Play-based foreign language teaching technology as a means of socialization for junior students

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Abstract

Requirements to results of education put in the forefront studying of the subjects providing successful socialization of the identity of the school student on the basis of broad education and receiving multi-lingual education in the conditions of school with profound learning of foreign language. Pupils of elementary grades, by means of the teacher, have to like consciousness of that the foreign language will allow them to master professionally important elements of communication, to carry out jump in development of future profession, further professional development and socialization. Game methods of development of a foreign language promote the solution of this task. Role-play in the process of learning a foreign language facilitates the development of reflexive thinking abilities the lack whereof in junior students, based on the findings of the ascertaining experimented conducted by the authors, is obvious. Designing role-playing games in the process of learning a foreign language depends on a set of pedagogical conditions that are formed artificially by the instructor. We believe that the major condition for implementing a model for the pedagogical organization of the process of learning German at the initial learning stage in the system of continuing school education is subject-subject interaction based on practice-oriented learning methods. Role-play is one of these methods.

Introduction

The current approach to linguistic education presupposes selecting the content of education and ensuring the continuity of primary general, basic general, and secondary (full) general linguistic education. Requirements for the results of learning put a premium on studying subjects that provide for the successful socialization of students based on all-round learning and receiving a multi-lingual education within the setting of schools with advanced study of foreign languages. In addition, requirements for the results of learning also include preparing a person in the information/ communication area, which helps form effective social communications [Ignatkina, 2009].

Game-based technologies in studying foreign languages

The formation of socially significant personal qualities is a process of exerting a well-directed and spontaneous impact on the structure of personality with a view to orienting it towards the needs of society. This impact is facilitated through the passing on of knowledge on the world around us on by various social institutes – above all, schools.

That said, the conscious study of foreign languages as part of school curricula is, in turn, the principal stimulus for deepening one's speech capacity. It is for this reason that boosting one's motivation toward learning a foreign language serves as a crucial mechanism for fostering socially significant personal qualities through linguistic learning. Only positively motivating a student can activate cognitive processes, perception, memory, and attention in them [Mikhaylenko, 2011].

For that to happen, a situation artificially created by the teacher must arouse in the student a natural interest in personal interaction – as a result, communicative motivation will facilitate the development of other types of motivation as well. Instrumental motivation presupposes having an interest in learning a foreign language as a means of attaining a higher level of personal development and future professional and social advancement. Junior students, with the help of the teacher, ought to realize that a foreign language will help them master professionally crucial elements of personal interaction and achieve a leap in mastering one's future trade and in one's future professional growth. Play-based methods for mastering a foreign language facilitate resolving this objective [Anikeyeva, 1987].

Play helps overcome arising language barriers and boost the effectiveness of grasping test material. Of importance is the use of means of visual presentation (slides, video-films, posters, movie fragments, literary works, articles in print media articles) that portray socially significant professions and situations dealing with social interaction based on illustrating socially significant qualities.

Motivation in learning a foreign language via play-based methods is formed by virtue of the off-beatness of forms of presenting learning material, creating situations for discussion, brainstorming, solving cases and group assignments, and working out group projects. Furthermore, important components in the process of implementing play-based methods are the teacher's emotionality, one's employment of various forms of encouragement and creation of conditions that facilitate fostering creative abilities in students [Goryunova, Sorokina, 2013].

Consequently, considering play-based methods as a means of developing in junior students a motivation for learning a foreign language, we need to look more thoroughly into the very term "play" and its major characteristics. In accordance with the role-related concepts of personal socialization, it is viewed as an aggregate of all social roles it performs in society. A social role is to be construed as a way of conduct for people within the system of interpersonal relations, which is in line with commonly accepted norms and is regulated by a system of norms and rules for behavior depending on one's status in society [Khrabskov, 2012]. In this regard, an important function of personal socialization at junior school age is performed by play-based activity which can help kids start finding their way in real life and picking up the rules for behavior which regulate interpersonal interaction within a community [Khrabskov, 2012]. It is in the process of play that children engage in interaction with the world around them, form new social ties, play various social roles, and, consequently, create a "new reality", which serves for one's forming personality as a favorable background for all-round development.

A dictionary of psychology provides the following definition of the term "play": "a type of activity, under the conditions of situations aimed at re-creating and assimilating social experience, wherein one's self-management of behavior forms and gets perfected". "Play is a necessary form of social activity via which a person either models or actually creates particular structural elements of one's own life space".

