

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION TOOLS IN THE CASE OF YOUNG LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT. Language and communication are psychological mechanisms at hand and subject of personal conduct adjustment and of the conduct of others. If the system images, concepts and ideas, formed through operational mechanisms of information were not to be used, then they would have no practical use, they would not be able to influence and inter-influence, but at the same time they should not be retrieved and returned to the circuit knowledge and should not have any impact on human activity. Communication, understood as an act of transactional action inevitably becomes essential to life, to the personal and social life of the individual. Pedagogical approaches used to encourage communication and development, while enriching and educating students in primary school includes space, adequate time and a set of tools meant to drive innovation and uniqueness through their involvement in the educational activity, in the well grounded educational institution. This requires the targeting of teaching based on psychological knowledge of the capabilities, skills and educational interests of students for effective action.

Keywords: *communication skills, language, young learner, education*

ABSTRAKT. Die Sprache und die Kommunikation sind die psychologischen Mechanismen die dem Subjekt zur Verfügung stehen um seinem eigenen Verhalten zu regulieren, und das Verhalten der anderen. Wenn das System der Bilder, der Konzepte und der Ideen, der mit Hilfe von Information-operativen Mechanismen gebildet würde nicht verwendet und verbreitet wäre, dann würde es keine praktische Verwendung geben, es würde nicht in der Lage sein zu beeinflussen, aber gleichzeitig konnte man das System nicht abrufen um in den Wissenskreislauf wieder gelegt zu werden und es würde keine Auswirkungen auf die menschliche Aktivität haben. Kommunikation, als ein transaktionales Akt, wird zwangsläufig notwendig grundlegend für das Leben, als auch für das persönliche und soziale Leben des Einzelnen. Psycho-pädagogische Ansätze, zur Förderung und Entwicklung der Kommunikation und gleichzeitig die Bereicherung und Ausbildung der Sprache der Schüler umfasst Raum, ausreichend Zeit und eine Reihe von Werkzeugen für Innovation und Einzigartigkeit stimulieren durch ihre Einbindung in pädagogische Aktivitäten auf die etablierten Bildungsträger. Diesbezüglich erfordert Ausrichtung der Lehre auf psychologische

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Kenntnisse über die Fähigkeiten, Fertigkeiten, pädagogische Interessen der Studierenden für eine wirksame Maßnahmen ergriffen werden.

Stichwörter: *Kommunikationsfähigkeit, Sprache, kleine Schulen, Bildung, Grundbildung*

1. General Delimitations

The everyday experience that Romania has been through in the last twenty years, and more recently the economic crisis, the cultural one and the incoherent government policy crisis have lead to the delineation of a new social phenomenon – the lack of interpersonal and why not intrapersonal communication. Paradoxically, the cultural universe of our society begins to revolve around communication and speech. 'Our century is dominated by the immense power of discourse, power in which we can rediscover the great virtues of language as well as its vices (Salavastru, C., 1996, p. 7). Within the educational approach communication has a special significance and so the study area and thus its analysis is extended to all the general sections of the communication process, including the research aspect of semiotics that come to shape the overall image of scientific communication. Pedagogists, psychologists, sociologists through many reports and studies have shown that at the pragmatic level there is a lack of skills in what concerns the meditation on tools, techniques and strategies used in mass communication, which also manifests at the intellectual level. The physical and the verbal violence as well as the aggressive behavior that seems to become more and more noticeable in the Romanian society, has led the individuals towards neglecting the language that is used placing authentic communication beyond language, overburdening the intuitive communication which is an expression of the irreducible character of individual subjectivity. Within the social economy that has been built in the last few years, there are also individuals who consider the word as the creator of a universal reality, not just an instrument of its domination. However, the socio-economic situation of Romania finds its echo in the education and in the instruction of young learners. Both school and family feel the impact of the financial crisis; it can be noticed an increasingly strong individual commitment in destructive collective actions, the emergence of this so-called "subculture of despair", and why not, the immorality of the society in which the aggressive behavior at the language level becomes noticeable from childhood. The maladjustment forms that increasingly affect the young learner and the cause triggering repertory are identified and mentioned as a following effect of the analysis of these problematic cases identified by school counselors. In this context, solving these problems highlights the existence of 'fundamental orientations, which come from the imperatives of the socio-cultural form of life that are strongly related to work and language (Habermans, J., 1983). Language should not be considered only

