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Biography of Things – A Ball

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Abstract:

The presented text is a study of interest in ball as an element of formation and perception of childhood. The research project was embedded in the paradigm of qualitative, interpretative research, where the focus was on the language of the preschooler, which becomes a reflection of the world of physical culture present in the mind of the child – the narrator. The problem of research is focused on the question: To what extent is the ball and its meanings an element of material culture located in the area of physical culture, and in what circumstances is it a determinant of child-specific pre-school folklore? The resulting space of the presented analyzes is an element of the phenomenographic method, where the use of a partially structured interview with preschool children (N = 80) provided the basis for the analysis of the perception and use of a ball in the cognitive theory of a child's language space. The main conclusions from the research are: 1) for younger children, the ball is more often an attribute of spontaneous play than conventional actions (governed by rules and patterns), 2) for 5- and 6-year-olds, the ball is an artifact of attractive motor activity, training complex motor skills and competition. In middle childhood, the ball is a domain of spontaneous emotionality and an attribute of children's play, which becomes a material for perceiving, interpreting and situating oneself in a specific culture of movement. The research was conducted in ten municipal kindergartens in the city of Slupsk, Poland in 2016–2019.

Keywords: history of the ball, ball games, playing with the ball, children's folklore, children's movement culture.

Introduction

In my research carried out as part of the last research project concerning the aspects of spontaneous movement activity in preschool children, in the course of partially structured interviews, the ball and experiences connected with it constituted an important element of assessments regarding the reality of their everyday functioning. Treating the ball solely as a detail in created stories of oneself during movement would lead to its perception only in the categories of the existing world. Extracting it from the reconstructed content of interviews and treating it as a preliminary research category in determining the movement experiences of a child aged 3 to 6 years has outlined a completely new research problem: To what degree does the ball and its meanings constitute an element of material culture, located in the area of physical culture, and under what circumstances does it determine the specific childhood folklore typical of preschool children?

Grasping the organisation of experiences with the ball and bestowing meaning to it (drawn from types of activities in which it is employed, differentiated in time and space, as well as contact with the ball, which is in the child's sight during the interviews – initially treated as an element for arousing/continuing the child's narrative), is made possible with the help of categorization theory within the model of cognitive grammar, and particularly Ronald W. Langacker's conventional imagery theory and Ludwig Wittgenstein's family resemblance theory, which were used to analyze the obtained data. Categorisation as a way of framing an event may occur in a differentiated way, especially since the same content may assume different semantic values, i.e. meanings (Langacker, 1995, p. 18).

In the assumed analytical perspective categorization is dictated by various types of experience, an assumed perspective of understanding including direction, orientation and viewpoint (Kardela, 1993, p. 142). Their perpetuation in language results in the fact that a series of linked meanings, connected with understanding particular content by language users, i.e. imaging, is intertwined in the cognitive model (Langacker, 1995, pp. 18–19). The category of ball, revealed from the subjects of structures organizing the statements of preschool children, was subject to analysis in the scope of: 1) determining the ways of organising (condensing) conceptual content, i.e. events, situations, sensory, kinesthetic and social experiences which constitute the semantic base of the elicited category of ball, 2) the context of using linguistic expression with respect

to the ball; context¹ was used to elicit new structural elements of the category, to extract expressions which profile basic meanings (primal carriers of categorisation), derivatives and their mutual relations, which allow us to discover the rules of similarity and the differentiating rules which accompany the ball imagery.

Taking into consideration the stage of speech and thought development in preschool children, the analysis of research material was based on using categorisation through prototype. Categorisation (i.e. the way in which meaning is conferred to experience) consists, in this case, in the extension of the prototype or the value which assumes the role of a point of reference, a symbolic semantic base, which gives us the opportunity to determine common properties and to indicate variations, accounting for the context of their formation (Kleiber, 2003, pp. 61–62). R.W. Langacker (1995, p. 14) presents categorisation through prototype in the form of a symbolic model: A is the prototype, B is the extension of the prototype, where B does not provide more detail to A but deviates from its characteristic. This type of categorisation: 1) negates the assumptions regarding the equal status of specimens of a given category, i.e. undermines arbitrary methods of establishing conceptual boundaries, 2) through the creation of network models, i.e. determining the specimens which more or less match the prototype (further, peripheral specimens which are closer to the centre), their mutual relations (schematisation, subjectification, marginalisation) and indication of categorial junctions – extension chains and new emergent semantic units which have the character of prototypes (Kleiber, 2003, pp. 47–49) – it is easier to frame the ways of imaging categories on levels of age- and narrative-differentiated respondents, 3) elements of categories have no properties common to all elements, i.e. they are connected by family resemblance².