Educational play, by the definition by M.G. Yermolayeva, is a "specially arranged activity in which players, who voluntarily join in, follow the play's general objective, are guided by similar initial conditions, use identical means, and observe the same rules, achieve certain results, based on which personal or collective success is assessed" [Khrabskov, 2012]. We have taken this definition as the methodological basis in our study.

Play facilitates both the social-emotional and cognitive development of personality [Zharkov, 2012], which is what its pedagogical essence is about.

The structure of any game presupposes not only the very process of playing but subsequent discussion of its results – this helps make the game complete and analyze the effect from it. The structure of a game, according to I.R. Sorokina, includes the goal and objectives of the game, the process of playing, and discussing the game's results as the final stage [Goryunova, Sorokina, 2013]. The goal of a game as a means of fostering socially significant personal qualities in junior students is governed by requirements set by society and micro-society for the development of personality – in particular, a crucial element of play is vocational guidance work with students

as a means of fostering in them a readiness for effectuating a professional choice. The specificity of the Ural region presupposes placing an emphasis in playing social-professional roles on professions within the technical and natural sciences spectrum as the most sough-after in the region's labor market. During the course of a game, the teacher ought to be able to outline the need for a future graduate's getting a socially sought-after profession, illustrate via simple examples the state of the region's present-day labor market, and outline the ways and means of getting a profession sought after in society. This is what the vocational guidance aspect of play in German class is about.

N.P. Anikeyeva examines the structure of play in more detail and singles out play as an activity and play as a process. The components of play as an activity are goal-setting, planning, implementing a goal, and analyzing the results. The author maintains that motivating play as an activity is achieved, among other things, through elements of competitiveness, as well as those related to students' need for self-affirmation and self-actualization. Play as a process includes the following components: roles taken on by the players; play-based actions as a means of actualizing those roles; the play-based use of objects, i.e. substituting play-based, nominal for real things; the actual relations among the participants; the plot (content), an area of reality nominally reproduced in the game [Anikeyeva, 1987].

In the view of famous pedagogue/didactician D.B. Elkonin, there are four crucial functions of play used in the learning process: firstly, it is a means of developing students' motivational-need domain; secondly, it is a means of cognition; thirdly, it is a means of developing one's thinking abilities; fourthly, it is a means of developing voluntary behavior. As we can see, role-playing is expected to nurture all three components of the structure of students' social competencies we have singled out – cognitive, motivational, and activity-related. And what is crucial here is the following dialectical interrelationship: the formation of the cognitive component takes place through the development of the motivational and activity-related components, while the motivational component is developed through the inclusion in play-based activity, i.e. via the activation, of the activity-related component. This interrelationship is of principal importance in terms of our study and the development of the model for the pedagogical organization of the process of teaching students German at the initial learning stage in the system of continuing school education.

Any educational game possesses distinctive features (according to S.A. Shmakov): the freedom of activity; a creative character; emotionality; the existence of certain rules. These features of play facilitate the development of the subject principle in the personality of students, which is what the activity-based character of play as a process is about [Shmakov, 1994].

In the process of learning a foreign language, of the higher importance is the role-playing type of play, which can be considered as one of the methodological techniques for teaching a foreign language. Role-play as a pedagogical technique for teaching foreign languages has been addressed in the works of R.D. Behn, M. Lynch, W. Littlewood, M. Lamb, and E.L. Towns . These works view role-play as an exact model for communication, since no other methodological

technique for teaching foreign languages can bring across more accurately the subject character of personal interaction. In it, there is an intertwining of verbal and non-verbal interaction between the communicators. In role-play, there is manifested quite vividly the socially-oriented character of teaching a foreign language: there are developed communication skills, students' ability to strike a dialog, hold a conversation and end it in a logical way, i.e. there is formed an information-communication set of competencies. Being tuned into the game's situation helps activate the emotional component of the structure of leaners' personality and through the situation of being tuned into it and being empathic boost one's motivation for learning German and the degree to which one picks up the learning material [Mikhaylenko, 2011].

Ye.I. Passov has identified a number of major objectives in the process of using role-play in foreign language lessons: fostering skills – primarily, communication skills; developing speech skills; developing abilities; fostering the acquisition of knowledge in the area of area studies and language; fostering committing language material to memory [Passov, 1988].

