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TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING AS ONE OF THE SPEECH DIALOGICALITY FORMS

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Abstract

As the article defines some factors influencing the effectiveness of the foreign languages teaching, on the one hand, and the role of critical thinking as a part of this process, on the other hand, - the work appears to be topical. The concept of critical thinking is presented as one of the dialogicality (=dialogue-natured) forms of speech and it is illustrated by an English authentic text from the newspaper «Moscow News» and an extract of a scientific paper. The issue of paradigm shifting from the former one maintained on the basis of the competence approach which dealt with the problems of information technologies and data storage to a new paradigm which is founded on the idea of the sender and addressee inter-action which is seen as the basis of communication is touched upon in the article. The author thinks it is dialogicality as the main ontological speech category which forms the essence of such interaction. All these issues are closely connected with the teacher's philosophy of life which is emphasized in the article as the main means in selecting the didactic materials corresponding with the aims of the educative teaching.

Keywords: Critical thinking , forms of dialogicality, communication.

1. Introduction

At present we witness swift changing of educational paradigms. Thus, in the first decade of the XXI century it was the competence approach which was in the limelight of the foreign languages teachers. It included informational technologies guidelines, knowledge and data accumulation and storage together with the results of the educational processes having the character of justifying valuables (Kulikova, 2018). But in the last decade we watch the growing concerns to the problems attributed to the communicability of the thinking process discourse.

2. Problem Statement

The shift from information accumulation technologies to communication and interpretation connected with it could possibly be explained by the following factors.

First, according to the conclusion formulated in philosophy, there is the overproduction of scientific information and so it cannot be mastered in the field of education. Consequently, as it quickly becomes out of date, it can't but be fruitless in social spheres (Burdiew, 1997).

On the other hand, the traditional interpretation of communication as a linear process just constitutes the transmission of information data from an addresser to the addressee and the understanding of this message as simply converting of the coded message into intelligible language. At present the goal of succeeding in conveying information is changed for its *interpretation* which is seen as the production of senses in a complex, communicative inter-action of the people associating with each other and evoking understanding.

This approach appears to be actual and productive, for it is conditioned upon the nature of speech and thinking depending on the main ontological category of dialogicality. We can't but agree with some scientists who consider the XXI century to be "the age of communication", in which "the emphasis switches over from a speaking person to "homo communicans" as the main individual of communication" (Kulikova, 2018).

3. Research Questions

Succeeding to the new educational paradigm resulted in a number of issues concerning teaching techniques and the informational component of the educational materials. The former trend which was characterized by the description and narration of the texts by the students, and informing students with different data by the teacher has been replaced with the increasing number of references to the other studies, with the analysis and comprehension of them, so that a student had to answer the questions "why?", "what for?" etc. in the comparison with the questions "what?", "where?". The latter demanded developing the "mechanical memory", which would permit students to learn things so as to be able to recall them, and the teachers – to control the work, whereas the former questions imply the challenges connected with abstract thinking and logic memory development.

As presumably there is no such phenomenon as "teaching in general" we should consider it from the teacher's and student's points of view within the framework of the new paradigm. Thus, what is the purpose of educating for teachers? – It is   the stimulation of perception and cognition of a student. Consequently, the total body of methods should serve this educational target. And what is education (e.g. in the field of foreign languages) from a student's point of view? – It is bringing out the teacher's thoughts, ideas, attitudes, etc., and clearing their interpretation, correlated with their own system of knowledge and experience.

Taking into account these considerations we can assume that another conspicuous factor in contemporary teaching process becomes comprehension   of information (not its storage) which should be based on the teacher's definite philosophy of life. Such attitude should be based on some value system, on the one hand, and – on the interaction of a teacher and students, on the other hand.

4.   Purpose of the Study

In modern times the western textbooks quite often contain the term "critical thinking", which is precisely described in the brochure "Core skills for learning, work and society" provided by the British Council (Taevere, 2015) . Let's express the hypothetical supposition, that it is one of the dialogicality forms, namely the form $I^1 – I^2$, which functionally equals reflection.

However, as there is no such concept as "dialogicality of thinking/speech" in western teaching methodology works the usage of the term "critical thinking" results in the muddle, or in other words, ambiguous terminology for the Russian reader, as in our national consciousness the word "critic" is usually associated with the idea of "something negative, which should be revealed, exposed, and improved while dialogicality is correlated with both negative and positive senses. So, it is important to inform our students with the main principles, forms and linguistic means of dialogicality and clear up the essence of the so-called "critical thinking" as one of the dialogicality forms, which correlates with it as an isolated, certain case in comparison with generality showing them the applicability to a whole class of instances (e. g. the forms: "I – you; they – they: I – you – he (they), etc.).

