I–*Thou* Communication in Distant Education from the Perspective of Martin Buber's Philosophy

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The internet space has become one of the essential tools for ensuring continuity of higher education studies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Established distance learning is based on virtual communication, which, by replacing the experience of interpersonal communication, raises many discussions about the possibilities of ensuring efficiency and improvement of distance education. The article deals with Martin Buber's dialogue education attitudes, which have become especially relevant in the current era of the internet when the absolutisation of technologies and media poses many threats to developing interpersonal relationships and spiritual values. In the first part of the article, the relationship is discussed as the basic foundation of education. It is revealed that Buber emphasises the importance and priority of I–*Thou* relationship over theoretical knowledge in developing a young person. In the context of Buber's philosophy, the second part of the article examines the problems of exclusion and alienation that arise in distance learning during virtual communication. Thus, the analysis of the article reveals the possibilities of improving distance learning in order to raise the objective, formal and instrumental I–*It* relationship of teachers and students to the subjective plane of I–*Thou* communication.

Keywords: Buber, philosophy of education, virtual communication, social networks, distance education, virtual dialogue

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the worldwide COVID-19 wave moved many socio-professional areas, including education, to virtual space, simultaneously creating new challenges, restrictions and changes in the process of university and school studies. Although mediated space and virtual communication are gaining more and more advantages both in the education and business sectors, it is noted that the growing absolutisation of media and technology poses many threats to the individual's existence, spiritual values and interhuman relations. According to Filiz Peach (2012), in this age of technology and computer, a person increasingly loses interpersonal communication 'face to face' in his/her personal life. The prominent representatives

of existential education, such as Søren Kierkegaard (1997), Martin Buber (1998), Martin Heideger (2013) and Karl Jaspers (2010), highlighted the situation of a single, alienated, despaired and spiritually valued person in a world full of technology and materialism. These insights respond and help evaluate/recognise the problems arising in the current media society and individual life.

Emphasising the importance of the living dialogue in all spheres of human life, Buber is therefore regarded by many as the philosopher of dialogue *par excellence* (Morgan, Guilherme 2016). Buber carried out various social, political, cultural and educational activities. Moreover, having worked for many years at various universities, he had personal experience as a teacher and is named a philosopher and an essential thinker – a highly valued pedagogue by colleagues and students (Hodes 1972). His philosophical interests and research included existential, religious, human being issues and culture, art, education, sociology and politics. A renewed and increasing interest in Buber's thought, especially in his philosophy of education, can be noted (Morgan, Guilherme 2016). In academic circles, Buber's philosophical ideas become widely explored both from the philosophical and pedagogical perspectives (Rumianowska 2020; Tsabar 2019; Soares et al. 2019), and descriptions of early childhood, school, higher, non-formal, or inclusive education curricula are prepared following Buber's approaches.

Buber's attitudes become relevant given the challenges of modern education, opening a new view of the importance and significance of dialogue for human existence and the development of society and culture. In their book '*Buber and Education Dialogue as Conflict Resolution*' (2016), Morgan and Guilherme note that Buber's ideas can contribute to finding a solution to the growing violence at school, improving teacher–student relations, and resolving interpersonal conflict situations.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the transfer of education to the virtual space causes much debate. We are looking for ways and opportunities to ensure the continuity and efficiency of distance studies in cyberspace. Buber's dialogue education principles, prioritising the lecturer–student relationship, guide how to improve distance learning. Therefore, this article aims to reveal Buber's approaches to education based on the *I–Thou* communication as dialogue as a fundamental method of education and highlight the problems of exclusion in distance learning following Buber's concept of inclusion.

I-THOU RELATION AS A FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION

Buber conveyed his ideas about education directly or indirectly in many of his works. '*Between Man and Man*', '*Education*', '*The Address on Education*' and '*The Education of Character*' are some of his most essential texts on education. Buber was a supporter of existential education. This theory of education is closely related to the philosophy of existentialism, Kierkegaard's originator. Buber himself took many of his views from the religious viewpoint of Kierkegaard. Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Jean-Paul Sartre and Juozas Girnius can also be attributed to representatives of existential education. It was grounded on the idea that teaching is not related only to collecting facts and presenting knowledge, but, above all, on the fact that the educator has to reveal to the learner what it means to be a human being, to convey the meaning of life and correct understanding of values, to develop the ability to build a relationship and actively participate in the process of building community and society, dissemination of good. In Buber's words, the school is not just letters, numbers and other subjects taught; the school is supposed to teach how to live.