We are of the view that the structure of role-play consists of the following components: the role, the baseline situation, and role-related actions. In this aspect, of most interest to us are the roles and role-related actions of the players as a means of getting the hang of the German language in interactive situations.

Role-play is built on interpersonal relations that are actualized in the process of personal interaction. Being a model for interpersonal interaction, role-play causes a need for interaction in a foreign language, and in that sense it performs the motivational-urging function [Mikhaylenko, 2011].

Role-playing games can be viewed as educational games, since they, to a great extent, govern the choice of language means, facilitate the development of speech skills and abilities, and help model personal interaction in various speech situations, i.e. a role-playing game is an exercise for acquiring skills and abilities in dialogical speech in the setting of interpersonal interaction. In this respect, role-play provides for the educational function.

Role-play fosters the ability to play the role of a different person and see oneself from the interaction partner's eyes. It orients students toward planning out their own speech behavior and that of the interlocutor, fosters the ability to control their actions, and give an objective assessment of the deeds of others. Consequently, role-play performs the orienting function.

Socially oriented linguistic education helps shift the focus towards social roles compared with psychological and interpersonal ones. Social roles help the players to organically tune themselves into the social context and, through the interest in roles played, aroused by the moderator (teacher), pick up their socially significant component. Thus, for instance, the use of social roles in the world of professions helps form the desired image of a professional in professional spheres that are in the highest demand in society.

The role situation as a component of role-play performs the linking function between social roles and the baseline interaction situation.

The regularity of arranging role-play in foreign language lessons through role-playing games facilitates a gradual boost in the degree of teachability of junior students.

Specific play-based situations in implementing role-playing games have been proposed by Ye.Yu. Pryazhnikov [Pryazhnikov, Pryazhnikova, 2010]. Of importance is the socially oriented character of role-playing games, as it helps orient junior students toward nurturing and developing socially significant personal qualities in them.

The goal of such classes governs the course of a role-playing game as well: depending on objectives set, role-playing games can be played in pairs or in groups of several individuals. The most basic type of role-playing game is playing in pairs; it is often done using questionnaires for the mutual exchange of questions. Yet, paired role-play does not leave out the rest of the members of a study group (the class): each of them takes part in the subsequent discussion of the playing process, shares his/her thoughts and makes statements in brief form. This facilitates fostering speech skills and the ability to exchange basic foreign phrases.

Role-play in groups presupposes either simultaneous (parallel) or sequential play in different groups, also followed by a discussion of the game's results. The teacher does not normally interfere in the playing process but can act as a moderator and play a certain role as well. The teacher (moderator) may have to interfere if/when there is a problem during the course of a role-playing game. In that case, the teacher can change the players or just lend a helping hand in the role-playing process [Pryazhnikov, Pryazhnikova, 2010].

The entire role-play process includes several stages – preparatory, content-related, and final (resulting). Some researchers dissect the playing process in even more detail (E.L. Towns), singling out, in addition to the above, the preparatory stage at home and at school and the final stage at home and at school [Dianova, Kostina, 1988].

In the process of socially oriented linguistic education via the role-play method, during the course of teaching German one of the crucial focus areas is the vocational guidance component. The principal function of the German Language discipline in this process is orientation towards the formation of preconditions for the development of junior students' professional-labor competencies, which then will be developed further at older stages in the system of continuing school education. The impact of learning German on preconditions for the formation of a professional choice is manifested through the process of formation of the following socially and professionally significant qualities: being oriented towards social communications; being oriented towards cognitive activity; having a sense of purpose, being hardworking and conscientious; being flexible at switching one's attention; having high creative potential and striving for self-actualization. These qualities are the indispensable qualities of a professionally competent individual with a technical and natural sciences specialty. The formation of these qualities ought to take place already at the initial stage of learning at school.

In the view of N.A. Kretova and S.I. Vershinin, junior students are characterized by having little-differentiated notions of the world of professions [Kretova and Vershinin, 2010]. One of the objectives in teaching junior students a foreign language in the form of role-play is to conduct

professional informing in the process of play, factoring in the regional specificity of a region's labor market.

