★ Concepts of CHAT Session 1 ★

Action, Behaviour and Consciousness

Mind & Matter?
Consciousness is the totality of the *subjective processes* of a human being which *mediate* between a person’s physiology and their behaviour.
Behaviour is the purely objective aspect of activity, excluding any reference to consciousness.
Actions are what a person *does* - the main units of human life.
An action is a (prior?) unity of consciousness and behaviour.
An **action** is directed towards an **object** *(goal)* which does **not coincide** with its **motive**.
Concepts of CHAT Session 1

• Consciousness
• Behaviour
• Actions
Genetic Method

Unity and Dichotomy
Genetic Method

The genetic method is the research approach used by Vygotsky to reveal the essential nature of particular psychological functions by

• Bringing them into being in an experimental setting, or
• Tracing their formation and disintegration in the course of the natural development
By looking only at the product of a process, or a snapshot, we miss the interconnections and functional relations between apparently separate processes, which make up the whole.
The Genetic Roots of Thinking & Speech

Concepts of CHAT Session 2

Development of Speech

Thinking which is beyond words

Inner Speech

“Thinking aloud”

Communicative Speech

Development of Intellect (Concepts)

True Concepts

Pre-Concepts

Pseudo-Concepts

Complexes

Syncretism

Potential Concepts

Pre-Intellectual Speech and Pre-verbal Intelligence

The Genetic Roots of Thinking & Speech
Unity and Dichotomy

dualism
Concepts of CHAT Session 2

Unity ↔ Distinction

Abstraction

Development
Concepts of CHAT Session 2

Unity ↔ Dichotomy

Union/Intersection

Relation/Identity

For example: person & environment; sound & meaning?
Dualism & Distinction
Concepts of CHAT Session 2

• Genetic Method
• Unity
• Dualism
Unit and Germ-cell
Unit and Germ-cell

In contrast to the term “element,” the term “unit” designates a product of analysis that possesses all the basic characteristics of the whole. The unit is a vital and irreducible part of the whole.”

Vygotsky

The specificity of this [commodity] form consists in that it contains, like a ‘cell’ or embryo, the wealth of more complex, more developed forms of capitalist relations. Ilyenkov
Concepts of CHAT Session 3

Abstract

Unit ↔ Germ-cell

Analysis

Concrete Reality

Synthesis

Immediate perception

Conceptual reconstruction

Grundrisse
Concepts of CHAT Session 3

Unity and Unit

Unity of A and B = Unit of C

Unit expresses the relation between the whole and the part. Unity expresses the relation between the elements within each part.
Concepts of CHAT Session 3

• Unit of Analysis
• Germ Cell
• Abstract and Concrete
Word-meaning and Artefact-mediated action, Dual stimulation

Sign or tool?
Artefacts

“psychological tools” or “technical tools”

To act on the mind

To act on matter

All artefacts are both material and Ideal

For example: a spoken word; a car; a pointed gun; a train ticket; a telephone.
Artefact-.mediation

Actions and perceptions are both immediate and mediated
Concepts of CHAT Session 4

Word-meaning

or meaningful word

is an action

mediated by a sound

which is meaningful

Word or Action?
Perception is *also* an action

Reflex Arc?

Dewey
The artefact-mediation of action is the key to the cultural formation of the mind.

“Every function in the cultural development of the child appears on the stage twice, in two planes, first, the social, then the psychological.”
Concepts of CHAT Session 4

Dual Stimulation

- Perception
- Self-control
- Development
- Genetic method
Concepts of CHAT Session 4

• Artefact
• Artefact-mediation
• Dual Stimulation
★ Concepts of CHAT Session 5 ★

Perezhivanie and Catharsis,
Social situation of development,
Disability/compensation

• Predicaments and Development
Concepts of CHAT Session 5

**Perezhivanie**

*plural, perezhivaniya*

An intense experience which is worked over, usually with others.

The personality is formed by a series of perezhivaniya.

Translation?
Concepts of CHAT Session 5

Perezhivanie

What do we mean by a “unity of individual and the environment”? 

What do we mean by “unity of intellect and affect”? 

Personality manifested as forms of collective behaviour, and only later ...

An experience plus catharsis

Freud
Social situation of Development

Predicament

Resolved by adopting a new role and being accepted in that role.
Concepts of CHAT Session 5

Defect/Compensation

Predicament

The defect is in the social relation.

Resolved by development of psychological functioning of individual and adjustment of the environment to meet needs of individual.
Concepts of CHAT Session 5

• Perezhivanija
• Catharsis
• Social situation of development
• Disability/compensation
A concept is a form of activity

Concepts are formed to solve some problem.

Concepts formed in childhood are generally not true concepts.
The development of Concepts during childhood

• Syncretic concepts
• Complexes
• Pseudoconcepts

Potential concepts
Pre-concepts
Concepts of CHAT Session 6

**Syncretic concepts**

Isolate object from background and name it.

