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Ways to Realize the Subject-Subject Interaction in the Process of Teaching Foreign Language Communication

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Abstract

The article deals with the definition of the term “subject-subject interaction” on the grounds of the scientific and pedagogical literature analysis. This technology involves the highest level of pedagogical interactions which may be characterized by students’ and teachers’ cooperation, partnership and reflexive management. The author highlights the main ways to efficiently realize the subject-subject interaction in the process of teaching foreign language communication in higher educational establishments. In addition, it is proven that the application of these interactive technologies increases the interest of participants and increases their enthusiasm for information exchange. It also helps them to discuss academic problems, persist in their ideas, prove their point of view or to put forward other problem-solution.

Keywords: Foreign Language Communication, Interaction, Interactive Learning Technologies, Student, Subject-Subject-Interaction, Teacher.

Introduction

Nowadays, all educational systems in the world are undergoing significant transformations. It is becoming apparent that global educational systems at every level encourage educational interaction of its participants. These systems aim at the concordance of external influences to internal personality traits, which ensures the changes in the consciousness and behaviour. Such interpretation corresponds to the modern learning paradigm; new conceptual approaches – humanistic, constructivist, learner-centred pedagogical ideology (Alur, Fatima, & Joseph, 2002; Motschnig-Pitrik, & Mallich, 2004).

The modern learning paradigm make available the platform for the educational process to be organized as interactions between teachers and students. In contrast to the traditional dominance of teachers over students’ cognitive activity, teachers these days reasonably play indirect role in their education and upbringing. Modern teachers take and treat each learner as a self-developing subject, encouraging and helping their professional and personal self-determination (Niemiec, & Ryan, 2009; Sarfo, & Adusei, 2015).

The Question of the Subject-Subject Interaction

Famous Ukrainian educators [H. Vashchenko, A. Makarenko, V. Sukhomlynskyi] devoted their time to work on the ideas of constructive pedagogical interaction in the educational process. Theoretical aspects of social and learning interactions have been grounded in the researches of such eminent psychologists [as Sh. Amonashvili, L. Vyhotskyi, V. Davydov, D. Elkonin, O. Leontiev.

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H. Andreieva, O. Bodalov, A. Dobrovych, M. Kahan, V. Kunitsyna, B. Lomov, and Ye. Melibrud] who researched into the processes of personal interaction from the point of view of communication psychology. Others [like Ye. Bondarevska, I. Bekh, V. Rybalka, V. Sierikov, O. Orlov, and I. Yakimanska] also analysed certain aspects of these processes in terms of the learner-centred approach. Kh. Liimets, V. Liaudis, A. Markova, O. Petrovskyi, D. Feldshtein researched the problem in the context of educational cooperation. However, the question of the subject-subject interaction in the process of teaching foreign language communication in higher educational establishments has not been studied thoroughly (Feschuk, 2016; Kasiarum, 2013; Pavlenko, 2003; Tarnopolsky, 2000). The purpose of this research is to describe the ways to realize subject-subject interaction in the process of teaching high school students to converse in a foreign language.

The Concept “Subject-Subject Interaction”

Interaction as a scientific category is characterized by a democratic nature that is based on the equality of the both sides of the pedagogical process. Both participants of the pedagogical interaction are in asymmetric relations in turns, depending on which side is the subject or the object of the educational process. Such equal relations cause reciprocal influence and changes that predetermine a peculiar form of the subject-subject interaction or cooperation.

In this article, the author treats the subject-subject interaction as the interchange of educational quintessence. It allows the privilege to enjoy equal rights between the subjects of the pedagogical process which takes place during joint educational activity and is mediated by interpersonal relations. In other words, subject-subject interaction explains the highest level of pedagogical interaction, which is characterized by students’ and teachers’ cooperation. This cooperation occurs in the form of both partnership and reflexive management.

At the high school level, the organization of the subject-subject interaction differs from the strictly rationalized approach to teaching and learning. Teachers desist from using traditional authoritarian teaching methods like the use of demanding discipline and critical remarks toward students. Rather, teachers appreciate each student as an integrated personality; whose development is the main aim of the educational process (Edward, 1991).

These conditions regulate the contemporary educational environment by encouraging the formation of students’ pedagogical abilities. It also helps students to realize their personal potential. The establishment of such a favourable environment for both students’ professional and personal development promotes their foreign language communicative competence.

To foster a sound subject-subject interaction environment, some scholars believe that the following characteristics should be in existence: (1) humanization of the pedagogical process when the subject of the learner’s individuality is preserved; (2) humanization of pedagogical influence on the scientific methods; (3) bringing education closer to real life and using both personal and collective experience in this regard; and (4) communication of subjects’ mutual support and respect (Dychkivska, 2004). In effect, such an environment harmonizes with the personal integrated world of the subjects, and it ensures their psychological comfort.

