher-student relationship that depends on the situation is characteristic.

The consideration of democratic relationships in future teachers’ professional visions reveals the expectations for the transformation of the teacher-student relationship. M. Alshurman [1] analysing the problems of democratic education in the context of school management emphasizes that the development of democratic culture in the educational institution must have the features of equality, participation, freedom to make decisions, practice of making compromises, tolerance for cultural and thinking differences, free atmosphere. The content analysis of future teachers’ professional visions has revealed the following most significant topics of the teacher-student relationship in educational processes:

- teacher-student collaboration – equal partnership;
- teacher-student communication – freedom of speech and respect;
- establishing conditions for the student’s activity – freedom of choice and creative freedom;
- teacher’s role in the relationship with the student – stimulation of the motivation for learning.

Future teachers in the topic “teacher-student collaboration” express the strongest expectation for equal partnership of the teacher and the student acting together in the educational processes. Such a result of the empirical study is understood as the expression of the construction of future teachers’ social knowledge related to their future pedagogical activity. Analysing from the perspective of power relationship, its content is twofold. On the one hand, future teachers understand that the teacher-student collaboration culture is created through negotiating, together solving problems and making certain decisions. This aspect of a collaboration culture is emphasized more strongly. However, in the professional visions there is another result, although its expression is significantly weaker, – future teachers construct social knowledge that creating the teacher-student collaboration culture in certain cases power is on the teacher’s side. Such domination of the teacher’s power relationship in future teachers’ pedagogical visions is more relatable to “create favourable conditions” to participate in the (self-)assessment process of educational outcomes.

Summing up, it is possible to state that in their professional visions future teachers express the expectations that in the educational processes the culture of balance/distributed power should be characteristic to the teacher-student relationship. Such equal partnership in future teachers’ professional visions projecting the teacher-student collaboration is characterized by such indicators as teacher-student collaboration based on agreements, creation of a harmonious and united team, teamwork.

There should be mutual respect, so I “fall” on the ground together with children, and we do various exercises together as a team (PV-18). The first days at school are very important because it is the agreements made with the help from children that will be followed (PV-11).

Particular attention in future teachers’ professional visions is paid to the topic of the teacher-student communication. The teacher-student relationship is democratic when both participants of the educational process face difficulties that are meaningful for them [18]. Democratic relationship can increase the freedom to choose, strengthen the learner’s individuality, broaden the field of interests. Referring to the material collected during the empirical study, it is getting clear that the teacher-student communication, i.e., the democratic perspective of communication in future teachers’ professional visions is constructed rather from the position of the student’s power. Analysing the material of the study the identified perspective of the teacher-student communication is defined with the following indicators: understanding, freedom of speech, sincerity, freedom, “warm”, “kind”, and inoffensive communication, adequate tone of voice to the situation and empathy, mutual respect.

The content of the topic of the teacher-student communication and the indicators that describe it reflects to the greatest extent the future teachers’ expectations for the development of the teacher-student relationship projecting their independent pedagogical activity. In the informants’ statements the intention to create the culture of communication with students is recorded, when, nevertheless, the main instruments (power) of the creation of such a culture is on the student’s side. The requirements for the teacher’s profession and pedagogical activity engages the teacher to meet the student’s demands, and at the same time, the requirements for the teacher-student communication. Future
teachers’ professional visions reveal the tendency to create conditions for the expression of the student’s power, when the teacher strives to ensure freedom of speech and choice for the student, to be understanding with regard to the student, to ensure the positive communicative background.

The child’s freedom to choose what is relevant to him/her (PV-2). I think when teaching children it is especially important not to overwhelm them, but, on the contrary, to let them suggest ideas themselves and let them tell how they imagine one or another activity thus getting new ideas (PV-4).

It is evident that future teachers in the topic “teacher-student communication” eliminated the principle of equal partnership. For example, to agree that positive communication is not only the teacher’s prerogative, such communication is created taking mutual responsibilities and implementing common agreements.