The emergent meaning structure of concepts categorised by prototypes – in this case the concept of the ball – approximates ways of matching its various types to natural situations of being in motion, exploring new spaces with its participation and gaining new movement experiences in accordance with desire, imagination and preferences.

¹ As Iwona Nowakowska-Kępną (1993) states in her text: *Definiowanie znaczenia wyrażen w kognitywizmie. Wybrane zagadnienia* [Defining the Meaning of Expressions in Cognitivism. Selected Problems]. In: J. Bartmiński, & R. Tokarski (Eds.), *O definicjach i definiowaniu* [On Definitions and Defining] (p. 164). Lublin: UMCS – context determines and shapes meaning, i.e. reveals and highlights structural elements of categories, and indicates traits which constitute extensions.

² L. Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblance suggests defining categorical structures, where traits creating the structure intersect and partially overlap. A given element belongs to a category if one of its features is shared by other elements.

Anthropology of objects – cognitive areas and force of influence

Objects constitute tools to both represent and to imagine a given culture. In this perspective objects as material representations determine cultural heritage. Anthropology of objects creates a view that such a perception of objects does not always display connection with human beings, particularly with their actions. A new dimension of defining culture through objects requires a re-evaluation of the human-object relationship, where the object is no longer framed in an exclusively subordinate relationship. In this perspective the world of objects and the world of humans is symbiotic. According to Marek Krajewski (2008, p. 44): “People are not objects, however, where there are no objects, there is also nothing human”. The intersecting relationships between people and objects as part of the social structure of everyday life broaden the perspective of expressing culture through objects. The separation of objects and experience not only limits cultural transfer but also obscures new meanings, dictated by a specific and often unique method of their exploitation.

The process of creating objects does not occur in a vacuum. Objects become carriers of knowledge, skills and traditions of their creators, and through their use they provide an opportunity to relate to forms of participation in the social life of their owners. Differentiation of objects of material culture constitutes a record of interactions which accompanies their production and later use (Attfeld, 2000, pp. 62–70). Objects which co-create the world of human functioning have meaning which results from the significance of their creators, and they have the potential to transform meaning. Innovativeness and creativity undoubtedly lead to a new cycle in object evaluation.

This is not the only scenario, as indicated by Michael Herzfeld (2008, p. 40). Children, for whom the biographies of objects align themselves in unconventional patterns, are the co-creators of what the authors calls a culture of intimacy between people and objects. Tim Ingold (2005, p. 79) believes that the properties of objects reveal themselves only through relationship with them. The situational context is not merely a background to their emerging meaning – it activates practices of specific perception and use, which includes change in their current use. Human activity through objects, which inscribe their presence in individual bibliographies, are corporeal in character. Objects make it possible to extract sensual experiences, which is why the body undergoes physical adaptation (adherence) in contact with an object, and may also be put into motion (Rakowski, 2008, p. 64). A child does not see a ball as an object, which is a base for something that covers empty space. A ball starts an adventure, emotions which homo futballisticus always yearns for (Zaleski, 2016, pp. 23–25).

Affiliation of the ball to the world of material and physical culture

The history of the ball takes us back to China and Japan (2700 BC), where a stone ball was used for throwing in the game known as tsu-czu and her Japanese variant mari-koju. In Ancient Egypt the ball used to accompany children’s games, as well as young men and women. The game was played occasionally and usually consisted in throwing a ball in pairs, while the penalty for an unsuccessful throw was carrying the partner on one’s back. Such an image of activity with a ball survives in a children’s game in Ethiopia (Lipoński, 1987, p. 247).

