Theoretical Foundations for the Problem of Using Language Games to Develop Lexical Speaking Skills

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ABSTRACT

It has long been known that play allows students to discover their capabilities in an immediate environment. Many famous teachers and psychologists have spoken and continue to speak about the role of play in the learning process. It is through play that children learn to assimilate social functions and norms of behaviour as games encourage development. The developmental significance of play is inherent in its very nature since play is always about emotions; and where there are emotions, there is activity, there is attention and imagination, there is thinking. The basis of teaching a foreign language is a game, which is a psychological justification for the transition to a new language of instruction.

The purpose of this article is to assess the methodology of using language games to develop lexical speaking skills.

Keywords: [language games, speaking skills, game typology, method of teaching a foreign language]

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the concept of "games" extends to almost all spheres of life and culture, arousing the interest of scientists in various fields. In philosophical and cultural studies, the game is analysed from the standpoint of its role in human life and its significance for culture (Y. A. Levada, J. Huizinga, and so on). The game is considered as a certain symbol, as a model of special behaviour and a non-standard attitude to what is happening.

The term "game" refers to various, sometimes little similar phenomena that are studied in psychology, pedagogy and even physiology. Play is defined as an action that takes place within certain boundaries of time, space and meaning, according to voluntarily accepted rules, outside the realm of utility or necessity, and this action leads to joy and often causes laughter.

A particular type of game, manifested in speech activity, is the language game. Unlike other types of play, its content is encoded, verbally expressed information.

DISCUSSION

Definition of a language game: game typology

The term "language game" appeared relatively recently (in the works of the philosopher L. Wittgenstein, who defined "language games" as "integral and complete systems of communication, subject to their own internal rules and agreements, the violation of which means going beyond the boundaries of a specific 'game'"), however, the phenomenon itself has a long history in language. Most likely, to one degree or another, language play is inherent in any developed language in all periods of its existence; only the scope of application of play interaction and the degree of relevance of this phenomenon for native speakers in a specific historical situation differ.

It seems to us appropriate to define a language game as a deliberate, targeted violation of a generally accepted norm, committed by a native speaker to achieve certain tasks. On the one hand, this makes it possible to distinguish a language game from a language error (violation of a norm caused by its ignorance, misunderstanding or rejection), and on the other hand, it makes it possible to avoid a certain narrowness in understanding the language game, as defined by L. Wittgenstein, and allows us to consider in this area not only closed game situations that exist on a contractual basis (native speakers accept certain rules and follow them, being within the game and at once outside the boundaries of the real language situation), but also open game interaction between the speakers in the flow real speech (Zakharova, 2006).

From our point of view, however, this definition is too broad since it includes all fiction as all authors strive for great linguistic expressiveness. It seems to us that it is advisable to limit the teleological aspect of the language game to the creation of a comic effect. This is exactly how the language game is understood by A. V. Usolkina (2002), who defines this phenomenon as a special form of lingua-creative thinking, which is the result of a programmed violation of the language scheme and a conscious deviation from the language norm to achieve a certain effect (most often comic).

According to S. Z. Nukhov (2004), a language game is a form of human speech behaviour in which the linguistic personality realizes the ability to display wit in speech, accompanied by the emergence of a comic effect. The recipient of speech shows creativity in perception, thanks to "the ability to evaluate the game, the ability to guess a seemingly insoluble linguistic riddle."

Thus, the language game is associated with the implementation of the category of the definition of the comic. Since language play is always implemented in communication and is associated with witty and purposeful manipulation of the figurative resources of language, we believe that it should be considered from the standpoint of speech construction strategies. This approach allows us to define a language game as a special strategy of speech expression (including artistic speech), associated with the generation of a comic effect based on a conscious violation of the functional-semantic patterns of the use of linguistic forms. It is no coincidence that some researchers consider it more correct to talk about a speech game since the game is implemented in speech, taking into account the situation and the characteristics of perception (Tsikusheva, 2009).