The interhuman relationship was a clear basis for Buber's educational philosophy. In his famous work 'I–Thou' (1998), the philosopher explores human relationships, their essence and meaning, giving two different types of relationships. The first type – *I–Thou* – is a reciprocal, authentic interpersonal relationship. The second type – *I–It* – is objective, user-friendly, egoistic and utilitarian, where an 'it' person becomes only an object, a means or an item/thing. These two types of relationships are among the essential starting points in Buber's philosophy, helping to understand the direction of dialogue education. Buber sought to emphasise that the right value-oriented interpersonal relationships play a significant role in the education process. Relationships *I–Thou* is the key to a successful education process and entire and meaningful life. Therefore, human existence for Buber is associated with dialogue, and dialogue is the foundation of existence (Asakavičiūtė, Valatka 2020). An individual has always been in a relationship and pursues it. Buber notes that 'the pursuit of a relationship is primordial', and it manifests itself in early infancy when a baby feels a natural urge to be in a relationship everywhere, to seek community, communication and a touch of another person (Buber 1998: 97). Thus, the dialogue acquires a considerable significance embracing numerous levels of human existence: the natural level as it is vital for a human being to experience a sense of physical proximity; the value-based level because the relationship is essential in formulating the worldview and morality of a young person; the ontological and existential levels because 'through the relationship the person knows himself and participates in reality, the relationship is the way of being in the world' (Asakavičiūtė, Valatka 2020). In this context, it is clear why Buber argues that developing the ability to be in a relationship is an essential function of education (Yaron 2000).

Buber makes a critical note that people are often treated as objects (rather than subjects) in business, science and social education institutions. When interpreting Buber's insights in modern technological society, Kathleen Richardson points out, that for us, humans, other individuals in working environments (e.g. cashiers, couriers, waiters, etc.) are not human beings but only tools and instruments. However, in every meeting, we encounter another human as a person, not as an instrument. Buber makes it possible to know the essence of a genuine relationship: a person does not cease to be a person simply because he/she represents one or another profession in a specific formal situation (Richardson 2019: 1). So Buber wanted people to learn to say and to see another as *Thou* with the capital letter, regardless of their profession or situation. He also transfers this target to educational institutions by analysing the relationship between educators and learners in detail.

In many cases, Buber criticises modern education that promotes the supremacy of the educator and favours 'objective knowledge' (Avnon 1998: 22). On the other hand, Buber also criticises the student's dominant role in the study process. The philosopher observes that in both cases, *I–It* is formed in the process of education, where the other is treated only as an object. Alex Guilherme and W. John Morgan (2009) point out that Buber is very critical of both teacher-centered (*top-down*, or as Buber would say, '*funnelled in*') and student-centred (*bottom-up*, or as Buber would say, '*pumped out*') approaches to education (Guilherme, Morgan 2009: 567). In their article '*Discussing Education by Means of Metaphors*' (2018), Alex Guilherme and Ana Lucia Souza de Freitas note that Buber uses the metaphors of gardener and sculptor to reveal these two erroneous models of pedagogical work. Metaphors are a method and way of understanding specific concepts, problems and motivating imagination to open up new possibilities for solutions. The article states that Paulo Freire (1996), like Martin Buber, also uses metaphors to formulate 'banking education' when referring to education. The metaphor

'banking education' discloses that the educator–learner relations are 'market relations', i.e. based on financial considerations. It is an objective, instrumental relationship. This position is becoming more and more established in modern higher education, where the tuition encourages the teacher/educator to approach the student as a client or customer. Buber and Freire deplore educational practices based on information, pragmatic interaction. As a result, 'marketing dialogue' is formed, characterised by a one-sided reporting system and puts results, efficiency, knowledge first, leaving no place for values, personality, feelings and experience.

Buber creates a new, unique way of education, emphasising equivalence and reciprocity: working with young people means acting on the principle of dialogue between *I–Thou*. This means that the educator has to establish a relationship with the learner as an entity/personality with an individual. This relationship creates a dialogue space in the study process, where both the teacher's influence and the abilities and needs of students can be expressed. These roles of an instructor and learner do not compete but are of the complementary and cooperating character. This principle of dialogue is fundamental and one of the primary education conditions to ensure that other methods, creative or practical activities are effective and that study goals are implemented.