A round object stuffed with bristle or wool and covered with leather patches (now known as a ball) was known in Ancient Greece and Rome as ‘pilla’, ‘palla’ and ‘pilus’. Differences in names were connected with its use in children’s games as well as emergent tactical games. It was a rule for the ball to be called the name of the game it was used in. This rule was generally applied throughout antiquity. All Greek games retained their Hellenic names in Rome (Słapek, 2010, p. 568). The ball was familiar to citizens and slaves, the educated, children, the youth, and to the oldest inhabitants of the polis. General interest in the ball remained at odds with the rivalry taking place during Olympic games, the origins of which elevated the sacrum or the sacrifice of one’s victory to the gods. Descriptions of the ball appearing in social space indicate that throwing, passing and bouncing were a pretext to play and to sport rivalry.

The competitive character of the activities also served to perpetuate quick movement while running, improvement of catching techniques, cooperation, all of which were connected with practicing skills important during a potential conflict in times of peace. That is why the rules of *episkyros* were included in initiation rites and in trainings as part of *ephebes*. In team games where a ball is used men saw mainly an opportunity to develop their strength, speed and dexterity – motor traits which serve the purpose of evaluating one’s skills in rivalry (tab. 1). Women chose individual activity with balls, where one could display agility and harmony of movement (Słapek, 2010, p. 568; Scrambler, 2005, p. 147).

Table 1. Ball games popularised in the Hellenic period

Ancient game	Activity (movement of the ball)	Ball (material, size)
<i>aporraksis</i>	hitting the ball with one’s fist while competing with opponents type of movement: bouncing the ball off the ground	leather, medium size with densely packed bristle

Table 1. Ball games popularised in the Hellenic period (cont.)

Ancient game	Activity (movement of the ball)	Ball (material, size)
<i>episkyros</i> war over the ball	throwing the ball over the heads of the opposing team in order to force them to retreat and cross the line on their side of the field → type of movement: catching the ball + throwing the ball while running	leather, hard, reinforced with leather straps
<i>ephetinda</i>	game based on simulating throws, which are in effect directed to someone else → type of movement: dynamic stepping with the ball	leather, hard, hand-sized
<i>phaininda</i>	tactical game, taking the ball from the opponent while running in a pair → type of movement: dynamic running while throwing the ball in a pair	leather, hard, smaller than the modern hand-ball
<i>harpustum</i>	throwing the ball to your partner while moving freely → type of movement: moderate, recommended by doctors	leather, medium size
<i>trigon</i>	movement game consisting in throwing and bouncing the ball between three players standing in threes → type of movement: using one hand while throwing + catching with both hands	large, leather hemmed, stuffed with bristle or filled with air
<i>urania</i> sky ball	game consisting in throwing the ball up high into the air and catching it before the other players → type of movement: throwing with one hand + catching with both hands	small, leather, hard, painted

Source: Author's compilation based on: Giulianotti, 2005, pp. 38–46.

As a result of migration from the Middle East numerous modifications of ball games from the Mediterranean region arrived on the Pyrenean peninsula, in southern France, in south-western Italy and in England. The ludic joy connected with playing ball and its ties with festivities and ceremonies leads to the medieval period. The narrow, palisade construction of towns in Eastern Europe resulted in a lack of space for team ball games. Such games were spectacular and required space. In Western European countries the most popular medieval game was called 'la soule'. This course of this spectator game depended on the origin of the players. In rural areas two teams competed for the ball in order to take it to the opponents' village. In towns the objective of the opposing teams was to take the ball away from the opponents and carry it from one gate to the other. The ball could be carried, thrown or taken away from the other team, with the use of hands, feet as well as large sticks. The ball was large, leather hemmed and usually stuffed with tow or straw. Fish or calf cartilage was placed inside the ball for elasticity. A dynamic game with a ball weighing 5–7 kilograms resulted in numerous injuries which eliminated players from the game. The brutal rules of the game were protested by the church and secular authorities (Lipoński, 2012, pp. 215–216).

The 12th century in France was a period of intense development of a medieval town game which was less brutal – the ‘*jeu de paume*’ in which a tennis-sized ball was hit using bats (curved or widened). Ball games took place in castle or monastery cloisters, the so called ‘*coutre paume*’. It was spectacular to watch the ball bouncing as it was hit with bats against roofs of surrounding buildings or small platforms set up for spectators. The game was also known in a variant called ‘*longue paume*’, in which pitches were delineated using a rope, and the 15th century saw the arrival of the net, over which the ball was hit (Lipoński, 1987, p. 248; Jarvie, 2006, p. 98). If no pitch was available the game moved into the streets, town squares or empty moats. The ball used in both versions of ‘*jeu de paume*’ could fit in one’s hand, was hard, leather hemmed and stuffed with linen or hemp string.

