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Reducing Verbal Aggression Level among Students by Implementation of Pedagogical Cooperation in the Process of Teaching a Foreign Language (Kazan Federal University case study)

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Abstract

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Discursive practices among students aim at strengthening hostility and becoming more aggressive. Aggressiveness in all its diversity is used as an instrument of the negative impact and for the weakening the partner in communication. The phenomenon of verbal aggression is implemented in a wide range of linguistic resources and discursive practices. The problem of this study is that the first-year students are poorly adapted to studying at the university level, have a different level of both the education and training and as a consequence, their deviant behavior is noticed. The aim of this study is to reduce the level of verbal aggression among students. The study is based on ascertaining method. The study was conducted among teachers and students, Institute of Management, Economics and Finance, Kazan (Volga region) Federal University. The results showed that, depending on the situation and objectives of the sender, students used active (direct/indirect) or passive (direct/indirect) verbal aggression. Recommendations: we consider that The obtained data allow the drawing of a conclusion that in order to neutralize verbal aggression we should base on the principles of pedagogical cooperation, strengthen individual approach to students, strengthen the training of linguistic and cultural studies component, which allows the acquaintance of the students with the best customs and traditions of the target language countries, introduce a regional component of training (Tatarstan, Kazan), involve students to extracurricular work in a foreign language, such as roundtables, presentations and discussions in English and participation in various contests, quizzes, and holidays, such as Christmas Carols.

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Keywords: Active verbal aggression, passive verbal aggression, multiculturalism, deviant behavior.

1. Introduction

The system of values of the younger generation has shown significant changes; as a result young people tend to cynicism, pragmatism and indifference. Discursive practices among students aim to



strengthen hostility and becoming more aggressive. Aggressiveness in all its diversity is used as an instrument of the negative impact and for the weakening the partner in communication. The dynamics of social interaction allow speakers to resort to a variety of linguistic strategies which promote, maintain, or attack an addressee's face, i.e. "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [sic]" (Goffman, 1967; cf. Brown and Levinson, 1987). Currently the importance of the study of verbal aggression among students is high due to the fact that it is perceived by students as an acceptable norm in certain situations and it often finds public justification and approval. Apart from social norms of behavior, interlocutors' expectations and interactional goals also influence speakers' judgments about whether a verbal strategy is impolite, rude or something else (Limberg, 2009). The phenomenon of verbal aggression, based on the negative emotional and evaluative attitude towards the partner (-s) and / or the object of communication, is implemented in a wide range of linguistic resources and discursive practices.

The problem of this study is that the first-year students are not sufficiently socialized into the system of higher education. They are poorly adapted to studying at the university level, have a different level of both the education and training and as a consequence, their deviant behavior is noticed. This is the main reason for the aggressive behavior of students, deterioration of the microclimate in the group and decrease in students' academic success.

The aim of this study is to reduce the level of verbal aggression among students by implementation of pedagogical cooperation in the process of teaching a foreign language.

In accordance with the goal, we had the following objectives: to carry out a theoretical analysis of the concept of verbal aggression; to determine the form of verbal aggression used by students; to identify the features of the manifestation of verbal aggression among students in the process of learning a foreign language, to develop recommendations on how to neutralize manifestation of verbal aggression.

2. Theoretical background

E. Guetzloe, M. Greene and I. Kalman investigations appear that the problem of verbal aggression is very acute among young people. Therefore, its comprehensive study is a prerequisite for ensuring the communicative safety of an individual and society as a whole.

Currently, a number of researchers have suggested a lot of definitions of verbal aggression. Verbal aggression is message behavior which attacks a person's self-concept in order to deliver psychological pain (Infante, 1995). Infante and Wigley defined verbal aggressiveness as "a personality trait that predisposes persons to attack the self-concepts of other people instead of, or in addition to, their positions on topics of communication (Infante et al., 1986). Verbal aggression can be defined as deliberately harmful behavior that is typically both unprovoked and repeated. It is an intentional abuse of power, such as teasing, taunting, or threatening, that is initiated by one or more individuals of relatively greater status or power (by virtue of their numbers or size) against a victim of somewhat lesser status or power (Reitman et.al., 2004). The locus of attack is a distinguishing factor in the

variable of verbal aggressiveness as it involves attacking the self-concepts of others rather than their position on an issue (Infante et.al., 1996).

3. Methodology

The study is based on ascertaining method (the participant observation method, oral questioning of students).

Pedagogical cooperation is a system of methods and techniques of education and training based on the principles of humanism and creative approach to personal development. During training the teacher should be based on the individual characteristics of the student. Therefore, as a model for verbal aggression neutralization the following were activated: personal approach as one of the possible implementations of pedagogical cooperation; strengthening the training of linguistic and cultural studies component (ensuring the communicative competence in intercultural communication acts), students should not only listen to the teacher, they should be actively involved in the educational process; the introduction of a regional component of training (the information about the republic of residence should be involved in the content of the texts, which allows introducing students to the best customs and traditions of the target language countries and the country (republic), where they get higher education.