as vocabulary but also by taking into account the meaning that we ascribe to words and the specific norms in the organization of speech. This way we shall perceive school as an institution in the case of which there is an increasing wish to communicate by all means, in which learning and communication are made at all of the levels, and for any possible socio-cultural or thematic context. The goal of communication in Romanian schools is human achievement, in all of the individual's fundamental moments of existence and in all possible conditions. The development of verbal creativity in learners -as the final objective of the instructive educational process - has a chance of fulfillment by adopting creative learning from the first year of school. If the specific creative learning activities are considered together, both at the methodological level and in the branches of the Romanian language discipline according to the new functional communicative model, then students' creativity will be specifically stimulated, having a much greater opportunity of expression.

The language used indicates a certain level of understanding and knowledge of ideas and feelings. To speak and write means to create the introspection of the inner and of the outer world, to communicate with others through language that is used as a tool of thought. Profound thinking imposes a rich vocabulary and the soul nuances require language nuances. The main objective of the study of Romanian language and literature in primary school, according to the primary school curriculum is the development of learners' oral and written communication skills, becoming familiar with literary and non-literary texts that are significant for young learners between the age of 6/7 to 10/11 specific to the usage of the language in concrete communication contexts. The new model of Romanian language teaching and learning in primary school - the functional communicative model requires for creative learning as a specific functional didactic strategy to be adapted to the psychological conditions of this school age, to the specific context of intra-inter-trans-disciplinary relations. The Romanian language discipline plays the main role in the general process of learner training, representing the main means of communication and information, and through all of its levels it contributes to the development of thinking and to the spiritual modeling of learners offering them the necessary support for their intellectual evolution and the possibility of integration in social life.

2. The psychological and language peculiarities in the case of young learners

Through language, the learners convey their own needs and requirements, they develop and communicate their thoughts, their joys and sorrows, and they organize their activities. Language gives the young learner autonomy and the ability to easily move within the environment. Language as a psycho-individual manner of language usage becomes the most expressive way of personality revelation, of the originality and singularity of the human subject. Between communication and the cognitive level there is a unitary connection; at a more evolved level there is no thinking without language, and speech without meaning or cognitive content is a simply form without content.

Playing within the human psychic a critical role, language is somehow an axle within the human psychological system that makes the phenomenon of consciousness possible. Language determines the form of communication. It is in fact the communication code that connects the person who transmits information- the transmitter and the person who receives it- the receiver. Given the importance of language in life, the teacher should always capitalize any possible student verbal expression in the case of all of the activities that are performed in school. In kindergarten the learners' educational needs have been fulfilled, the learner masters to some extent the language system but his/her skills are not yet solid, thus at the language level there are subjects in the case of which language deviations can be noticed, deviations that are determined by the cultural environment in which they have developed and who are also influenced by the specific language deviations in the area they live. There can be identified a discrepancy between the active and the passive vocabulary as well as the oscillations occurring during the creation of words. The child's verbal experience in his/her first six years of life influences his/her entire psychological development. When starting school the child has a certain intellectual and verbal experience. The child can understand people around him speaking and he/she is capable of making him/herself understood by expressing thoughts in correct sentences and phrases. The learner is aware of the differences between various objects and phenomena; he/she is capable of understanding irony and of getting involved in contradictory discussions and their wishes and preferences are expressed much clearly. This verbal expression is facilitated by the relatively large vocabulary capacity of about 3500 words, 700- 800 of which are part of the active vocabulary. The shift is made from the specific preschool situational language to the contextual language, the language that develops coherently and that is well structured. The pronunciation defects that are often encountered in the case of young learners are: the replacement of j with z, the replacement of sounds that are more difficult to pronounce such as L and R, the exclusion of certain sounds, the misuse of the genre and of the article. It is in primary school that the basic intellectual skills are formed: reading, writing and the math skills. The social status of the child is continuously changing, the child becomes a student who has obligations and at the same time rights; the relationships that had been previously established with the family and with other children change as well and are structured through other principles that are considered at this stage. The young learner gradually becomes more secure, he/she pays attention to his/her gestures and is capable of focusing on things much better now; within the instructive educational process voluntary attention is created, the stability and the distribution of attention is increased so that the learner can now take part in learning activities for longer periods of time. The child becomes more attentive to himself, he /she is more aware of his/her own inner self and at this stage things cannot be easily modified. In this context, the process of internal language formation enhances the young learner's capacity of planning his/her activities mentally and of always adjusting them. By talking to him/herself, the child finds solutions and orders his/her own actions. Language is of great importance for the child's intellectual development,