The ball was modified in the second half of the 14th century – the new ball was stuffed with horse hair, covered with sheepskin and flew at high speed. The lighter ball, covered with short trimmed wool was safer and softened the hits (Lipoński, 2012, p. 221). In 1580 the Italians developed and wrote down the rules for a team game similar to football. The game, called ‘*giuoco del calcio*’ was played at town squares and later at house yards, surrounded by benches for the spectators (Matyja, 2000, p. 190). Football was finally born in the 19th century in England, where the two oldest universities, Oxford and Cambridge, developed rules similar to the current ones. Soule was a popular game in medieval England as well. Due to the brutal course of the game royal decrees prohibited playing it in towns, moving it to the commons. Running and fighting over the ball remained unaltered. As there were no town gates the pitch was marked by their imitations, spaces between trees or other objects in the natural surroundings. Playing outside towns and cities or on their outskirts resulted in the emergence of outlines of pitches and goalposts (Lipoński, 1987, pp. 217–218; Donnelly, 2006, p. 208). The ball was an object which gave one an opportunity to experience joyful emotions in the course of religious festivities at Christmas or during the carnival. It was also an object of initiation rites. An example of this is the Easter ball – on Sunday morning young women asked married women for a ball. The Easter ball was made of cloth, stuffed with tow, sawdust or straw. The cloth ball was played in a nearby wood until it was destroyed (Lipoński, 1987, p. 248).

The emergence of precision ball games resulted in an evolution in the way balls were made. Apart from balls stuffed with bristle and hemmed or reinforced with leather straps, there were also balls made of wool and tow wrapped in string or leather straps, and with cartilage put inside for greater elasticity. Such balls were known since the middle ages. There were balls made of fabric and stuffed with sawdust, as well as shuttlecocks, used in the French predecessor of

badminton. Until the Second World War balls were made of patches of leather sewn together around a rubber tube or held with string. The most original ball was one made of balls of wool and studded with needles to raise the dramatic character of medieval rivalry (Barankiewicz, 1998, p. 236).

In the examples of ball games listed above the main activity of the player was to carry, bounce, throw or hit the ball using one's hands, fists or bats. Kicking the ball occurred occasionally or played an auxiliary function during a game. The name *football* in the English middle ages and renaissance did not mean a game which consisted in kicking. Plebeian ball games were of no interest to the upper class. The term 'football-player' was an insult and the very name *football* was a symbol of bad manners. Ball games were part of church celebrations, local fairs, carnivals, as well as ordinary days. They were meant to provide entertainment for the participating crowd.

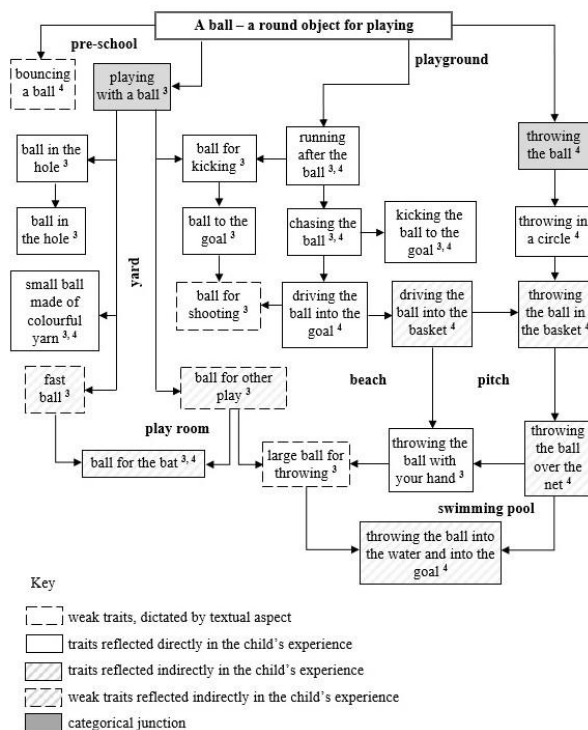
A new element came in the form of football games without any special occasion, particularly on Sundays, which started the so called Sunday football tradition (Lipoński, 1987, p. 332). New opportunities for activities connected with the ball emerged when the YMCA defined the rules of a new game called basketball, especially the use of baskets for throwing the ball and the development of vulcanization. A rubber ball retained its desired shape, was lighter and elastic. Vulcanization fostered the evolution of tennis (the medieval game of Royal Tenni), replacing the heavy tow-filled ball with a rubber ball covered with wool. Apart from leather, cloth and rubber balls there were also wooden balls, known in Poland since the renaissance period and the interwar period, used in the game of Palant (Lipoński, 2004, p. 67).