Let us emphasise once again that the game is a means of creating a communication situation because the use of educational and speech game situations fully meets the age characteristics of children and creates conditions for their natural communication. The educational and speech games used differ from entertaining ones in that they have a secondary purpose or a narrow methodological goal. An educational speech game situation encourages students to speak and act according to the rules of the game for educational and methodological purposes (Lyakhovitsky, 1981). It is the game that increases and maintains interest in communication. The following types of educational speech games can be distinguished:

1. Grammar games, which set the goal of teaching students the use of speech patterns containing certain grammatical difficulties; creating a natural situation for using a given speech pattern; and developing speech activity and independence of students.
2. Lexical games, which are aimed at introducing students to new words and their combinations; training students in the use of vocabulary in situations close to natural settings; intensifying the speech and thinking activity of students; and developing their speech reactions.

3. Phonetic games, which have the goal of training students to pronounce foreign sounds; teaching students to read poetry loudly and clearly; and learning poems to recount them by heart. These games are based on the theatricalisation of carefully selected nursery rhymes. The work is divided into two stages: 1) learning poetry; and 2) theatricalisation of poetry. Here, the teacher's passion and imagination play a big role as they need to be the first to play specific scenes. Phonetics games can be played in teams or individually. Sometimes it happens that extreme immobility of the facial muscles and lips prevents the correct articulation of certain sounds. To do this, you can suggest learning poems to develop the mobility of the speech apparatus. The teacher needs to ensure that the students read clearly and slowly, pausing after each line to perform the required movement of the lips and lower jaw.

4. Auditory games. These games can help achieve listening goals such as teaching students to understand the meaning of a single statement; learning to highlight the main thing in the flow of information; and developing auditory memory and auditory response. It is important that the recordings presented to students reproduce the speech of native speakers. The entry is submitted only once, as the game loses its meaning otherwise.

5. Speech games. These games contribute to the implementation of tasks such as teaching students the ability to express thoughts in their logical sequence; teaching students the practical and creative use of acquired speech skills; and teaching students proper speech reactions in the communication process (Karabanova, 1997).

Game modelling as a method of teaching a foreign language

Pedagogy researchers consider the main functions of a teacher's innovative activity to be the improvement of the pedagogical process and its components, one of which is pedagogical technology as a system of forms, methods and means of teaching that ensures the most effective achievement of a specific set of goals.

Among educational technologies, the leading place is occupied by gaming technologies since they have all the features of active learning methods and have a number of advantages, the main being that gaming technologies allow simulation of professional activities. They contribute to the formation of those traits of a creative personality that encourage active participation in the educational process. Due to their characteristics, gaming technologies involve the process of actively obtaining information (Milrud, 2000).

In teaching foreign languages, researchers H. Schatz and G. Neuper understand game technologies as a system of game exercises aimed at developing various skills and abilities of foreign language speech. As the former notes, gaming technologies, including a system of exercises with elements of role-playing activities, carry the potential for significant emotional impact, and the formation of communication skills and abilities (Brzosko, 2012).

We would like to emphasise that in a foreign language lesson, a special place is occupied by forms of classes that ensure the active participation of each student in the lesson, stimulate verbal communication, and contribute to the formation of interest and desire to learn a foreign language. These problems can be solved using game teaching methods. In the game, the abilities of any person, and especially a younger student, are fully demonstrated. A game is a specially organised activity that requires intense emotional and mental strength. The game involves making decisions: what to do, what to say, how to win. The desire to solve these issues sharpens the mental activity of the players. And if students also speak a foreign language, the game opens up rich learning opportunities.

Game-based teaching methods use various methods of motivation:

1. Solving game problems together stimulates interpersonal communication and strengthens relationships between students (motives for communication).
2. In the game, students can stand up for themselves, their knowledge, and their attitude to activity (moral motives).
3. Each game has a close result (game ending), stimulates the student to achieve the goal (victory) and understands the path to achieving the goal. In the game, students are initially equal, and the result depends on each player and their personal qualities. The impersonal learning process in the game acquires personal significance. A situation of success creates a favourable emotional background for the development of cognitive interest. There is a mystery in the game – an unknown answer, which activates the student's mental activity and pushes them to search for this answer (cognitive motives).

Playful learning cannot be the only method in educational work with students. It does not in itself form the ability to learn but develops the cognitive activity of students.

