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CONDITIONS FOR DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

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Abstract

Introduction. Individuals need communicative competence for personal fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.

Materials and Methods. The meaning of the key concepts of “communicative competence” and “opportunities” is studied within the search for conditions to develop.

Conclusion. The theoretical findings allow putting forth the following hypothesis: communicative competence is developing if educator and students create the efficient professional environment based on students’ interaction in foreign/professional language with the educators, on students’ interaction in foreign language for professional purposes with peers, and reflection.

Key words: *communicative competence, opportunities, conditions for development*

Introduction

Individuals need communicative competence for personal fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. However, opportunities for developing communicative competence within a multicultural environment require that conditions have to be considered. Aim of the following paper is to identify conditions forming opportunities for developing communicative competence within a multicultural environment on the pedagogical discourse.

The remaining part of this paper is organized as follows: State-of-the-Art demonstrates the author’s position on the topic of the research. The paper involves 3 sections. Section 1 introduces opportunities for developing communicative competence. Conditions forming opportunities for developing communicative competence will be presented in Section 2. Finally, some concluding remarks are provided.

State-of-the-Art

The modern issues of global developmental trends emphasize “a prime importance in sustainable development that is to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Zimmermann, 2003: 9). Thus, sustainable personality is “a person who sees relationships and inter-relationships

between nature, society and the economy” (Rohweder, 2007: 24). In other words, this is a person who is able to develop the system of external and internal perspectives, and in turn the system of external and internal perspectives becomes a main condition for the sustainable personality to develop. Thus, the life necessity to develop the system of two perspectives, namely, external and internal, determines the research methodology of conditions for developing communicative competence on the pedagogical discourse, as highlighted in Figure 1 introduced by Ahrens and Zaščerinska (Ahrens and Zaščerinska, 2010: 7).

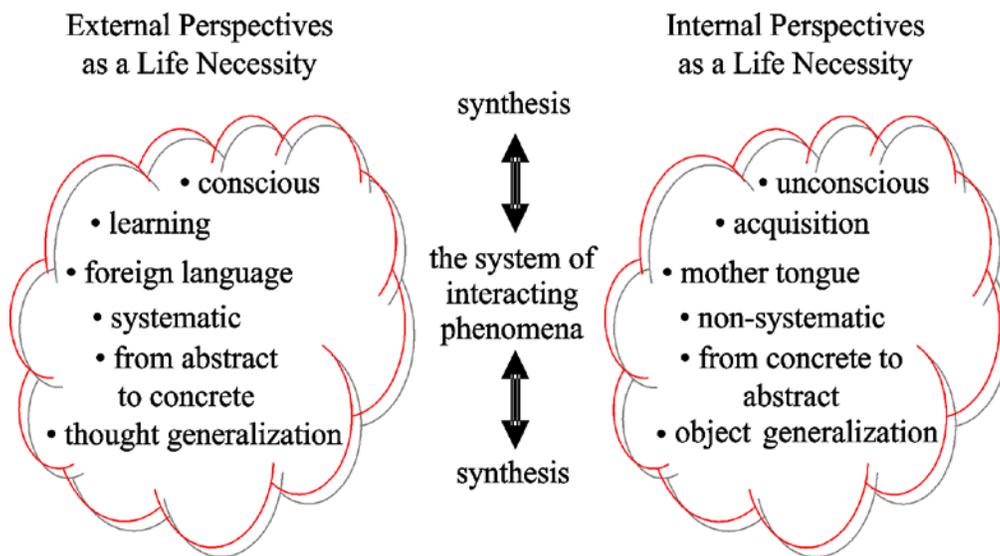


Figure 1. Developing the system of external and internal perspectives as a life necessity

However, in real life sustainable person is often realized from one of the perspectives: from the internal perspective accentuating cognition, from the external perspective accentuating social interaction and finding a balance between the external and internal perspectives (Surikova, 2007b).

The methodological foundation of the present research on conditions forming opportunities for developing communicative competence is formed by the System-Constructivist Theory. The system-constructivist approach to learning introduced by Reich (Reich, 2005) emphasizes that human being’s point of view depends on the subjective aspect (Maslo, 2007: 44): everyone has his/her own system of external and internal perspectives (Figure 1) that is a complex open system (Rudzinska, 2008: 366) and experience plays the central role in a construction process (Maslo, 2007: 42). Thus,

four approaches to conditions forming opportunities for developing communicative competence are revealed. Therein, the fourth approach, namely, developing the system of the external and internal perspectives, is considered to be applicable to the present research on conditions forming opportunities for developing communicative competence. The search for conditions forming opportunities for developing communicative competence within a multicultural environment involves a process of analyzing the meaning of key concepts *opportunities for communicative competence* and *conditions for development*.