The ball as a social means of defining children and childhood

When carrying out the research task, which consisted in determining the ways of valuing the world of physical culture of preschool children, through the reconstruction of their movement experiences and an analysis of their linguistic ways of perceiving this world, it was noticed that there exist specific categories which foster this. Among statements regarding movement activity the ball constituted a recurrent theme. It was present in the narratives of both 3- and 4-year-olds as well as 5- and 6-year-olds. The awareness that the ball is a common fact in the children's environment prompted the question of its status. The direct cause for generating it was drawing attention to the way in which 3- and 4-year-old children participating in the study spoke of items taken to the playground. Among the objects, located in the category of toys, the appearance of the ball

was preceded by the conjunction ‘and’. It meant connecting elements (in this case separate semantic units) which remained in a coordinate relationship, however, among registered statements such as “I take X, Y, Z and a ball” a thought occurred regarding the reasons for separating the ball from the set of objects with the status of toys.

Narratives of the youngest respondents indicate that the object function of the ball (its material form), and particularly the material from which it is made (cloth, leather, rubber, yarn), as well as its shape, played a decisive role in children’s desire to have a ball. Elasticity, size and weight of the balls triggered a desire for movement, which gave pleasant kinaesthetic sensations. Activity of 3-year-old children with a ball was not solely physical contact with an object. Statements included a theme of attachment to the ball, manifested by numerous diminutives in its name and by an element of fear related to losing one’s ball.



Graph 1. Prototype representation of the ball category among 3- and 4-year-old children

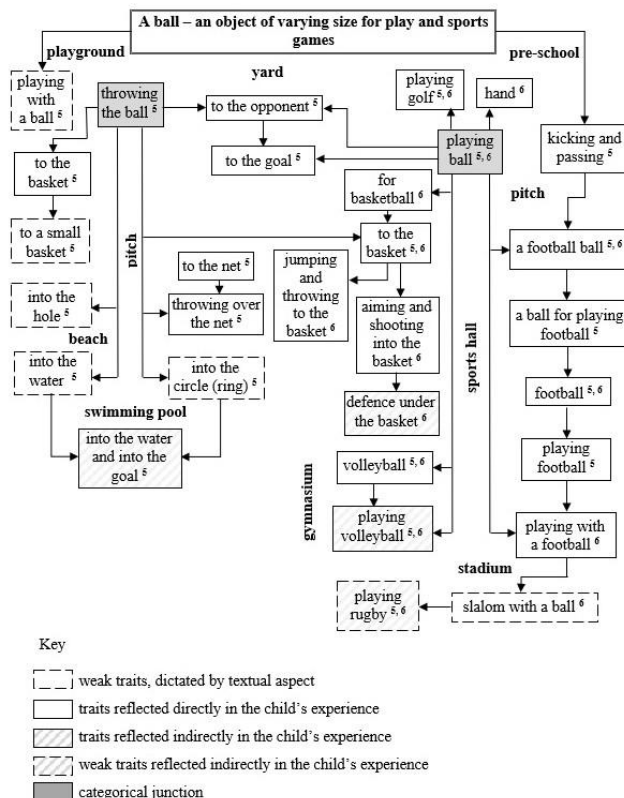
Source: Author's research.