The game is feasible for almost every student, even those who do not have sufficiently strong knowledge of the language. Competence in solving game problems increases motivation to learn a language. A sense of equality, an atmosphere of enthusiasm and a sense of the feasibility of tasks – all this allows the student to overcome the shyness that prevents them from using words of a foreign language in speech. Anxiety and stiffness gradually decrease, and a positive self-image appears (Panfilova, 2006).

Thus, gaming technologies are a pedagogical tool that can, on the one hand, remove the language barrier, and on the other hand, intensify the learning process, making it active, fruitful, and close to the natural process of communication in a foreign language.

Functions of gaming activity in the process of teaching lexical speaking skills

When using the game method of teaching, the teacher's task is, first of all, to organise the cognitive activity of students, in the process of which their abilities, especially creative ones, can develop.

The use of game forms of learning makes the educational process more meaningful and of higher quality, since:

- the game draws each student individually and all together into active cognitive activity and, thus, is an effective means of managing the educational process;
- learning in the game is carried out through the students' activities, which have the character of a special type of practice, during which up to 90% of the information is absorbed;
- a game is a free activity that provides the opportunity for choice, self-expression, self-determination and self-development for its participants;
- the game has a certain result and stimulates the student to achieve the goal (victory) and understand the path to achieving the goal;
- the game occupies a special place in the system of active learning, as it is both a method and a form of organising learning/teaching, including almost all methods of active learning.

All this allows us to define the game as the highest type of pedagogical activity (Konysheva, 2008).

Game activity in the learning process performs the following functions:

1. The educational function is to develop memory, attention, and perception of information; it leads to the development of general educational skills; and it contributes to the development of foreign language skills.
2. The educational function is to cultivate such a quality as an attentive, humane attitude towards a playing partner during which a sense of mutual assistance and support develops. Students are introduced to cliché phrases of speech

etiquette to improvise speech addresses to each other in a foreign language, which helps develop such a quality as politeness.

3. The entertainment function consists of creating a favourable atmosphere in the lesson, turning the lesson into an interesting and unusual event, an exciting adventure, and sometimes into a fairy-tale world.

4. The communicative function is to create an atmosphere of foreign language communication, unite a team of students, and establish new emotional and communicative relationships based on interaction in a foreign language.

5. Relaxation function – relieving emotional stress caused by the load on the nervous system during intensive learning of a foreign language.

6. The psychological function consists of developing the skills to prepare one's physiological state for more effective activities, as well as restructuring the psyche to assimilate large amounts of information.

7. The developmental function is aimed at the harmonious development of personal qualities to activate the reserve capabilities of the individual.

The place and role of the game method in the educational process, the combination of game and teaching elements largely depend on the teacher's understanding of the functions and classifications of various types of games (Konysheva, 2002).

We especially emphasise that with the help of games:

- the relationship between students and the teacher improves since the latter acts as a communication partner in the game;
- conditions appear to create a creative environment and maintain lively interest;
- an attempt is made to go beyond the limited communication in the classroom;
- a situation is created in which the student can play himself or the role that is assigned to him;

- the time for speech practice increases. Students express their own opinions more often and more often than in other forms of education, express the feelings and thoughts of the characters they play;
- problematic tasks, including projects, are solved through joint efforts, which allows one to gain experience in practical and creative activities;
- great opportunities are created to broaden the horizons of students by getting to know the history, culture, traditions and personalities of the countries of the language being studied (Galskova, 2006).

Thus, it should be remembered that games are not meant for entertainment, but for learning through action. To successfully conduct any communicative game, correct selection of material and careful methodological preparation are necessary.

CONCLUSION

In various pedagogical systems, play was given a different role, but there is not a single system in which play would not be given a place to one degree or another. The game has a variety of functions. This is educational, educational and many others. The game is of great importance for the development of the student's motivational needs. This has been known for decades, as L. S. Vygotsky, while studying the game, brought to the fore the problem of motives and needs as central to understanding the very origin of the game and role-playing game, in particular.

The use of various game techniques and situations in lessons contributes to the formation of a friendly team in the class, so each student in the game has the opportunity to look at himself and his friends from the outside. Language games foster responsibility and mutual assistance in students, since in the game they are often "one team."

In the process of teaching a foreign language to students, the game makes it possible to bring the educational process environment closer to the real conditions of

generating the need for knowledge and its practical application, which ensures students' personal and cognitive activity.

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