Conditions for Developing Communicative Competence

1. Defining opportunities for developing communicative competence

Opportunities are determined as the objective aspect of the improvement of students' communicative competence. Opportunity is defined as the development of culture of learning, education and interaction in a certain social-cultural environment gaining his/her individual experience (Tišlja, 2006: 162-163).

However, opportunities are based on conditions.

2. Conditions for developing communicative competence

Conditions are defined as intrapersonal, interpersonal and introspective processes (Maslo, 2006a: 14), thereby developing the system of the external and internal perspective.

Conditions as intrapersonal and interpersonal processes put the emphasis on the uniqueness of personality (Maslo, 2006b: 20) and reflection for becoming professional (Kepalaite, 2008: 1).

Conditions as integrative introspective processes lead to understanding that learning is already a process of learner's development (Žogla, 2008: 6). In other words, communicative competence develops if only learning is available. According to Maslo (2007: 38), all learning is part of a single process, an on-going process.

Personality development is formed within a social-cultural environment or, in other words, situation of interaction (social situation or social interaction (Surikova, 2007a: 253) as the source of psychological development (Vygotsky by Ситаров, 2002: 264).

Thus, conditions for developing communicative competence are based on diverse interactions.

Vygotsky formulated General Genetic Law of Development or interiorization defined as transformation of the external culture into the individual's internal (Vygotsky by Wells, 1994: 3). The movement from the social form of knowledge to the individual one is determined by Vygotsky in the Theory on the Proximal Zone of Development (Vigotskis, 2002: 257).

Thus, two conditions for the process of interiorization or the development of communicative competence in the frame of the present research are essential (Vigotskis, 2002: 208):

- the level of individuals' actual development that is determined by the level of spontaneous concept acquiring (Леонтьев, 1982) and
- the zone of individual's proximal development revealed by the level of scientific concept and professional concept (Mylett, Gluck, 2005: 6) gaining (Леонтьев, 1982).

Vygotsky (Vigotskis, 2002: 275) points out that scientific concept and professional concept (Mylett, Gluck, 2005: 6) learning differs from spontaneous concept acquiring as foreign and professional (Mylett, Gluck, 2005: 6) language learning differs from native language acquiring, that is why Vygotsky emphasizes (Vigotskis, 2002: 208) types of relationships

- between spontaneous concept and mother tongue;
- between scientific concept and foreign language;
- between spontaneous and scientific concepts and/or mother tongue and foreign language

that are as follows:

- inner and outer conditions of forming spontaneous concept coincide with inner and outer conditions of acquiring mother tongue;
- inner and outer conditions of developing spontaneous concept coincide with inner and outer conditions of learning foreign language;

- inner and outer conditions of forming spontaneous concept and of acquiring mother tongue are different from inner and outer conditions of developing scientific concept and of learning foreign language:

“Scientific concept learning differs from spontaneous concept acquiring as foreign language learning differs from native language acquiring. The development of scientific and spontaneous concepts is interrelated as foreign and native languages relates to each other” (Vigotskis, 2002: 275).

“If the development of the native language begins with free, spontaneous use of speech and is culminated in the conscious realization of linguistic forms and their mastery, then development of a foreign language begins with conscious realization of language and arbitrary command of it and culminates in spontaneous, free speech. But, between those opposing paths of development, there exists a mutual dependency just as between the development of scientific and spontaneous concepts” (John-Steiner by Robbins, 2007: 49).

That is why to consider the spontaneous, scientific and professional concepts means to discuss the mother and foreign and professional language.

Professional language is defined as native language for specific purposes (Zašcerinska, 2010: 406).

Considering the term *psychological system* where the change in the relationship between functions is of a great importance for the individual development, and not the development of each function (Vygotsky by ЛЕОНТЬЕВ, 1982: 38) and the relationship between foreign language and professional language allows determining the initial term *foreign language for professional purposes*.

The author of the present research assumes that the level of *foreign language for professional purposes* obtaining is possible to be realized as the quasi-autonomous zone where an individual is between his/her levels of actual and proximal development being able to implement a certain activity at a certain level with other's particular assistance. The quasi-autonomous zone implies peer learning (Myllet, Gluck, 2004: 7), in other words, students' co-operation without teacher's assistance, in order to allow students' reflexive functions (regulation, evaluation, planning, etc) to be implemented (Cukermane by Surikova, 2007b: 33).

The theoretical analysis in the frame of the present research highlights the system of conditions, namely, developing the system of the external and internal perspectives, student interaction with educator and scientific and professional concepts (existing concepts in the frame of the present research), and student interaction with peers and quasi-concepts, and reflection, as the basis to form opportunities for communicative competence development.

Conclusions

The theoretical findings allow putting forth the following hypothesis: communicative competence is developing if educator and students create the efficient professional environment based on students' interaction in foreign/professional language with the educators, on students' interaction in foreign language for professional purposes with peers, and reflection.

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