The graph 1 shows that the activity of playing located in a world of objective reality is the content which has the strongest association with the concept of the ball. For the youngest children (3-year-olds) the sets of properties describing the ball are connected with direct action. The feature with the highest degree of perpetuation is the purpose of the ball. In the sphere of features closest to the prototype there are expressions which take the form of 'ball to/for...' phrases. Characteristic of a given activity with a ball was an indication of various types of balls (golf ball, football, ping-pong ball, Hacky-sack) without naming them. In the statements of 3-year-old children, such as 'ball for kicking' and 'ball for shooting', the semantic features of the football are derived directly from movement experience with the ball. The properties of the golf ball (expressions, such as 'ball to put in the hole') are connected with the object of the action. Identification of the volleyball, handball, beach ball using the principle of: volleyball = 'ball to/for ...', handball = 'ball to/for ...', ping-pong ball = 'ball to/for ...' is unsuccessful. Each word treated individually under these assumptions does not allow one to create an image of the ball. The discovering of the properties of these balls is enabled by the activity of 3- and 4-year-olds in new contexts of movement with a ball, i.e. in the spaces of a pitch, swimming pool, beach or playroom. However, the indicated features are too vague for this group of children, i.e. they have a status of weak, textual and strongly individualized features (with a low level of solidification). The football, profiled as 'a ball for kicking' constitutes a categorical junction for 3- and 4-year-old children, i.e. it triggers sets of semantic extensions of the prototype. Activity with a ball acquires the status of a complex activity (ball + running, ball + kicking, ball + aiming), which releases the child's presence on the playground.

In reference to the context of ball-related activity of 3-year-olds, the yard (semantic plan II) is a place of free and spontaneous movement. The playground (semantic plan III) releases an extension of the primal prototypical structure. A reference point for the new categorical junction, i.e. 'throwing a ball' is the interaction with the other. A type of experience with a ball is acquired by 4-year-olds at a playground or on a pitch (semantic plan IV). It evokes connotative features of the ball, i.e. features derivative of the influence of culture shaping factors, such as watching football/basketball games and cheering, knowledge regarding team sports and language clichés, on language. The presented figure highlights a small scope of ball-related experiences released in preschool (and a symmetric plan). Bouncing the ball has the status of a weak trait, the content of which is descendant in character (it appears occasionally – marginally).

The statements of the 3-year-olds indicate that the ball is also an object of creative interest. Using external frames of reference in the form of picture

stories, illustrations of sports disciplines using balls (primarily to prompt narratives) during the interviews revealed another regularity. Basketballs, volleyballs, rugby balls and footballs were attractive not because of the type of game, but due to the possibility of playing with them according to one’s imagery of movement. The ball is an attribute of free movement play, and thus play in its pure form. For this group of 4-year-olds movement with the ball is inscribed in the space of interaction. Satisfaction is drawn from possessing the ball as an object which channels a natural desire for movement (including the practice of various motor activities with the ball), but most of all from partnership during the ball-related activity. The broadening potential of movement experiences of 5-year-olds results in new patterns of activities with balls (graph 2).



Graph 2. Prototype representation of the ball category among 5- and 6-year-old children

Source: Author’s research.

Based on the extensions of the main part of the prototype, i.e. throwing the ball, it is possible to conclude that there is a mutual penetration of the two basic scenes of movement for 5- and 6-year-olds: the playground (semantic plan I) and the yard (semantic plan II). In both places the space assigned to playing ball is a matter of agreement, i.e. dictated by the need for spontaneous (changing) movement. The method of profiling the ball throw results primarily from direct experience, hence the scope of significance is determined on the basis of real base examples. Activity with a ball on the pitch (semantic plan III) is individualized in relation to ball throwing (a child follows its own paths, the game is not set in opposition to play). Similarly to 3- and 4-year-old children, throwing a ball in the water belongs to elements grouped the furthest away from the prototype (having the status of peripheral traits). For 5- and 6-year-old children a game based on objective rules is a new type of experience. A sports hall (semantic plan IV) is a source of new sensory (auditory, kinaesthetic, dictated by the surface of the hall) and social (resulting from following the rules with respect to the opponent in team ball games) challenges connected with kicking and throwing the ball. A ball game in a sports hall and on a pitch is associated with belonging to a new community, which shares a disciplined type of activity. The evoked sports disciplines are not part of the direct experience of the pre-schoolers – they are dictated by a desire to imitate and by the spectacular character of the disciplines.

