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## PARAMETERS OF EDUCATIONAL DIALOGUE BASED ON THE SOCRATIC DIALECTIC

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The purpose of this study is extracting the dialogue parameters. Dialogue is considered as an important and affective method of teaching at education. The aim here is to work out the parameters of an effective dialogue from an instructional perspective. The resource which was drawn upon is Socratic dialogues in Plato's writings.

Socrates, Greek philosopher, is the inventor of the dialogue method. The Socratic dialogue is a student-centered approach that challenges learners to develop their critical thinking skills and engage in analytic discussion. The Socratic Method can be used at any grade level and with all subject areas, and lessons can be adapted to fit a changing society.

In this paper Socratic dialogues are analyzed in depth to establish some dialogical parameters. For this purpose, first we choose the Educational dialogue between Socrates and various individuals, educational dialogues are defined as those dialogues which have taken place between or among non-equal actors who can be considered as educator and educate, then analyzed the content of these dialogues, considering actions and words of educator (Socrates) to reach the parameters for dialogue.

The findings are parameters as below: primary preparation (include Initial subject analysis, considering audience need, Creating Motivation, Creating intimacy), questioning (include Exploratory Questioning, Destructive Questioning), Maintaining freedom in the dialogue, Creating uncertainty.

*Ключевые слова:* dialogue, parameter, Plato, Socratic dialectic.

### Introduction

One of the distinctive features of human with other creatures can be considered as the speech and dialogue ability, as in the definition for human, it is said that man is a rational animal. Man is nothing but is the ability to communicate and the flow in which he communicates with others, and when he can open up the gate of every word and thought for himself, enter into conversation, dialogue and then choose the choice, the horizon of thought and wisdom will grow and develop inside him. Human communicates with other people and expresses his modern thoughts and feelings to others by this means. It is based on this fact that the dialogue plays an essential role in education since education requires communication and impact between educator and educate.

Philosophers and scholars have been thinking about this method and its importance and effect on the thought formation since about 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Socrates, Greek philosopher, is the inventor of the dialogue method [1]. In fact, the most prominent feature of Socratic philosophy is this way of dialogue that named dialectic method [2]. Plato, the most prominent disciple of Socrates, also believed

that the fact of things cannot be achieved as a ready thing, but it is provided as a result of thinking and talking and as the result of dialogue and criticism, mind moves gradually towards obtaining truth.

Previous educational research discovered that a method of self-exploration learning was more effective than directly giving a student the solution [3]. Socratic dialogue has the same function as mentioned above, because it can help students understand their limitations, impel them to learn, and encourage them to actively criticize their own understanding [4].

However, in the current educational system using dialogue method in education has been largely neglected. On one hand, the use of teacher-centered methods including lectures etc. on the other hand, the attention is more focused on new and special methods, while given that the use of dialogue method does not need much equipment and facilities and can be utilized in various times and places, it can be highly efficient. Thus it is necessary to amplify this method in the education system from the research point of view. This paper intends to present the dialogue parameters based on the Socratic dialectic.

### Socrates and voice of Plato

Referring to Socrates has its problems. Socrates is an almost mythical figure, illusive and hard to catch, even though many attempts have been made. We know him from some contemporary sources, such as Plato, Xenophon, Aristophanes, and Aristotle, all of whom give different testimonies. Socrates himself left no written record of his philosophic or pedagogic ideas; we know these mainly from Plato's dialogues [5].

Socrates made a great impression on Plato. Soon after Socrates' death, Plato probably started to write down Socratic dialogues. He continued to use Socrates as a main character in his writings for years to come. This causes one of the major problems in trying to pinpoint Socrates' ideas: deciding what are Socrates' own ideas and when the figure of Socrates is used by Plato to articulate Plato's own ideas. But some scholars like Monika Ringborg (2001) see no distinction between the voice of Socrates and that of Plato.

It's give a somewhat contradictory picture, open for differing interpretations. Since the early nineteenth century, two major tendencies in interpreting Plato have surfaced. A Unitarian view going back to Schleiermacher, assumes that the various dialogues are composed from a single point of view, and that the differences between the earlier and later texts are explained on either literary or pedagogical grounds. A Developmental view, on the other hand, going back to Karl Friedrich Herman, assumes that Plato changed his philosophy over time.

However this kind of issues does not play a significant role in our research. Because we're just trying to explore Plato's treatises in which Socrates is quoted and thereby to achieve a dialogue parameters. So we do not pay attention to it and in this paper have considered the dialogical idea of Socrates and Plato, nearly the same.