It's important to show that besides the form $I^1 – I^2$ all the other forms of dialogicality play important roles both in proving scientific hypothesis, or in its comparison with former scientific experience, in the demonstration of advantages and disadvantages of different scientific trends, as well as in sociopolitical contexts. It's necessary to exhibit all the stylistic means exteriorizing the total range of dialogicality forms.

5.   Research Methods

The methods of direct analysis, linguistic observation and monitoring together with functional-semantic and comparable methods (collating different texts and attitudes) have been used in our work.

The authentic materials for the investigation have been picked out from the newspaper "Moscow News" (the column "Mind the Gap") and some articles from scientific journals.

The subjects were 100 students of the Philosophy and Sociology faculty, including 80 freshmen and 20 Masters of Arts.

6.   Findings

Dialogicality of sociopolitical and scientific texts reflected different types of oral dialogue (e. g. talk of two and more, people (polilogue); and in another aspect – dialogue – debate; dialogue – unison and dictum – dialogue which were implemented by the same structural units as in spoken language. To illustrate everything mentioned above we suggest the following abridged text from the newspaper "Moscow News" (Krasavtseva, 2017) and one extract from a scientific paper (Abramenko, 2016).

Example № 1

TASKS

1. Explain the meaning of the underlined sentences in the text.

2. What are the author's examples proving her statements? Do you agree or disagree with her?

3. Give your own examples demonstrating your views and ideas.

4. What are the dialogicality forms you have come across in the text?

RUSSIA'S CLOSED DOOR POLICY

Cultural gaps can be funny or tragic. In any case, most of them make for a good story. *The Moscow News* has heard of a billion mishaps occurring to foreigners who try to adapt to Russian mentality. We hear these from our readers and colleagues every day. Now, you can share your cultural experience too – send your stories or observations to gap@mn.ru.

Ann Limerick

There is a perception that Russians are rather generous. They share their natural sources, personal wealth, and feed you up until you are about to split your sides. But Russians are very niggard in respect of rational distribution and organization of public services. The thing I hate most of all is the Russian habit to close three doors of four in a building. And when, say, the crows flows out from after a theater performance or a concert, even the most polite and self-possessed personalities can hardly restrain themselves. What is the point in keeping doors closed? Last time when I witnessed this kind of situation an old lady seemed to have had her foot dislocated after she had been pushed from behind.

Or another example. Once I was rushing to catch my train to Saint-Petersburg, and there was a similar situation at the railway station: half of the doors were locked, so people had to sneak in through residuary ones nudging one another and pushing each other with their bags and suitcases.

Also in adherence to keeping everything closed Russians often create lines: in some shops, drug-stores or museum ticket-offices, and that's a strange phenomena for me too. Because in most cases there are enough cash desks or ticket windows but there is nobody to serve you in some of them.

Who is responsible for this stupid "closing" policy?

The Moscow News № 2 (4166)
30 March – 5 April
2005

Example № 2

TASKS

    1. Are there any forms of dialogicality in the extract?

    2. What are these forms?

    3. Is it important for you to know them? Why?

Thinkers throughout the history of philosophy applied metaphor in order to describe complex entities. However, metaphor itself has never been a subject of inquiry. At the beginning of the XX century there was a linguistic turn in philosophy, and it has made a huge contribution into a deep understanding of various language phenomena. It has been shown that the metaphor serves not only as an artistic device; it performs a number of other functions, among which the most important for philosophy – epistemological (Black 1962). Any form of discourse – scientific, political, artistic, etc. – contains different kinds of metaphors. We are interested in the process that occurs at a higher abstraction level of discourse (which is characteristic of scientific thinking) – to use a metaphor for the construction of a new scientific knowledge

Although philosophy began to raise questions about its foundation due to metaphor, but thorough analysis of metaphorical effect in the process of producing a new knowledge we should refer to studies of other sciences, in particular, to empirical studies of cognitive linguistics. This problem is interdisciplinary, so in this case we need to approach it from two directions – philosophy and cognitive linguistics. Applying the analysis of cognitive linguistics at the structural level will expend and deepen understanding of the content of philosophical categories (Abramenko, 2016).

Having read the model texts we can see how the authors, addressing the readers enter the explicit and the implicit dialogues with them (the dialogicality forms: I – you, they – they, you – they, etc.). The tasks follow the targets: a) to think over (contra)-defying realia of the surrounding environment giving arguments to support their points; b) find out differences in traditions and civilizational values of different peoples (= cultures) and compare them with their native culture, etc.

7. Conclusion

So, to achieve the most effective algorithmic way in the academic process a teacher of foreign languages should take into account and use the following factors: a) inter-action with students on the basis of the authentic materials, the main ontological characteristics of which is *dialogicality within different forms*; b) the selection of didactic materials according to the teacher's philosophy of life; c) applying the collating approach with the formation of sociocultural and sociolinguistic competencies.

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