The study indicates that for preschool children at the age of 3 and 4 years playing with a ball constitutes a record of their spontaneity and not a convention of regulated behaviour. For the youngest pre-schoolers games become a new psycho-motor offer. In the games of their early childhood, based on a show of strength, speed and endurance, one can notice motifs of ludic interests. Playing ball is an antithesis of seriousness as it is accompanied by joy, which manifests itself through satisfaction. The mixture of laughter and pleasurable kinaesthetic experiences offered by ball games constitutes an experience category for pre-school children. A recurring motif in the stories about ball games was a show of movement and a display of the resulting positive emotions. It should be highlighted that the choice of ball games among 3- and 4-year-old children required previous familiarisation with the ball. This familiarisation assumed the form of mastering the object.

During its contact with the ball a child discovers that its hands, legs and body do not simply perform locomotion movements and manipulations. As noted by Józef Lipiec, a ball in motion comes to life when it rolls, bounces or flies through the air. The activity of a child with a ball dynamises its movement

experiences – in the context of children playing ball, the children always become animated (Lipiec, 2007, p. 240). The studies suggest that *agon* connected with play does not mean that those who play always follow the rules. Rules are at odds with the movement imagination of 3- and 4-year-old children. Competition inscribed in rules during ball games is known to older pre-schoolers. 6-year-old children show awareness that games of skill with a ball can train specific skills which sharpen one's mobility. The pleasure resulting from movement with a ball and perseverance enable one to master what was at first difficult in a faster and easier way. For 3- and 4-year-old children games of skill involving a ball carry the risk of failure, which could result in discouragement from spontaneous and programmed physical activity. Free improvisation with a ball eliminates the possibility of error, and its possible occurrence is perceived as an amusing surprise. The comment by Johan Huizinga (1985, p. 59) that forced play is no longer fun remains true.

Conclusion

The category of the ball, isolated and analysed in semantic systems, indicates that it is a symbol of acts of movement, reflected in socially and culturally justified areas of physical culture, but most of all in the subjective world of being in this culture and its reception. The collective character of the yard, playground (the basic spaces of movement activity with the ball), indicates that it is a/an:

- PROP, which enables one to follow his or her path in the realization of the need for movement, guided by one's own customs and the open character of movement;
- OBJECT of a motor activity realised according to the adapted rules of games/sports disciplines, for the purpose of 'playing sports with a ball';
- CATALYST of spontaneous emotionality, especially laughter which accompanies running after a ball, as well as a programmed movement activity, realised on the basis of accepted external rules;
- ATTRIBUTE of children's play which brings with it a promise of extending relaxing movement during tasks with a ball, invented and directed against boredom.

The pitch, sports hall and gymnasium are places of uncommon movement activity. Here the ball becomes an object of 'discovering play in sports', i.e. children's activity is endowed with a sense of acquiring new complex motor skills with a ball, resulting from the need to compete, test one's abilities in new

spaces, and from the joy of belonging to ‘a ball-playing community’. Activity with a ball is also an expression of leaving the known spaces of activity, with hope of experiencing something new. The ball, just as the movement it helps to release, belongs to children’s folklore. The meanings ascribed to the ball diverge from meanings located in the physical culture of adults. The ball becomes an OBJECT of self-presentation, beliefs and motives for action connected with the perception of the world, in which pre-school children participate every day (Szczepska-Pustkowska, 2014, p. 195). Jerzy Cieślukowski (1985, pp. 214–215) was correct in his claim that childhood is not merely a time of age, but also a state of being and varied forms of expression through movement, allowing one to immerse oneself in play, which determines the functioning of pre-school children in all areas. Thus the ball belongs to a culture of movement, which is created and fluently filled by them. Getting a child to answer what the ball is for him or her leads us to hidden meanings, i.e. meanings which are not explicitly stated. Historical aspects of activity with the ball and its current observations are part of the thesis put forward by Mary Douglas (2007, p. 161), according to which that which is hidden is often dependent on what a given community considers obvious. This state does not have to be expressed with words, gestures or other means, but rather be a part which is genetically connected with THE CHILDREN’S WORLD of movement-related functioning. It is important to generate a plane of dialogue (in this case of discourse between adult and child), which would make it possible to activate components of association chains in relation to balls and their elaboration (development) previously unknown to children, and which ultimately lead them to PARALLEL WORLDS of activity with the ball, i.e. movement-related recreation or spectator sports disciplines, which belong to the physical culture of adults and school youth.

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