The establishment of the conditions for the student’s activity is based on such meanings as student’s free choices and taking responsibility for them, the possibility to act creatively. Future teachers in their visions of professional activity point out that freedom of choice and creative freedom are two important axes of the teacher’s activity establishing suitable conditions for the student’s activity. However, the research informants identify the function of the construction of the aforementioned conditions with the teacher’s role, i.e., they project the conditions for the student’s activity in educational institutions rather from the perspective of the teacher’s power.

To establish creative educational environments, because an attractive and acceptable activity and environment, in my opinion, motivates to act and learn the most (PV-6). Another thing that forms the vision would be not a person but the kindergarten where I work itself because in this kindergarten the child is free to choose (PV-4).

Future teachers presenting the visions of their professional activity paid particular attention to the construction of the teacher’s role. The main indicators that, according to the research informants, would characterize them as independently acting teachers are: respect for and confidence in the teacher, teacher-facilitator (helper, counsellor), teacher as a “guarantor” of the motivation for learning. In future teachers’ professional visions the importance/power of the teacher’s role to motivate students to learn is the most strongly emphasized. The informants point out that it is especially important that in their future independent pedagogical activity they would take the essential responsibility for the teacher-student relationship based on the stimulation of students’ motivation for learning.

I think, how to behave with children, to recognize their learning type, how to approach them and how to behave with them to make them motivated and willing to learn (PV-19). To give motivation to the other (PV-17).

5 CONCLUSIONS

- Relationship that is based on power in the educational process is hardly recognizable. Constant reflection on the educational practice becomes an important approach for the recognition of such relationship. The reflection on the learning experience they had becomes important for future teachers not only transforming the educational experience itself but also the power relationship that is in it. It can be done by the teacher who is critically thinking and ready to apply the social construction of knowledge based on democratic principles. One of the instruments to analyse how future teachers perceive the importance of the change of power relationship and what expectations they have for this transformation is the visions of their professional activity created by them.

- The research has revealed that future teachers projecting their relationship with students especially emphasize the function of knowledge transfer that is related to expert power. In some professional visions the expectations to ensure control in the process of education applying coercive power are also revealed. The coexistence of different discourses projecting power relationship is also noticed. It reflects a certain confusion when future teachers express their expectations to create relationship with students based on both democratic and authoritarian principles. The support for asymmetrical power relationships expressed when the teacher uses coercion, emphasizes his/her epistemic authority and the monopoly of truth is a serious signal for teacher training institutions. Such expectations of future teachers show the lack of the reflection on the pedagogical practice, critical evaluation of the situation and can become a favourable precondition for the continuity of the asymmetrical power relationship.
Nevertheless, in professional visions the expectations for the transformation of the asymmetrical power relationship is predominant. They are mostly related to the elimination of the relationship based on fear, the change of the assessment process, and the involvement of more different (non-traditional) participants in the educational process. In the context of the future teachers’ reflection on their school experience it is becoming clear that a typical model of hierarchical power relationship firstly comprises a negative teacher-student communicative contact, when the teacher evidently demonstrates anger or dissatisfaction. Future teachers criticize it the most and expect to change it. Trying to dismiss traditional assessment as a sanctioning measure future teachers identify themselves with the role of a facilitator. It means that in the educational process they try to become not the ones who suppress students but the ones who empower them to act. The expectations to involve various participants in the educational process show that future teachers do not tend to attribute the role of the omniscient epistemic authority but prefer to focus on the construction of democratic relationship developing knowledge.

Future teachers relate the democratic teacher-student relationship to such essential principles of the modelling of educational practice as equal partnership based on freedom of speech and choice, mutual respect and creative freedom. The stimulation of the student’s motivation for learning becomes an especially important feature of the teacher’s role. The research has revealed that future teachers in the educational process mostly expect to create and maintain the teacher-student partnership-like relationship when not only the teacher has power at his/her disposition. The expectations for educational activity reveal that developing the teacher-student relationship future teachers tend to look for community when solving particular problems. Community is possible when respective agreements are made together and the communicative background is marked with communication that is free, inoffensive, and based on empathy and mutual respect.

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