because inner language is the underlying mechanism of thought. During this period of time, the phonetic side of language constantly develops, although the pronunciation of words is not entirely correct due to peculiarities of the vocal tract, of the verbal-motor analyzer and of the hearing analyzer. Children learn the background lexicon as well as the significance of words, concepts. But the most important issue in the case of young learners is learning the grammatical structure of the language.

3. Developing communication skills in the case of young learners

Developing communication skills at young school age is one of the major objectives that is achieved gradually, by increasing the number of verbal interactions with people surrounding the children, in the context in which the children manifest the curiosity of object knowledge, of an interrogative attitude regarding the origin and the cause of various phenomena. The evolution of language in itself implies a whole series of gradual interests: in the beginning, the child only uses nouns, indicating known objects, then, in his/her vocabulary there can be noticed the verbs, the conjunctions, the adjectives, the numerals and finally the pronouns. This sequence of occurrence is constant, independent of the age at which language and various ways of learning it develop. By developing communication skills, the child goes through certain stages of speech learning: a. the global vision period, in which there can be differentiated more or less outlined ensembles; b. the analysis stage, which gives rise to mental images; c. the schematic stage, created through the fusion of mental images and reduced to the essence of the object that forms the concept to which the word label is being given and where it remains. In the idea of developing communication skills in the case of young learners, the teacher must consider the essential characteristics of language at early school ages:

- the increase in expressiveness achieved through content and sentence structure, through epithets and comparisons;
- the transition from inner to outer language;
- the morphology and the speech synthesis development (the correction of pronunciation and of grammar accordance);
- simultaneous language development and appearance of the communication functions, of cognitive experience fixation and activity organization;

During this time, the teacher must continuously stimulate communication between children, take into account their need of spontaneous communication, of cultivating this tendency, intervening in the process of style correction and for the clarification of the ideas expressed by the learners. In order to enhance the quality of language and vocabulary the interest is not so much on the number of new words learned from any layer of the language, but rather on the number of words of higher frequency in everyday speech and first of all on words from the main language lexicon. The teacher can use didactic methods for creating oral communication content: conversation, story telling, role play, exercise, problem-solving, explanatory reading,

exposition, the phonetic, analytical- synthetic method and so on. The teaching methods gain their own value through the efficiency of the activity in which they are engaged, through the way in which they are implemented by the teacher in the instructive educational process.

The Experimental Part

The education and the development of communication in the case of young learners must be consistent with current needs and social demands and also with defining requirements of formative education favored by the Romanian educational system. According to theoretical assumptions, an ameliorative psycho-didactic intervention that aims at identifying and giving value to certain means of perfecting the educational practice first in the case of the Romanian language discipline and then, as an extension of its effect in the case of all of the subjects provided in the curriculum and which are mandatory, optional or facultative for pupils in elementary school to follow is necessary. The main object of the research was the analysis of the issue of development of communication skills of young learners, of the methods and strategies used during the instructive educational process. The inclusion of all the responsible factors: teachers, counselors, psychologists and of other educational partners: the family and the cultural institutions represent an important aspect. In the case of the intervention that was made the starting point was the assumption that if in the case of the teaching and learning activities higher attention is paid to their organization as such or as situational games based on communication, by using interactive group techniques and strategies adequate for the learners and which are consistent with everyone's own work pace, evaluated by scientific criteria, the formation and the development of a real efficient communication competence and language education premises that target the diminishment of difficulties in communication and at the same time the development and the enrichment of vocabulary as a necessary condition for the increase in school performance in the case of primary school students will be created.