Interestingly, Buber rejects any sharp duality between *I–Thou* and *I–It* relations. For Buber, there is always an interaction between *I–Thou* and *I–It*, between these two basic relationship categories. Therefore, *I–It* is an objective or instrumental link that allows people to meet their basic needs and desires because we are material entities. Still, it can also be said that the *I–Thou* relationship is a personal or spiritual relationship that enables people to realise themselves in a creative, intimate and spiritual way because we are also subjective spirit entities (Guilherme, Morgan 2009).

Buber's dialogue provisions can be applied in distance education to form and strengthen virtual communication and relationships between educators and learners. In addressing this issue, it should be noted that distance studies are transferred to the virtual reality created by online platforms, which results in the disappearance of relations and the authenticity of emotions and feelings. Moreover, on the one hand, the internet as a tool provides a particular advantage for distance learning. It enables the space for dialogue as it provides opportunities to simultaneously access and communicate with many students in different locations. On the other hand, the internet controls and limits the educator's ability to enter into a dialogue relationship with learners as *I–Thou*. In the process of distance learning, technologies (e.g. computers, mobile phones and cameras) acquire an important role as a mediator to connect the educator and the learner – both participants – into a common study area. However, the interactive dialogue being constructed in cyberspace only imitates the illusion of proximity because the human face and voice remain unauthentic (Asakavičiūtė 2020). An equally important expression of emotions and other elements of nonverbal communication also remain challenging to notice. A mediated space is not a reality but just a reproduction of reality. It is a flat world wherein little space is left for senses, feelings and soul. Gilbert Garza (2002) states that 'the internet reveals the world as a spectacle for the eye, and all within its view becomes a matter to be seen' (Garza 2002: 195). So people are superficially monitored on the computer screen without seeking to know each other authentically. A man becomes not a person but a superficial picture that lacks depth, spirit and life. Therefore, it has to be admitted that virtual relationships are very different from the actual relationships 'with flesh and blood'. 'In this way, the fleshy vital other is either absent altogether, reduced to points of light or pixels, or further reduced to flashing letters on a chat-room screen' (Garza 2002: 195).

Thus, in the context of Buber's philosophy, virtual dialogue does not compare to the live communication between the educator and the learner that takes place in the natural environment and reality (classroom). The internet encourages to see or watch rather than to participate or to be in. However, for Buber, the dialogue relationship is not something one can only watch from outside of a computer, but the fact that 'I'm all involved in it' (Buber 1998: 103). Thus, from the point of view of Buber's philosophy, online studies in many cases form not a dialogue relationship *I–Thou* but a technical relationship and monologue based on *I–It*. The second case is dominated by isolation and exclusion, which are reinforced and consolidated by the non-use of video cameras.

However, although the conclusion is that it is difficult to form a fully-fledged relationship between educators and learners in the virtual space, it does not mean that this connection cannot be achieved by targeting not only external technical capabilities (e.g. video cameras) but primarily by forming well-meaning inner intimacy of educators, their sincere concern towards learners as subjects.

INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

Thus, for Buber, education is inevitable of dialogic nature 'because it implies the inclusion of the Other; education is necessarily founded on *I–Thou* relations and is concerned with 'character formation', i.e. it aims to enable us to live in a real community with each other in society' (Guilherme 2015: 787–801). It is important to explore more widely what the term 'inclusion' means for Buber. This category has many layers, shades and interpretations. First of all, there is an inseparable link between dialogue and inclusion. The authentic dialogue involves both participants of the dialogue, not to isolate them from other people and the world. Still, on the contrary – the dialogue involves all other relations with the community, the world and nature. In this way, inclusion enables an individual to experience a full and meaningful authentic existence and be an active and conscious creator of society, culture and history. Education must be conscious, and Buber's '*Between Man and Man*' (2002) contradicts the *top-down* knowledge model. According to Buber, education is also the development of character and values, together with life's knowledge, moral attitudes and social experience.

So from the comparative point of view, *I–Thou* is an inclusive relationship that promotes reciprocity, activity, awareness, creativity and integration. *I–It* is an exclusive relationship that increases passivity, alienation, consumerism and isolation. Thus, in a broad sense, inclusion can be perceived as a part of dialogue education, which helps develop a young person's character, his/her ability to integrate into the community, the ability to share, tolerate, accept and listen to others. Inclusion and exclusion are essential categories, not only in the context of education and their weight arises in the existential view that 'inclusion and exclusion are different ways of life in the world' (Wayne 2013).