In the course of the analysis of the scientific and pedagogical sources (Dychkivska, 2004; Edward, 1991; Felder, 1994; Kagan, 1994; Lyaudis, 1980; Maksiuta, 2007; Roger, & Johnson, 2001), it had been found out that one of the efficient ways to realize the subject-subject interaction in the process of teaching foreign language communication is to use interactive learning methods. Interactive learning is known to be characterized by a high level of intensive interpersonal communication, activities exchange, wide range of kinds, forms and methods, and purposeful reflection of the participants.

Interactive Learning and the Process of Teaching Foreign Language Communication

Nowadays the term “interactive cooperation” is more often used in domestic and foreign literature in the context of learning foreign language. In a wider sense, interactive cooperation means a dialogue between any subjects – using all available ways and methods. Both sides actively participate in the dialogue, exchanging questions and answers. In the educational process, the education based on interaction is called an “interactive learning”. The lexeme “interaction”; is derived from the English word “interact” (inter – mutual, act – do something). Interactive means cooperating with someone or something [e.g. a computer] in the form of a dialogue (Kagan, 1994).

So, interactive learning is, first of all, learning with the help of a dialogue, in the course of which cooperation is performed. Apart from this general description, interactive learning includes an extremely important element which allows teachers and students to treat it as one of the ways to realize the subject-subject interaction in the process of teaching foreign language communication. This component is the inner dialogue which means existential processing of the obtained information, giving it a personal sense in the process of reflection (Lyaudis, 1980). That is why, interactive learning methods are gaining more and more popularity nowadays, leading to the change in the type of interaction between teachers and students.

Interactive pedagogical cooperation is characterized by an intensive communication of its participants. It is aimed at the alteration, and improvement of teachers' and students' behavioural models and activities (Felder, 1994). At present, while teaching foreign languages in high school, special attention should be drawn to the interactive educational cooperation of the pedagogical process participant. The main signs and tools included in this process include: polylogue, dialogue, intersubjective relations, freedom of choice, content-creativity, creation of situation success, positive assessment, reflection, etc.

Interactive Technologies Used in Teaching Foreign Language

It is essential that the characteristic traits of the interactive technologies used in teaching foreign language meet the needs of time. Firstly, interactive learning calls for cooperation between the agents of the educational process [direct or indirect], which makes it possible to realize the ideas of peer training and collective mental work in the course of teaching and learning. Secondly, under the condition of applying interactive technologies, all the participants are interested in the result and are ready for the information exchange to discuss the problem, continue in their ideas, and to prove their point of view or suggest their variant of the problem-solution. Specifically, this fact proves the communicative aspect of the interactive learning together with the application of modern information technologies [distance learning]. Thirdly, this type of learning is based on real problems and professional situations. Learning reality is both personally and associatively motivated. That is, it gives rise to personal response to active communication, and, as a result, each educational process participant gains more personal experience.

The analysis of the following theoretical sources (Kagan, 1994; Lyaudis, 1980; Maksiuta, 2007; Osova, 2017; Panyushkin, 1984; Roger, & Johnson, 2001, Spencer, 1999; Tellis, 1997) allow one to single out some other ways to realize the subject-subject interaction in the process of teaching foreign language communication. For example, since the 1980s, British and American schools have been actively implementing such methods as cooperative learning in small groups, and team learning [learning in cooperation]. Learning in small groups [from two to five members] was used in Western Germany, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Australia, Japan, etc. as early as at the beginning of the XXth century. It is an important element of the pragmatic approach to education presented in John Dewey's philosophy and his project method (Rud, Garrison, & Stone, 2009). However, it was only in the 1980s that this approach was developed and described in detail by the three groups of American educators from The University of Minnesota – R. Johnson, D. Johnson ["Learning Together"], Elliot Aronson's innovators group from California ["Jigsaw"], from Johns Hopkins University – R. Slavin ["Team Learning" and "Jigsaw -2"]; research activities of those who learn in groups became the groundwork of Sh. Sharan's team from Tel Aviv University.

On the grounds of the scientific and pedagogical sources review (Osova, 2017; Panyushkin, 1984; Spencer, 1999; Tellis, 1997), five main elements of the cooperative learning can be singled out to include:

- i. positive interdependency ["we'll drown or swim out together", coordinated actions, active work, rejoice at common success];
- ii. coordination "face to face" [contribute to each other's success, support and assist one another];
- iii. personal and group responsibility ["say 'no' to inactivity!"];
- iv. interpersonal relations [active communication within the group and with the teacher, formation of skills to take part in discussions, to make decisions, to solve conflicts, trust building];

- v. summarizing of joint actions results in groups [discussion of behaviour patterns, monitoring each team member's success, grades are of socio-academic character].

The educator either guides or consults the group, and the rest of their time can be devoted to the individual approach to each student. The authors of this method believe that teachers should be more concentrated on the questions of the group formation, that is on the students' placement according to their personal and psychological characteristics, level of knowledge, etc., as well as on the development of tasks to every group and activity stimulation and motivation.