Research variables:

- the independent variable – reevaluation of educational techniques by using adequate interactive group techniques and strategies and by taking into account every learner's own work pace, evaluated by scientific criteria
- the dependent variable, objectified in effects, expectations, achievement targets, the diminishment of communication difficulties and at the same time the development and enrichment of vocabulary, as a necessary condition for the increase value of school performances

The specific objectives that were considered are:

- the creation and the development of communication and language education abilities for the instructive-educational activities that are organized and directed as a state of communication.

- the shaping of a more accurate picture of the actual situation in the case of the Romanian Language discipline as the result of an initial evaluation
- the determination of the degree of development of verbal, nonverbal and Para-verbal learner communication skills
- the identification of the level of poor communication and the elaboration of an ameliorative intervention program, in collaboration with teaching practitioners, methodologists, parents as important educational factors in the shaping and the influencing of a communication style, of an adequate language norm, on the basis of certain formative-educational activities, at the experimental stage
- the students' practice of techniques and processes of enrichment and education of language
- recording, monitoring and comparing the results obtained from initial, formative and final assessment
- the design and the development of the language education activities by using interactive group strategies, applied in different forms of activities, either individually or in groups
- the development of students' vocabulary and of their communication skills as the result of constant use of interactive strategies

The research methods and tools that were used have had as main purpose the collection of data, whose analysis should verify the hypothesis, but at the same time provide answers on the research topic. Methods such as the interview, the questionnaire, the observation, the teaching experiment, in all the stages that were psycho-didactically investigated were used as well as the application of different communication methods (story telling, explanation, heuristic conversation, dialogue discussion, questioning, reading), and of different work techniques, which enabled the analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the applications of such methods so as to underline their efficiency in stimulating learners' communication through language, respectively writing at early age, during the first year of school.

The pedagogical intervention has been conducted for over four months on two parallel classes, consisting of 54 students, 29 of which were girls and the rest of 25 of which were boys from the First Grade. They were six or seven years old. The qualitative sizing of the sample of subjects was based on the use of class samples: the control sample and the experimental sample that were created by considering the age criteria. The advantage in the case of this type of sampling is represented by the natural environment in which the investigation could take place, by the natural organization of the educational process.

The pre-experimental phase lasted 3 weeks. The subjects were given a wide range of tests meant to determine their level of development of verbal, nonverbal and Para verbal skills. In parallel, a 10 item- questionnaire was given, with the main purpose of identifying the familial communicational, affective and educational climate of the subjects.

After analyzing the results obtained in the case of the given questionnaire, the following results could be noticed:

Percentual Distribution:

- 98% is the percentage of children who know their full names and surnames as well as those of their parents
- 55% is the percentage of subjects who have an intrinsic motivation for learning and getting good grades; 25% of them have an intrinsic motivation for obtaining very good grades, and 30% of them are extrinsically motivated
- 20% of the subjects are helped by their grandparents in doing their homework, 20% of them are helped by their mothers 5% of them are helped by their fathers, and 55% of the subjects are supervised while doing their homework and this way they do their own homework.
- 66% of the subjects give their family members information about their educational activity at school and 34% of them do not offer their families any kind of information about their school results
- 45% of the parents are interested in what the subjects are reading, 64% of the parents do not monitor students' reading, nor provide other suggestions.