In the context of *inclusion*, dialogue education is not just a level of knowledge, concepts and words, 'it is a turn to the other' and 'it is a genuine concern for the other'. The educator seeks to hear what the learner says and understand his experiences and emotions. Buber points out that the educator can only play his/her role as a teacher and start the 'real process of education' when he/she has 'experienced the other side', which means a deep inner engagement. In his '*Education*' (2002), Buber uses a metaphorical expression to convey the meaning of inclusion: when a person beats another, he must suffer a blow in his soul which he strikes himself. The educator has to experience what it means to be a student and feel how his own words/methods affect learners. This is the ability to involve the student's experience and point

of view in the field of self-perception. Thus, Buber describes a relationship based on inclusion as the first step that the educator should take toward the learner. The actual education process can only occur on the ground of a relationship based on reciprocity, a genuine dialogue between educators and students. Such a dialogue is possible only if the student trusts the educator, if the student feels accepted. Otherwise, any endeavour to educate will lead to rebellion and lack of interest' (Guilherme, Morgan 2009: 567).

Thus, Buber helps to understand the importance of each lecturer's inner intents and efforts in the education process. Buber thought that openness and good intentions of teachers encourage students to accept them as *Thou*. According to Daniel Murphy (1988), Buber's sincere speaking and listening is essential to effective learning and ultimately to the whole pursuit of truth.

It should be noted that Buber points out that in the case of inclusion, differences and distinctiveness are preserved. The educator experiences what the learner experiences, he/she understands everything through the learner's eyes and without losing his/her perspective and control as a lecturer (Guilherme, Morgan 2009). The learner is also encouraged to share experience, to accept the instructor's leadership without losing spontaneousness and creativity. In this way, inclusion creates a space for cooperation, actively monitors and evaluates reality, and provides feedback between learners and educators. All of this becomes a bridge that helps the educator to involve young people in society and culture.

The concept of Buber's inclusion in the process of distance learning helps to highlight the weakening of community and growing exclusion, which is determined not only by technology mediation but, above all, by the educator's own efforts to meet formal standards and to convey as much knowledge as possible during the lecture without giving sufficient attention to maintaining and forming communication/interoperability with learners. In other words, in distance education, this becomes secondary when Buber puts the relationship in the priority place. Moreover, as has already been mentioned, in distance studies virtual space illustrates human proximity and the world of feelings. Especially when the cameras are disconnected, when the educator loses video communication with learners, the segregation increases, and the human factor disappears, as there are many black cells on the computer screen that are only anonymous objects (*It*). By creating 'secure walls' and hiding under dark screens, students show that they do not accept teachers like *Thou* with the capital letter. The internet creates a world that we perceive as 'seeing and listening' that is a two-dimensional reality for which the image is important. In other words, 'the internet is made for the eye and ear' (Garza 2002). Therefore, to achieve the quality of distance learning, it is necessary to ensure that learners hear and see the educator's facial expressions, emotions and gestures. The absence of cameras in the study process forms not a community space but a collection of faceless, anonymous black screens. Every young person has a 'community need', which always accompanies the desire to realise his/her identity and to be recognised. It has to be admitted that during distance studies, the lecturer, sitting in front of a black screen, often leads not to a dialogue but to a monologue when talking to himself/herself. Such a process of education is based on an information dialogue or monologue (*I–It*). In the monologue, 'everyone speaks to himself, each one is left to himself only', says Buber (2001: 71).

Thus in the educational process, Buber calls for a fundamental difference between *I–Thou* and *I–It*, which helps distinguish the opposite features of the study process: inclusion or exclusion. In the first case, there is reciprocity, trust and cooperation. There is a mechanical

or marketing dialogue in the second *I–It*, which determines that disconnection, distrust and psychological tension prevail in the study process. Prejudices and beliefs are also exacerbated in relations (Laverty, 2007).