#### The place of dialogue in Socrates' point of view

Dialogue is a conversation between two or more persons; dialogue means that two or a few individuals, exchanging and debating about ideas and specifically means exchanging and debating to reach consensus or mutual understanding [6]. So the dialogue is against monologue.

Monologue means the solely long talking by individual and specifically exclusive talking or being theologian in a negotiation [7]. The history of dialogue refers to the time when human learned talking, but talking is difference from dialogue. Linguists and scholars have enumerated various functions for language. Each types of speech or rhetoric

that man has learned brings about a new role and function for him: transferring ideas, expressing complex emotional and mental needs, social interaction etc. and as mentioned one of the most famous historical dialogues is Socratic dialogues with various individuals.

The Socratic Method or "maieutiké tēchne" as it is called in Greek, means the midwifery. Socrates claimed that just like his mother he was practicing midwifery. Only his mother helped pregnant women deliver babies, whereas he helped his followers deliver knowledge. He did so mostly by questioning: first driving his collocutors into self-contradiction (elenchus) and thus freeing them of their false preconceptions and then helping them deliver the true knowledge. Socrates believed that through the process of dialogue the concepts of both parties in the dialogue could be clarified and this would allow the discussion to become clear and distinct [9].

The dialogue, as Socrates points in a part of his defense speech in court, is the product of human attention to this point that he do not know. Then this knowledge, the knowledge to ignorance, becomes a stimulus so that the person in talking with others promotes his knowledge on one hand and on the other hand helps others so that he possibly turns his compound ignorance to simple ignorance and then takes steps towards expanding his knowledge. Socrates has such an approach in his dialogues.

The most important aspects of the Socratic Method took from Plato is questioning from a not-knowing point of view and teaching how to think for oneself.

What Plato states on the importance of dialogue method is based on his theory of ideas. According to this theory, he basically believes that our world is a mirror of true and real world named world of forms or ideas that is impossible to access except by a perfect man and through intuition. He considers the duty of education as referring the learners' minds from the world of feeling and guess to the truth of ideas [10]. Such an outcome is possible only by unparalleled dialogue between the educator and learner. This method which allows the educator help and guide the learner and force him to think and, if necessary, to discipline, expresses the essence of Socrates' midwifery method [11]. On the other hand, Plato believes in the theory of warrant in education. In fact, in Socrates' and Plato's points of view dialogue with the nature of recognition has an unbroken link. We know that for Plato learning is remembering. Soul has viewed the truths before entering into the body. Then the human soul itself is the carrier of truth but has forgotten it, therefore, the truth cannot be taught but remembered. In this theory he says what should be known has been

present on the mind previously. The challenge of education also includes bringing this knowledge to the aware conscience and it is based on this theory that he uses the dialectical method. Besides, in the dialectic method the adult person meaning the teacher tries to stimulate student awareness towards his thoughts [12]. and during these dialogues between the educator and learner, the person moves towards the world of ideas. He believes that if the dialogue is in accordance with the dialectic principles and facts, it can raise the man to the prosperity meaning knowledge and ultimately accompanying with the gods [13].

Generally in the dialogues, Socrates first asks his interlocutor to explain what is meant by a certain concept (like piety, righteousness, or knowledge). This is often done by the interlocutor exemplifying its use [14]. Socrates then asks him to explain what the examples have in common, encouraging the interlocutor to present a general definition of the concept. Socrates now starts the inquiry, or *elenchus*. At this point, Socrates is doing most of the talking: questioning, analyzing, and presenting analogies. It is not just contradicting the propositions made by the interlocutor; *elenchus* is a search. The interlocutor's answers are short, often reduced to «yes» or «no». Suddenly, it is obvious that the interlocutor has contradicted himself on some vital point. The dialogue ends without result, collapses without any answer or any agreement. Both Socrates and the interlocutor are perplexed.

Although Socrates said «I know that I know nothing» and maybe he believed this, but in general Socrates applying his method to make a dialogue with audience so that help him learn.

### Former research on Socratic dialogue

Among scholars of education, some have researched about the Socratic Method and also have been results. Below are some of the most important points.

Based on Stevens and Collins [15], observing the dialogues between the teacher and the student and by careful analysis of the teaching techniques, one can summarize the following five principles for applying the Socratic dialogue:

1. Presenting different cases to the student: present different questions which reveal a certain special principle (reveal and exaggerate questions).

2. Presenting counterexamples: when the students form incorrect or incomplete principles, presenting counterexamples forces them to pay attention to their own contradictions.

3. Entrapping the student when he/she has not identified all necessary factors: leading students to

make incorrect calculations so that their incorrect concepts are more unequivocal.