- Incoherent Heap
- Subjective series
- “Those there”
Concepts of CHAT Session 6

Complexes

Abstract a feature and group objects according to the same feature.

- Chain complex
- Associative complex
- Collection complex
- Diffuse complex
Complexes

- Abstract a feature from object
- Hold the feature in consciousness
- Synthesise objects by features
- Extend complex beyond experience

Concepts of CHAT Session 6
Concepts of CHAT Session 6

Pseudoconcepts

to form complex under guidance of others’ word use.
Concepts of CHAT Session 6

**Potential concepts**

to isolate objects according to their functional significance
Concepts of CHAT Session 6

**Pre-concepts**

to reason within a finite set of objects according to rules
Concepts of CHAT Session 6

- Syncretic concepts
- Complexes
- Pseudoconcepts
- Potential concepts
- Pre-concepts
Spontaneous, True and Actual Concepts

Ideal lines of development, not types of concept
Spontaneous Concepts

- Recognised by features
- Acquired interpersonally
- Unsystematic

... Everyday or “empirical” concepts
True Concepts

Part of a system of concepts
Culturally transmitted
Identify a problem/solution

Scientific, religious, literary concepts ...
“book (institutional) learning”
Concepts of CHAT Session 7

Actual Concepts

Have roots in both “institutional” learning and life-experience
The Emotions

Expression solely internal

Conceptual appraisal

Internal expression

Self-Regulation

Action-readiness

Communicative function

Function

Expression adaptive to situation

Body Feedback

Sensations

Experience

Subjective

Development of Expression

Development of Action

Unconscious expression & Undifferentiated feeling
Concepts of CHAT Session 7

• Spontaneous concepts
• True concepts
• Actual concepts
• Emotions
Activity: operations, actions and activities

“Activity” is a substance
Concepts of CHAT Session 8

**Artefact-mediated** Actions

- An action is directed towards a **goal** which does not coincide with its **motive**.
- An action is determined by its **goal**.
- An action is **consciously controlled** by the subject.
An operation is a **fixed pattern of behaviour** which can be adapted to conditions.

- The subject is **not consciously aware** or controlling the operation, which is controlled by goal of action.
- An operation is determined by its **conditions**.
Concepts of CHAT Session 8

Activities

• An Activity has an *intrinsic motive* or object which can only be realised socially, by many actions.
• The subject is *aware* of the motive of the activity.
• The activity *provides the motive* for its actions.
Concepts of CHAT Session 8

Motivation

Personal Sense  Objective Meaning

Psychological  Non-psychological
Concepts of CHAT Session 8

• Operations
• Actions
• Activities
The Object

in Leontyev, Engeström and Vygotsky

“Object” is a highly polysemous word!
The Object for Leontyev

Leontyev’s Activity Theory reveals the structure of motivation
The **Object** for Leontyev

Предмет : ‘the object of activity’ is the imagined and desired objective product or outcome of the activity.
The object meets a social need, which itself arises from activity. But this may differ from the personal sense of the object which motivates an individual’s action.
Engeström’s Activity Theory, the object is the ‘raw material’ at which the activity is directed and which is transformed into the outcome. The object carries in itself the purpose and motive of the activity.
Engeström’s Activity Theory does not address how the outcome is/is not intended by individuals, but focuses on actions. Engeström’s *outcome* may be Leontyev’s *object*.
Cooperation between different systems of activity (which “speak different languages” so to speak) is achieved by means of an object which has features recognised by both subjects.
For Vygotsky, the object is part of the concept the subject forms of some task or problem. The concept is the form of activity by means of which the object is realised.
For Vygotsky, the separate actions relate to the object in the same way word meanings relate to the concept.
The Object for Vygotsky

People form different concepts of the same task according to their social position. The difference is not one of personal sense; it is social.
For example: an encounter with a dangerous bear

A subject will form a different concept according to:
• Social position
• Available means
Concepts of CHAT Session 9

• The Object for A. N. Leontyev
• The Object for Yrjö Engeström
• The Object for Lev Vygotsky
“Project” is a unit of social life

A project is an activity.
The object of a project is the concept it has of itself. A project is a process of concept formation.
Projects are units of social life

Social life is a large number of projects interacting with one another.
The Project is a practice with an object

The Project provides the “frame” or context in which the judgments are made (ideology)
Concepts of CHAT Session 10

Projects collaborate with one another

by colonisation negotiation or solidarity

Collaboration includes both conflict and cooperation
Concepts of CHAT

The End

Thank you
Unit of personal development, an Experience=unity of individual & environment;
Unit of the intellect, a word=unity of sound & meaning;
Unit of economic life, a commodity=unity of exchange-value & use value;
Unit of culture, an artefact=unity of material and ideal;
Unit of behaviour, a reflex=unity of stimulus and response;

Elements disclosed by analysis
Unit of action, an action=unity of consciousness and behaviour;
Unit of language, a sentence=unity of subject and predicate.

Units not dialectically constructed
Unit of formal logic=a proposition;
Unit of discourse=an utterance.