From the perspective of Buber's philosophy, it is necessary to look for opportunities to strengthen the lecturer–student interaction in the virtual space in distance learning. In addition, increasing exclusion is one of the causes of the ever-increasing individualism and egocentrism of students. Buber (1998: 130) states that 'in the fundamental word *I–It* 'I' appears as an ego'. According to him, a self-centered person does not participate in the relationships, does not enter into relationships. Still, he opposes himself with others (teacher, classmates), society and the world. Such a person is alone, alienated, belongs only to himself and thinks only of himself, takes care only of himself. Buber's attitudes help understand how important it is to look for opportunities to transfer the interaction between teachers and students in distance studies from the objective, actual technical level to the emotional, personal level. Thus, virtual relationships are not blindly mechanical and they can also be respectful and cooperative relationships.

Moreover, creating a space of community and communion is an integral part of the education process, since only in the dialogue-based soil can common human values be developed, and the ability to create a genuine, authentic relationship with others can be acquired. This shows that full-fledged education also includes value-building. Just like Kierkegaard, Buber perceived the development of values and responsibilities as very important. Buber (1998: 169) emphasised that the dialogical ratio *I–Thou* encourages to commit and create a relationship of responsibility: '*I–Thou* is not only in the relationship but also in responsibility'. Thus the development of responsibility is possible only through a dialogue, where a person learns to hear, accept and understand the other. For 'inclusion (i.e. the experiencing of the other's experience) is that makes a relation mutual, and it is only through mutuality that we place ourselves and the other within the moral sphere; it is only through mutuality that we ascribe the other with rights and duties and vice versa' (Guilherme, Morgan 2012: 986).

For Buber, *Thou* becomes 'like a mirror' that helps a person to see and comprehend himself/herself: 'I will not say anything about myself, without looking at another as a living mirror of my own. The Other is a "project", a sketch, meaning of a personality's I-existence in the coming life' (Starovoytenko, Derbeneva 2017: 385). So the next other, a teacher, is not just an instrument that conveys knowledge. The educator's personality should help young people to see and understand what to align with, what to aim for and how to behave. Thus, it should be concluded that Buber's dialogical education is not focused only on the development of critical thinking but also on value development because the dialogue takes place not only in words but also through the educator's person himself/herself (personal example). While conveying the values of life, the truths are encouraged by the openness of learners, thus creating relationships of respect and trust that determine the success of studies and fertility. In this context, Buber's important position is that the educator's personality demonstrates and teaches without words. Emmanuel Levin, a phenomenologist and famous follower of Buber, also emphasised the importance of the '*Other-Face*' in the value and self-knowledge process. Levin points out that the *Face of the Other* reminds me of my responsibility. The book '*Ethics and Infinity*' (1994) states: 'Another person is the face <...> The face says <...> Face asks me and tells me. Its meaning is an expressed command. To be more precise, the face before me is a commandment.' The direct experience of the Other shows the limits of the individual's function and liberty.

Interpreting the insights of the latter dialogue representatives Buber and Levin in the context of distance education, it can be stated that the opportunity to see the personality of the lecturer, his/her face develops the student's responsibility and reminds him/her of duties. This allows assuming that if cameras are not turned on during ongoing studies, students' involvement in the studies and the assimilation of knowledge and the value education becomes weaker, i.e. students' perception of responsibility for the study process and fulfillment of their duties. Inclusion in the study process forms an unbroken chain of education with such factors like awareness, confidence, activity, respect, responsibility and relationship, and, conversely, exclusion promotes egoism, passivity, one-sidedness, superficiality, competition and resistance.

To sum up, Buber's philosophy does not provide specific methods or techniques for dialogue techniques or formats. Rather his philosophy of education represents views on communication between the educator and the learner and indicates the direction and orientation to be followed to prepare young people for life. Adir Cohen (1979) notes that according to Buber's education philosophy, it would be complicated to create an educational model because each time the educator–learner encounters happen anew, they are unique. Buber himself was little concerned about teaching programs, methods and examinations, but rather about giving a student an authentic identity, how to form a single, comprehensive personality, to show him/her the way to responsibility and love (Hodes 1972).

CONCLUSIONS

The theoretical analysis revealed that the improvement of the quality of distance studies predetermined by the COVID-19 pandemic in the 21st century could be based on Buber's education philosophy, where the priority focus in the study process is on the formation of the relationship/link between teachers and learners as *I–Thou* communication. The formation of Buber's dialogue relationship *I–Thou* cannot be explicitly described by educational methods or techniques. This relationship is primarily based on the pedagogue's individual, spiritual values, which help maintain an active and sincere relationship between teachers and students.