4. Asking for predictions: encourage students to make predictions and produce principles or produce principles with the teacher's help.

5. Probing for relevant factors: encourage students to evaluate their own predictions or to evaluate whether the principle is consistent with existing facts. If the students use different concepts to evaluate, their thinking can be more complete and it creates a systematic understanding of the students' level.

Overholser [16] also explained the three main stages of Socratic dialogue as (1) systematic questioning; (2) inductive reasoning; and (3) universal definitions. The three stages comply with three patterns. Socratic dialogue depends on the above three stages to make students continuously reveal, check, and modify their mental models in order to change their poor cognition and establish beneficial mental models.

Another scholar Seeskin [17] defines three rules for participants in Socratic dialogue:

1. The respondent cannot hide behind hypothetical's,

2. The questioner cannot force the respondent to accept something he does not believe. He cannot dogmatize, judge, or ask the respondent to take something on belief, or decide on what is self-evident.

3. The respondent has the freedom to make whatever modifications he wishes provided that he remains consistent with himself.

But none of the studies specifically discuss the parameters that must be respected in practice and so we dedicate this paper to parameters that must be observed in the dialogue process.

### Dialogue parameters in the Socrates's point of view

Among the remaining sources of Plato contents that clearly spoke about dialogue parameters were not found. So the only way that would lead us to the Socrates's approach about the dialogue parameters was studying Plato's writing which portrays actually the quotations of the dialogue between Socrates and others.

Our method to extract parameters is exploratory- analytical method. For this purpose, we chose Socrates Educational dialogues (like Meno, Laches, Phaedrus, Theaetetus etc) and carefully examined educator's actions and words. What you see bellow is the result of studying these dialogues and extracting principles that we have presented as the dialogue parameters from the Socrates's point of view.

#### 1. Initial preparation

Socrates principally does a kind of preparation to enter into discussion which has various aspects. He takes advantage from this preparation to open up the dialogue so that he companies the audience with himself and increases his speech influence on the audience idea.

Among the preparations that he uses in his dialogues include:

#### **A) Creating intimacy:**

Dialogue is one type of interpersonal communications and influencing the interpersonal communications requires an introduction which intimacy is one of them. By creating intimacy Socrates tried to initiate the dialogue pleasant for the audience so that he can finally have more influence on the audience ideas. As an example in the Theaetetus we see these sentences that create intimacy and camaraderie at the beginning of speech:

«- Theodorus: Theaetetus, come here and sit down next to the Socrates.

-Socrates: Yes, come here so that I can see my own image in your face since Theodorus says that you and I look like each other...»[18].

#### **B) Creating Motivation:**

In his speech, Socrates created sufficient motivation in young people with facetiae so that he could reach his goals and enter them into discussion with himself. For instance, in Phaedrus we see that Socrates attains to be aware of what had passed between Phaedrus and Lousias and by expressing that, “hearing the discussion between you and Lousias is more important than anything for me“ [19] creates required motivation to him to express what had happened.

Or at the beginning of the Hippias we see that Socrates forces him to begin the dialogue with himself through expressing an utterance about him and says: « Hippias, it is really a great blessing that human like you to be wise and perfect.

In private life, the arts you have caused that you make a lot of money with teaching the youth. However, the advantage that you have given them is more than this income. On the other hand, in public and political life you do worthy services to your country...» [20]. After stating these sentences, he poses his questions.

#### **C) considering audience need:**

Education should primarily be based on individual needs otherwise it does not have much impact. In the streets, markets or parties according to which classes or groups the audiences are and the questions posed to him by somebody Socrates begin to speech. For example In the Meno we see that the discussion begins in the following of a question which Meno asks Socrates and Socrates also elaborates on that subject details considering his question coming from his need. At first Meno suddenly

asks: "Socrates, tell me that the virtue can be achieved by learning or experience and exercise?

If it can be achieved neither by learning nor by experience is it innate or not? And where does it come from? [21].