Doctor Spencer Kagan developed a range of class activities that contribute to obtaining the best results from team work: "Think-pair-share" – triad. The triad concept means that, the individual thinking should be followed by a discussion with a partner and then sharing with the other team. In addition, the "three-step interview" or "Round Robin Brainstorming" presents the method of ideas generation through collective discussion with absolute freedom to suggest various solutions. Finally, the "three-minute review" or "Team Pair solo" allows working in the team, then with a partner, and then alone (Kagan, 1994).

Group Learning Versus Learning in Cooperation

Group learning should not be identified with learning in cooperation. According to the scheme of learning process participants' productive cooperation suggested by V. Liaudys, as well as collaboration dynamics formation developed by V. Paniushkin, three stages of cooperation formation are singled out. The first is a preparatory one, that is the stage of attraction to activity. The second is the stage of collaboration dynamics – agreement of teachers' and students' actions, the third is the partnership as the result of this process (Panyushkin, 1984).

In the course of the scientific search three principal differences have been found. Learning in cooperation is characterized by:

- * the dependence on the single recognized aim which the students can reach only after joining their efforts;

- * the dependence on the type of the award. Each learner gets the same, usually averaged [mediated], grade for their academic knowledge and all members' achievements together;

- * dependence on the information sources, as a group member knows only a part of the general information, necessary for their contribution to taking the final team's decision.

The aforesaid allows us to claim that cooperative type of learning contributes to the enhancement of learning success because students do not compete with each other, but vice versa support one another. So, even a weak student feels a bit more confident and takes delight in the learning outcomes.

Subject-Subject Interaction and the Process of Teaching Foreign Language Communication

These days, the subject-subject interaction is widely used in the process of teaching foreign language communication in higher educational establishments. One of the popular methods is brainstorming. This is the joint active consideration of something, search for the truth on the grounds of the absolute prohibition of any sharp criticism of the ideas suggested by the participants, as well as the encouragement to express one's own thoughts, to take everything with humour (Santanen, Briggs, & de Vreede, 2004).

Another wide-spread form of interactive learning in teaching foreign languages in higher pedagogical educational establishments is also a role play (Limbu, 2012). Business games, used along with role plays, help to reproduce communicative environment which positively influences the formation of social and professional qualities of future specialists. Business games that are based on the methods of independent search for the best variants of the problem-solution not only improve theoretical knowledge, but also form functional skills, develop creativity and belief in oneself (Gooding, & Keys, 1990).

Using such methods as discussion, debates, and interview stipulates talking about a topical problem. They promote formation of value judgments and develop communication culture in case of favourable psychic atmosphere, mutual respect and interest. Simulation method includes artificial problem situations that represent various aspects of reality. It allows subjects to analyse a wide range of factors that influence them, find out the reasons why the communication was not

successful, gain personal experience. Situational method, or Case Study, one of the most popular ones in teaching foreign language, originated in Harvard Business School (Tellis, 1997).

Tellis (1997) underline in the definition of Case Study that teachers and students are in permanent interaction in order to do a particular professional [educational] task. Real “cases” or situations they choose offer justified behaviour patterns and arguments that are dictated by real life. The attention is focused on the process of professional skills formation, on deliberate knowledge acquisition, but not on automatic memorization typical for traditional authoritarian education. The obvious advantage of the educational interaction method is the development of students’ value system, professional competitive qualities that appear as a result of creative, emotional discussion and solution of the simulated real problem. Teachers synthesize performance of several functions: communicative, educational, organizational and research ones. Accordingly, a Case Study is applied to help a future professional [especially in the areas of education, medicine, business and law] to understand the specificity of relations, motivation, responsibility types, to acquire communicative skills to adapt as quickly as possible to realities of future activity, etc.

Conclusion

This paper explores in detail, the process of teaching foreign language communication. The methods needed to realize the subject-subject interaction include: application of interactive, cooperative learning technologies and team learning (learning in collaboration). Interactive learning stipulates cooperation between the agents of educational process, which allows subjects to realize the ideas of peer training and collective mental work in the course of teaching and learning. Application of the above-mentioned technologies makes all the participants interested in the result and ready for the information exchange, problem discussion, perseverance in their ideas, proving their point of view or suggesting their variant of the problem-solution.

The above-mentioned ways to realize the subject-subject interaction in the process of teaching foreign language communication represent all levels of communication. Hence, it becomes clear that taking into consideration the type of teachers’ and students’ participation in a communicative educational action, their interpersonal relations, as well as the way of collaboration procedural realization is one of the most important conditions for efficient development of foreign language communicative competence.

Further investigations are necessary to study the experience of language interaction realization in the process of teaching foreign language in higher pedagogical educational establishments.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest in relation to this work.

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