Through professionally oriented role-play in teaching a foreign language, there takes place the preparation of students for professional self-determination. In this regard, the principal objective is arousing students' interest in work activity as a precondition for future professional activity. As is indicated by the results of an ascertaining experiment conducted by the authors, junior students mostly exhibit an instrumental motivation for work, and it will be reinforced during the course of students growing up. This trend can be overcome through activating an interest in work via professionally oriented role-play. Role-playing vocational guidance games with junior students in foreign language lessons are oriented toward fostering a value-related attitude towards work and cultivating an interest in academic and work activity via a play-based situation of being tuned into particular types of it.

The formation of socially significant personal qualities in junior students in the process of teaching foreign languages in role-play situations depends on the level of students' subjectness – its activeness or passiveness in the process of cognition and action. This issue is, primarily, raised by researchers in relation to teaching college students [Takanova , 2010] and has seen quite little research in terms of teaching junior students. Furthermore, the subjectivity of junior students is by itself a precondition for the formation of socially significant personal qualities in them as well.

Social and professional thought pictures as means of fostering socially significant personal qualities ought to be easy to understand and accessible to junior students and, besides, be relevant and in demand in their daily living environment. The formation of thought pictures occurs via means of foreign language personal interaction, which makes the process of mastering social roles played more exciting. The formation of socially significant personal qualities in junior students through means of teaching German organically facilitates the development of the creative personality of students, the making and development of their I-concept. A foreign language acts in this case as a mechanism for creating a personality-forming environment.

Learning a foreign language in the form of role-play, apart from vocational guidance, makes an impact on the process of formation of a number of socially significant personal qualities – above all, information-communication ones. Communicating confidently as a personal quality is impossible without practicing one's speech culture, without knowing the fundamentals of a foreign culture. Communicating confidently is but a crucial instrument for professional development and growth in present-day society. Besides, role-play in the process of learning a foreign language facilitates the development of reflexive thinking abilities the lack whereof in junior students, based on the findings of the ascertaining experimented conducted by the authors, is obvious. These abilities, according to A.P. Rudenko [Rudenko, 2007], are traced directly to the ability to analyze the situation and comprehend the problem set, which is quite in line with the goals and objectives of role-play.

Conclusion

Designing role-playing games in the process of learning a foreign language depends on a set of pedagogical conditions that are formed artificially by the instructor. We believe that the major condition for implementing a model for the pedagogical organization of the process of learning German at the initial learning stage in the system of continuing school education is subject-subject interaction based on practice-oriented learning methods. Role-play is one of these methods. In addition, pedagogical conditions also include:

– creation of an atmosphere of creative self-actualization and search-exploratory interaction;

– artificial problematization of the situation, which aims the players at a concerted search for optimum solutions;

– arrangement of the link between situations designed and real life, which facilitates the concretization of the process of formation of socially significant personal qualities;

– orientation towards the creation of a positive motivation for junior students and designing a success situation in the process of role-play.

Thus, the above pedagogical conditions, as well as any principles, forms, and methods employed, form the basis of pedagogical support for the model for the pedagogical organization of the process of teaching students a foreign language at the initial learning stage in the system of continuing school education.

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Игровые технологии обучения иностранному языку как средство социализации учеников младших классов

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Аннотация

Требования к результатам образования выдвигают на первый план изучение предметов, обеспечивающих успешную социализацию личности студента на основе получения многоязычного образования в условиях углубленного изучения иностранного языка. Ученики младших классов с помощью учителя должны осознать, что иностранный язык позволит им овладеть профессионально важными элементами общения, поможет сделать скачок в развитии будущей профессии, профессиональном развитии и социализации. Игровые методы изучения иностранного языка способствуют решению этой задачи. Ролевые игры в процессе изучения иностранного языка способствуют развитию способностей рефлексивного мышления, очевидное отсутствие которого у учеников младших классов констатировал проведенный авторами экспери-

мент. Проектирование ролевых игр в процессе изучения иностранного языка зависит от набора педагогических условий, которые искусственно формируются преподавателем. Мы считаем, что основным условием для реализации модели педагогической организации процесса изучения немецкого языка на начальном этапе обучения в системе непрерывного образования является субъект-субъектные взаимодействия на основе практико-ориентированных методов обучения. Ролевая игра является одним из таких методов.

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Ключевые слова

Социализация, начальная школа, иностранный язык, методология обучения, ролевые игры.