Modern information and educational technologies allow us to teach a foreign language by individually-oriented way through: the creation of advanced information in individually-oriented subject environment, with a variety of educational and information resources and learning technologies; development and application of multi-level system of individual exercises; organization of project activity of students in various forms.

The study was conducted among 72 students (first and second courses), Institute of Management, Economics and Finance, Kazan (Volga) Federal University. During the study, in order to measure the types and forms of aggression among students, the classification presented in the Dictionary of verbal aggression by D.V. Zhmurov [DVA] was used. It includes two main types: active and passive aggression, which can have a direct and indirect actualization (Table 1).

Table 1. Active and passive aggression

№	Type of verbal aggression	Actualization
1.	active	direct verbal abuse or humiliation of another person
2.		indirect spread malicious slander and gossip about the other person
3.	passive	direct refusing to talk with another person/to answer his questions
4.		indirect refusing to give specific verbal explanations, to speak out in defence of human unfairly criticized

4. Results

The research results was based on observation and oral questioning of students, carried out in different groups of Institute of Management, Economics and Finance, Kazan (Volga) Federal University which showed that, depending on the situation and objectives of the sender, at the lessons of foreign language 22% of students used passive direct verbal aggression, carried out by the refusal of working with certain group mates. 74% of students are adhering to a neutral position and not speaking out in defence of student unfairly criticized thereby implemented passive indirect verbal aggression according to the classification of Zhmurov. Active direct verbal aggression was realized through verbal abuse (3%), for example, when somebody gave an incorrect answer or made a mistake another student could give the following comments: "think before you speak," "What a nonsense!" and others. Active indirect verbal aggression (1%) was less implemented, for example, in the absence of one student, the other students expressed, "he is strange," "he is not ill," and so on. (see Figure 1)

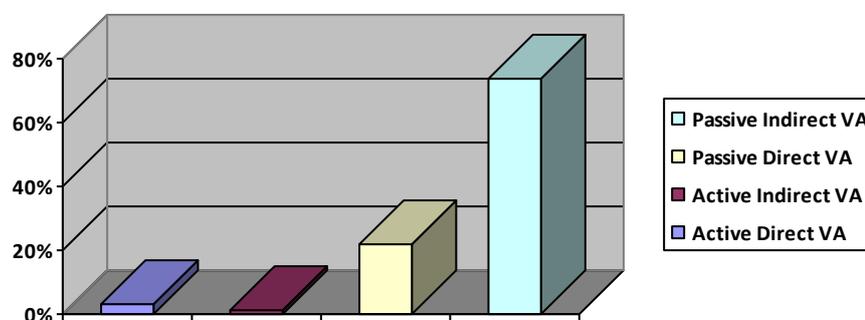


Fig. 1 The research results (Institute of Management, Economics and Finance, KFU)

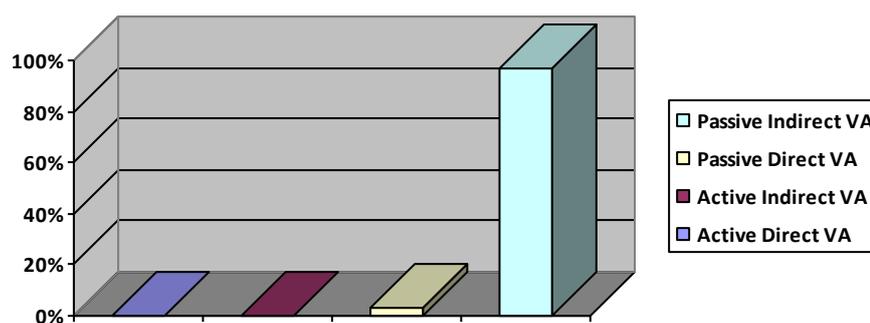


Fig. 2 The research results (Institute of Management, Economics and Finance, KFU) in 6 months

As we can see from the chart (see Figure 2), the results of the study in the same groups in 6 months showed that passive direct verbal aggression was carried out by 3% of students, passive indirect by 97%, while active (direct, indirect) verbal aggression were not implemented at all.

5. Conclusion

The obtained data allow drawing a conclusion that in order to neutralize verbal aggression among students in the process of teaching a foreign language, we should base it on the principles of pedagogical cooperation, strengthen individual approach to students, strengthen the training of linguistic and cultural studies component, which allows the acquaintance of the students with the best customs and traditions of the target language countries, introduce a regional component of training (Tatarstan, Kazan), involve students in extracurricular work in a foreign language, such as round tables, presentations and discussions in English, for instance, "...teachers can discuss perceptions of impoliteness in terms of intentionality, speaker purpose, and level of aggressiveness" (Mugford, 2007) and participation in various contests, quizzes, and holidays, such as Christmas Carols.

We believe that the implementation of such approaches in teaching will reduce the level of verbal aggression in students, and therefore increase the motivation, activity and initiative in learning.

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