Pedagogical intervention

During the experimental phase, which lasted three months, there have been given evaluation samples and formative tests of applied knowledge for the experimental sample with the purpose of checking the degree of assimilation and understanding of knowledge and acquisition, of establishing the values of the dependent variables and for adopting certain ameliorative measures. During language and communication classes there have been used various work techniques applied on different forms of activity (story telling, the didactic game, reading, visual literacy, conversation, memorization) in order to become aware of the effectiveness of each working method with the purpose of achieving the objectives of developing oral/written message reception and expressions abilities. The following indicators were important: the signaling methods, the prompt, immediate correction of mistakes, the way in which they were explained with the learners' help or through the intervention of the teacher as well as the way in which such explanations were received, the learner's degree of implication in working either in groups or in the case of differentiated, individualized tasks, the learners' degree of involvement in discovering what was new to discover, new information, the relationship between quantity and quality in the case of the teaching materials used as support, new information, the rapport between the quantity and the quality of certain teaching materials, the objective notice of the typology and symptomology of the difficulties encountered in enriching the vocabulary and in handling communication according to the interpretation grid, the changes in students' behavior as well as in teachers' behavior, according to the independent variables, the rhythm and the increase in amplification of school performance, the

diminishment of communication and language education difficulties, the identification of the encountered obstacles- the way in which they could be solved by the students, the teacher, the diversity of the formative activities within the psycho-pedagogical experiment.

Effective intervention proposals meant to aid the learners in creating a more viable system of enrichment and education of the language, of communication in verbal coordinates (oral and written) and non-verbal ones and in developing a new perspective were made after the research.

- the development of parental educational involvement skills
- appropriate and effective communication, by developing confidence in students' opportunities and abilities to relate to other people and assume responsibilities
- School has an educational and socializing role; its intervention in stimulating activities, in enhancing the communication, intellectual, emotional and creative potential of the child for the induction of positive states is necessary
- Tutoring and counseling activities, leading to reduction in the number of errors commonly encountered in speech, making a didactic class project that should have as primary objective the increase in efficiency of the communication skill development tools
- Groups of social and personal development by encouraging creativity in the group, the spirit of competition and by supporting the students' free and spontaneous manifestation
- cultural-educational activities meant to reduce the time spent by students on harmful educational actions, encouraging interactive participation and an active spirit
- Availability of day care centers and of special programs for children from families of lower socio-cultural level, whose parents do not have the necessary financial potential to support some costs for educational programs that might lead to developing communication and language education skills

By analyzing the personalized intervention on the sample group it was noticed that 78% of the students have improved their communication skills and at the same time have enriched their vocabulary and that the feeling and social educational retreat was gone. This intervention has outlined another aspect, namely the reduction reduced by more than 28% in what concerns the potential of the subjects, the improvement of the parents' social skills, of interaction and communication with the students.

Thus we believe that we want the concretization of the effective intervention through various instruments, means of involvement in the achievement of the educational communication objectives, through interculturalism and through efficient educational management, by educating the communication behavior, school cultivates and strengthens the role of the interlocutor, of the student's partner (co-responsible and co-interested) in its own making and allows students to gradually build a positive self image in a favorable and appropriate climate for their own expression and for the reunited interpersonal communication.

Conclusions:

Human communication is defined and understood as the interpersonal relationship in which the man gives meaning and value to the message that has been received or sent. This way, communication represents all the forms of manifestation of the individual in relation to himself, or another individual or to the environment. The improvement in communication requires a lot: exercises and the mastery of methods, techniques and strategies. At the same time, communication learning implies profound motivation and personal effort. The teacher simulating life situations helps the student to practice various roles, it outlines his self-esteem and the esteem for his partner, and it endows him with a set of norms of moral conduct. The game stimulates the formation and the development of the concept of communication, the establishment of a positive educational climate, active, empathetic listening. Armed with classical and modern strategies, the competent teacher will ensure proper use of the Romanian language in receiving and producing messages in various communication situations. Cooperative learning strategies provide students the opportunity to materialize their need to work together, to communicate and share ideas in a collegial atmosphere of encouragement and mutual support. The group enables the assessment of ideas, the revision of opinions and the development of interpersonal intelligence. Teamwork has significant effects on the students' personality, the presence of the partners in interaction representing an intellectual and triggering of information exchange in communication. This construction involves teamwork, a detached view of the development of perfection, of the change in attitudes and it leads to the increase in dynamics of the communicational universe.

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