

Motivation within Role-Playing as a Means to Intensify College Students' Educational Activity

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Abstract

This article covers college students' educational activity issues while studying a foreign language; analyzes special aspects of motivation introduction, their specific features. It also defines role and structure of role-playing. The authors come to the conclusion that introduction of role-playing in an educational process will bring it closer to objective and social conditions of a future professional activity. A study conducted by the author showed that motivation in role-playing allows improving students' education quality, that is, motivation maturity in an educational process, proficiency, an ability to set and achieve goals.

Keywords: educational activity; motivation; professional orientation; role-playing

1. Introduction

In an era of unprecedented speed, over sophisticated technology, humanitarian transformation of the world, expansion of an international cooperation one may witness a change of outlook, knowledge acquisition and obtaining of applied professions. A university graduate must have a profound professional knowledge, be able to exploit new information technologies, possess a modern system of values and a desire for self-improvement.

Therefore an educational activity at college should be built in the way not only to transfer knowledge to students, but also to promote a sustainable demand to acquire knowledge, to develop a personal motivational sphere. However, to have an active and effective development process a student should engage in an educational activity with all his motivation, i.e. so that an educational activity should be personally significant, contributing to the student's extensive and activity-related skills.

An educational activity of a student retains all substantial characteristics, patterns of an educational activity of knowledge acquiring of a learner, so that a motivation in an educational activity herein may look like as follows:

- 1) Focusing student's attention on a case study;
- 2) Obtaining by the student an information on the subject of demand (demand update);
- 3) Demand perception (selection of a motive);
- 4) Decision making (setting goals by a student);
- 5) Pursuit of ambition (conducting an educational activity);
- 6) Latest information uptake, adjusting one's actions (strengthening one's confidence on correctness of actions);
- 7) Self-evaluation of the process and the results of the activity (emotional attitude to the activity).

At the beginning of a study, a student must switch his interests, goals, motives to a specific case study that is to focus one's attention.

In fact a person can't focus on two simultaneously presented stimuli. Therefore, the main object of attention should differ from the rest of by its novelty, contrast ratio, perhaps by an extraordinary method of its presentation

by the teacher.

Focusing one's attention helps a student to obtain information on the subject of demand. Moreover, this demand has a social value; it is only transformed by the teacher through the consciousness of a student, becoming a personal demand of a student. Understanding the necessity of the following subject helps the student to update his needs based on accumulated knowledge on the subject.

Demands update is accompanied by a semantic setting for action, that is, our activity acquires a personal character. As noted by Leontyev (2005), the question of meaning is always a question of motive. An impulse to action may be motivated by a desire to consolidate current knowledge on the subject, to pass a test, to understand a problem and therefore to improve one's own knowledge on the subject. The choice of motive is controlled by a human consciousness and occurs based on the already formed motives, beliefs, moral ideals.

By making a choice a person as though gives a preference to that or other impulse, defines himself in the method of activity, thus demonstrating his attitude to the subject of demand. Reflection of the subject of demand and the choice of motive makes the student act towards achieving the goal of the activity. If motive incites for an activity, then the goal determines its direction.

An educational objective is formed by a teacher. The student actively involves in an educational activity only when by correlating his task with his internal motivational state, he sets his own objective in the form of "an image of a desired future". It is important that the objective of the student should not be imposed on him, but generated by the student as his own.

Undertaking certain actions to meet urgent demands, that is, an aspiration to achieve a goal is the next step in an education activity. By striving to achieve a goal, a student often performs only reproductive actions aimed at reproduction of an educational material. Whereas a productive activity involves a creative approach in solving educational tasks and problems.

In a real life stated objectives are not often backed up within a specific activity of a student organized by a teacher. And if a teacher does not provide such an educational activity involving student's updated demands and motives in the overall educational process, motives may fade away. Hence, a student may develop dissatisfaction with the results of his activity, anxiety, self-doubt. Therefore, corresponding educational activities should include and provide the students with intermediate and actual results, i.e. a feedback between a student and a teacher.

Therefore, based on the above mentioned we may conclude that to solve motivation issues in education of nonlinguistic college students one should apply solutions based on motivational support of educational activity, which allows to define new approaches in organizing and conducting lessons, activating students' work while mastering their knowledge on a particular subject.

2. Methods

In the real research authors were guided mainly by the concept of activity approach of Leontyev (2005). It relies on the principle of unity of human mentality and activity and sets systemacity in studying personis motivational needs.