The commercialised and mediated world is also leading to considerable changes in the education system. However, Buber's education philosophy reveals that it is not figures, knowledge or results that matter the most but rather a person, values, openness and sincerity in the process of education. Therefore, proper and comprehensive use of technologies is essential to ensure the quality of studies by conveying theoretical knowledge and encouraging the learner's active involvement in the study process, participation in dialogue and sharing of experience. This calls for attention to be paid to the need to re-examine the link between tradition and innovation in education. Reducing *exclusion* and promoting *inclusion* is becoming a strategic objective of distance learning. The educator must convey theoretical knowledge and encourage young people to develop, participate in the world, change and create it, and act not separately but jointly.

The analysis of Buber's philosophy of education also revealed that establishing a relationship is becoming a priority method of education. The educator cannot be limited to the simple processing and transmission of information. In education studies we can observe many more systematic instructions that mechanise and objectivise the process and direct attention to the formation/support of communication with the student himself/herself. Monologic/information communication model *I–It*, which only concerns the transfer of knowledge, should be avoided. *How to teach* is not just an instrumental technique. It is a relative and interactive task

that requires the integration of different teaching and learning processes and values. Therefore, in the process of education, it is very important to be able to establish an interactive inner relationship, due to which teachers can show the learner care and attention in the online space, which can help to increase and create an atmosphere of trust and commonality, which positively affects the virtual study space and leads to *I–Thou* communication.

Thus, according to the attitudes of Buber, the philosopher and educator, it should be emphasised that people's relationship, dialogue, communication, interaction, exchange of values, experiences, emotions, information and perceptions, as well as face-to-face studies, remain the essential factor. Besides, the inner openness of the educators, the sincerity directed to the student and the concern, opens up opportunities to establish a closer relationship with the student even during distance studies. Also, we can state that the absence of a video camera increases the passivity of students and the loss of responsibility for the study process. Therefore, even in distance studies, video communication should maintain an active process of communication, cooperation and feedback. The assumption is that the non-use of a video camera is linked not only to the limited provision, reception and perception of knowledge/information but also to the exclusion of the learner, self-isolation through the transition to a one-sided *I–It* relationship.

Finally, technologies (internet and use of cameras) can establish conditions for creating a common study area and maintaining communication. However, the educator's functions cannot be replaced/compensated solely by technology or, in other words, robotised. Regardless of the cultural, social and economic situation and the change in educational paradigms, learners are looking for an open and sincere *I–Thou* relationship in the process of education studies.

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Aš–Tu komunikacija nuotolinėse studijose žvelgiant iš Martino Buberio filosofijos perspektyvos

Santrauka

COVID-19 pandemijos metu internetinė erdvė tapo viena iš svarbiausių priemonių, užtikrinančių aukštojo mokslo studijų tęstinumą. Įsitvirtinęs nuotolinis mokymas remiasi virtualia komunikacija, kuri, pakeisdama tarpasmeninio bendravimo patirtį, kelia daug diskusijų ieškant galimybių užtikrinti nuotolinių studijų efektyvumą ir jų tobulinimą. Straipsnyje nagrinėjamos Martino Buberio dialoginio ugdymo nuostatos, kurios tampa ypač aktualios dabartiniame interneto amžiuje, kai technologijų ir medijų suabsoliutinimas kelia daug grėsmių tarpasmeninių santykių ir dvasinių vertybių ugdymui. Pirmoje straipsnio dalyje aptariamas santykis *Aš–Tu* kaip esminis ugdymo pamatas. Atskleidžiama, kad M. Buberis pabrėžia ne teorinių žinių, bet pirmiausia santykio prioritetą ir svarbą jauno žmogaus ugdymo procese. Antroje straipsnio dalyje remiantis M. Buberio filosofija nagrinėjamos nuotolinėse studijose virtualios komunikacijos metu kylančios atskirties ir susvetimėjimo problemos. Taigi straipsnio analizė atskleidžia nuotolinių studijų tobulinimo galimybes siekiant objektyvius, formalius ir instrumentinius dėstytojų ir studentų *Aš – tai* santykius pakelti į subjektyvią *Aš–Tu* komunikacijos plotmę.

Raktažodžiai: Buberis, ugdymo filosofija, santykis, virtuali komunikacija, nuotolinės studijos, virtualus dialogas