#### **D) Initial subject analysis**

The initial subject analysis is something that we see at the beginning of the most Socratic dialogues as he either defines the subject or sheds light on the subject or such thing that helps the audience to understand the subject. Socrates says in dialogue with Phaedrus: «The first duty of a true orator is that he carefully defines and clarifies the dialogue subject otherwise no benefit is achieved from the discussions...» [22]. Socrates believes that and also he observes it himself. In Laches, For example, he says: «is not firstly this question posed what the reality of art that we want to find the teacher for is?» [23] And following he spoke about the reality of that subject. As Socrates have noted himself, clarifying or defining the subject is the introduction of entering into discussion because if the parties do not have a precise and clear definition about the issue, they get misunderstood and mutual understanding being the aim of dialogue is impossible. Whatever was said are the types of preparation that we found in the Socratic dialogues. This issue is a requirement of the dialogue and entering into discussion without it is futile because the dialogue is a kind of communication and any communication requires preparation, and without it the audience influences declines. For example, if the audience has not enough motivation, his entering into discussion is susceptible and if the discussion has not been devised based on his needs, it is not attractive enough also, if the issue is not properly clarified, the risk of misunderstanding and error increases. The purpose of this preparation is that the parties can communicate easier with each other and the audience focuses more on the course of the discussion and the result of the discussion is more plausible.

### **2. Inquiry**

Another parameter that is abundant in Socratic dialogues is questioning techniques as can be said that it is an integral element of Socratic dialectics. Socratic Method is essentially based on the question. Questions that Socrates used in his talks can be divided into two separate categories:

#### **A) Destructive Questioning**

This type of question is used when he is actually going through rejecting the audience perspective to provide a background so that the audience can recognize that his faith is wrong and needs re-examination and thus makes him ashamed. Socrates releases the audience from wrong faith network and beliefs by doing such a thing but does not

tell his words directly to them so that he will not be opposed, but after preparing the introduction, he asks it in the form of a question from the individual and here is where the audience notices his error and acknowledges it. Chenari [24] also calls this technique as interrogation. For example, in Laches he interprets courage to the emotional power, Socrates says in his response: "But when the spiritual power is associated with ignorance and foolishness, what you say? Do mental power in this case not downgrading and damaging?" [25].

### **B) Exploratory Questioning**

This type of question often appears from the beginning the dialogues. Because Socrates is not showing the grace and state what he knows but as he said he only asks others to help them flourish their thought and he does not know anything. and that's why he use the question to helps the audience, explain what he knows. Therefore, it can be said that this component is the result of Socrates' midwifery techniques that will just help them to regain information in themselves. For example, in Theaetetus he opens up the discussion in this way: "... would you answer my question? My problem is this: Is learning something other than becoming wiser about what we learn? And is wisdom something other than knowledge" [26].

### **3. Creating uncertainty**

Consternation and confusion of Socrates audience, is a natural consequence of his questions. By creating uncertainty he is trying to help the audience go beyond their ordinary views and look deep into things.

As soon as the person's mistake during a conversation is proved, he no longer can defend what previously believed, and it's now been proven that it is invalid. In such a situation one sees himself in a confusing state and feels that he has reached a dead end [24] and is now ready to accept the truth.

We see an example of such consternation in the words of Meno: «O Socrates, before I get to know you, I heard from people that you always doubt and make others uncertain. Now I see I've been caught in your charm and have become totally fascinated and stunned, and my mind does not work.... and I do not know what to say to you» [27]. Socrates thereby released people from their wrong beliefs and aroused their curiosity towards the truth and thus reached this conclusion that we must begin a new investigation and enter into dialogue.

### **4. Maintaining freedom in the dialogue**

Socrates in all his dialogues was determined not to make his teaching something like a match. He believes that the listener is free to judge and accept or refuse the words of Socrates. There is no sign of fear in the Socratic dialogues. Others always talk easily even if they are Sufism. Socrates allowed the

audience to reject his opinion and express their beliefs and in case of error, calmly and without anger using question technique reminded them of their errors and using what seemed acceptable to them tried to convince them. Such an approach caused others be eager to talk with although during this talk, their mistakes be apparent to others. For example, in a part of the Laches he explicitly says: «O Socrates, I am confident that this is not true and you make mistake ...» [28].

Socrates says in Phaedo paper in response to Symias: «... if one of you better than me can tell the answer to this objection does not withhold, it seems to me that he well stated the problem. But before I even answer him, I want to hear Gibes' problems and after having heard both problems if they are right, we give up, otherwise, with all our forces we must endeavor to look after our own ideas, so Gibes, You Say» [29].

### **Conclusion**

According to this research, dialog parameters are as follows: primary preparation (include Initial subject analysis, considering audience need, Creating Motivation, Creating intimacy), questioning (include Exploratory Questioning, Destructive Questioning), Maintaining freedom in the dialogue, Creating uncertainty. What were said were dialogue parameters from Socrates's point of view which was of course the result of our study of Plato's dialogues. Parameters that are mentioned, things that need to be entered in the field of action and should be used for dialogue in the classroom. undoubtedly more research is needed to prepare these findings to use in the field of action. In addition these cases, not all parameters and further researches should be devoted to it.

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