The authors proceeded from Rogers's concept, and also Verbitska and Bakshayeva, which allows to define new approaches in the organization and carrying out the occupations which are speeding up work trained in the course of mastering by them knowledge of a concrete subject in interpretation of the problem of formation of students motivation of educational activity.

Ideas of features of pedagogical game technologies developed as a result of works of Ushinsky, Rubenstein, Freud and many other scientists who developed methods of game training.

The results of a pilot study which were carried the economical faculty of Kazan University (Naberezhnye Chelny branch) formed empirical base of this work.

For the solution of research problems the following methods were used: theoretical analysis of pedagogical, psychological scientific and methodical literature; modeling; supervision, analysis of products of activity; pedagogical experiment under natural conditions educational process.

3. Study Results

A pilot study conducted in 2012 was aimed at testing a motivation ensuring of nonlinguistic college students' educational activities while learning a foreign language. In the study we have tested those pedagogical tools, as it has been found during the theoretical analysis of motivational issues, to the fullest extent contribute to enhancement of a student's educational activities as a result of exposure on the motivational sphere. While using

different forms and methods of an educational process, we took into account motivational peculiarities: students' initial level of motivation, andragogical prerequisites for education of adults, peculiarities of structural components of motivation in educational activities, their interaction with student's individuality and a specific character of the subject "Foreign language". The study involved 75 first-year students of economic department of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University branch in Naberezhnye Chelny.

During the experiment the students were divided into experimental and control groups. In control groups instead of role-playing students were engaged in a dialogue/a polylogue method. At the preparatory stage students were provided with the same lexical and grammatical material including tasks on dialogues dramatization. A distinctive feature of it was that exercises in experimental groups had a creative nature.

Thus, for example, part of the lexical material has been presented in experimental groups not in texts, but via diagrams, which have also been used when solidifying material taught.

To check lexical material mastering experimental groups practiced game forms containing elements of competition between the students. Elements of role-playing were used in semi-verbal and verbal exercises, when the students acted out situations simulating real professional interactions.

The teacher offers the students an assignment on role-playing. The students get a memorandum prepared for a sales manager by the Chairman. The students should be divided into micro-groups. Group 1 is preparing a presentation on sales according to the instructions of the memorandum; group 2 prepares their roles as a Board of Directors. The students are given the necessary information on the roles, additional material is presented in the chart. The teacher's task—based on the obtained information and the actualized demands of the students to focus them on preparing role-playing based on the elaborated educational material, to arrange role-playing. Preparing for and conducting role-playing were conducted according to the following diagram:

Table 1. Diagram on motivating role-playing

№	Role-playing stages	Elements of motivation	Methods and means	Forms
1	Introduction of role-playing topics and extralinguistic context	Focusing students' attention on an educational situation	Information presentation, orientation for the future work	In groups
2	Lexical and grammatical structures introduction in the language to conduct role-playing	Obtaining by students an information on the subject of demand	Analyzing of charts with constructions, listening	In groups
3	A choice of roles by students	Demand perception	Clarification on each role, its functions and content	In groups and individually
4	Preparation of students for their roles	Decision making	Targeting on linguistic solutions	Individually and in groups
5	Joining a business conversation by the students	Pursuit of goals	Success story modelling	In groups
6	Communication with fellow students by roles	Latest information uptake	Smooth correction of speech and educational activities	In groups
7	Summing up role-playing, decision making	Self-evaluation of the process and the results of the activity	Informative evaluation by a teacher	In groups and individually

Carrying out motivation oriented role-playing, as shown during the surveillance over the students during experimental classes, is one of the most effective means to enhance students' educational activities, to generate an ability to control students' attention, to set own goals, to achieve them in communication process through productive activities. In general, it can be noted that even with a simple observation without special measurements, there is a noticeable increase in overall level of educational motivation, achievement motivation and students' affiliation.

Despite the use of the same information material, equal speech and language exercises ratio, the research outcome showed some benefits of active gaming techniques compared to traditional ones while teaching business communication in a foreign language.

During the experiment it was found that in groups with role-playing students used more lexical material, they also proved to have better developed speaking skills in any situation on any topic. During the study we have established the fact that role-playing enhances working out speech patterns, using the right words in the right place at the right time. This enables us to state that role-playing is an effective means to create a motive to build up a dialogue in a foreign language, allows the use of spontaneous speech, and contributes to a proficiency increase, that is, to an effective development of knowledge quality and relevant skills.

Thus, an experimental work helps us to make the following conclusion: motivation within role-playing enhances students' education quality, that is, level of motivation development in education, proficiency, an ability to set and achieve goals.

4. Discussion

In a scientific literature there is no consensus on the definition of role-playing. The most popular terms that are often interchangeably used are "modeling", "game", "role-playing simulation".

US scientists Richard and Rodgers (2001) consider three linguistic aspects: structural, functional and interactive. Role-playing method (simulation) comes from an interactive aspect. The content of language teaching according to this approach may be defined and arranged via exchange and interaction models in accordance with students' inclinations.

Traditionally, educational roles in role-playing specially are distributed via verbal instructions or role cards. Nevertheless, Kaplan M. in his works in 90s. argued against role-playing that focuses on descriptive topics emphasizing the specific vocabulary area, as they do not transmit spontaneous life conversational situations (Kaplan, 1997).

US scientists Burns A. and Gentry J. in his works consider knowledge and experience in decision-making as the main criteria for success in role-playing with which students get engaged in role-playing and recommend teachers to pay a careful attention to experimental exercises (Burns & Gentry, 2000).

Russian scientists have examined the concept of role-playing in various aspects: psychological, pedagogical, methodological. In the psychological aspect role-playing, like any other game, is interpreted by domestic scientists from activity approach: Vygotsky, Zhinkin, Leontyev, Rubinstein, Elkonin. A game is regarded as a special type of activity where motive is in the very process, in the content of the action itself. Consequently, game is not just an activity, but a motivated activity.

In the pedagogical aspect role-playing was studied by Strazdas, Appatova, Dragomiretskiy, Akhmetov, Kitaygorodskaya and etc. Strazdas sees the main purpose of a didactic game in formation of professional activity motives. Kitaygorodskaya (2009) considers role-playing as one of the essential factors of upbringing training. Akhmetov (2005) regards students' self-reliance as the most important advantage of role-playing in solving educational tasks.

In the methodological aspect Derkach (2006) holding an extensive study of educational role-playing concept, notes its heuristic function. Dragomiretskiy draws our attention to formation of professional verbal communication skills and abilities in English language while using role-playing in an educational process. From this perspective it is possible to understand and express the essence of educational role-playing: it allows in a learning process to model objective and social contexts of a professional work and thus to create a more adequate, comparing to the traditional education, conditions of personality development.

Cristopher and Smith (2011) investigate as far as the content of language training in modelling can be precisely certain, or remain uncertain, because of distinction between "convergent" and divergent models.

Cummings and Genzel (2002) focused attention in the research on creation of criteria of game. They consider that the program model is a combination of procedure and process.

The stages of more difficult modelling of students' actions by means of "case"-tasks or role cards applicable in different areas of a foreign language were investigated by many scientists: Hutchinson and Sawyer-Laucanno (1990) considered technical English, role English is presented in works of Brammer and Sawyer-Laucanno (1990), English in international relations is considered by Crookall (1990).

5. Conclusions

Role-playing (modeling) while learning a foreign language as an effective method of students' educational activities helps to create a favorable psychological communication atmosphere and helps students to perceive a foreign language as a real means of communication.

This may be achieved while adapting and applying methodically right and creative theoretical and practical experience accumulated by scientists in the following field and by finding ways of optimal integration of the method under consideration with other language teaching techniques.

Thus, role-playing allows each participant to get a maximum benefit for himself. Students' results, herein, depends on a student, his activity, and not on the teacher, as in a traditional educational process. Such an educational process generates one of the main components of educational paradigm at college: educational effect is directly proportional to students' activity.

At the same time a team work expressing a collective creativity based on individual activity of each participant is a means of improving students' knowledge. During a group training, organized in such a way, each participant benefits from it. The effect of knowledge accumulation develops through both exchange of individual views and opinions on the problems, and through well-organized process of collective and creative work. Some advice given by an experienced player to a beginner has a considerable influence on the views of students participating in role-playing, that comes down to a careful choice of department where one is going to work, that is, to determine which of the given activities you like most and on which you have a much profound information.

The main criteria in selecting a future activity in role-playing are professionalism, responsibility, personal interest, activity, a choice of a group with comfortable activity conditions, an opportunity for interpersonal communication (i.e. providing conditions to build micro groups). Role-playing is considered as a simulation of a professional activity for the purposes of training, controlling, research, design and implementation of various types of work.

A set of modern methods and techniques, designed and approved by authors at a college (state university) provided us with a scientific data, generalized, organized and expanded the notion on an effective role-playing with motivation.

Motivation within role-playing is an effective means to intensify students' educational activity, to activate students' ability to control their attention, to set goals and achieve them during a business communication via productive actions.

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