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ROLE PLAY AND ITS PECULIARITIES IN TEACHING SPEAKING TO SENIOR PUPILS

"Language came into life as a means of communication. It exists and is alive only through speech. When we speak about teaching a foreign language we first of all have in mind teaching it as a means of communication" [1, 40].

The knowledge of a foreign language is acquired through its practical mastering, i.e. through the process of focusing the attention on teaching pupils to speak spontaneously in a situation close to a natural one, thus transforming their already acquired language habits into automatic speech habits.

Foreign language teachers often tend to assume that conversation in the language classroom in roles is nothing more than putting into practice the grammar and vocabulary skills taught elsewhere in the course. These types of activity do to some extent help pupils to develop speaking skills. But teachers need to be aware of characteristics of native speaker performance in conversation if they are to teach conversation effectively and be able to create the living, real atmosphere and surroundings which the learner is sure to find while speaking a foreign language [2, 7].

One of the ways at bringing situations from real life into the classroom is the role play. In role play pupils pretend to be someone else, for instance, a teacher or a shop assistant, etc. When we do role play we ask pupils to use their imagination.

Very often teachers of foreign language use different forms of dramatisation, for example retelling a text from the point of view of its characters, reading a text in roles, drama improvisation. Pupils become authors of the improvised scene. The teacher may suggest a theme or a situation for improvisation or merely drop them a hint of it.

In role play pupils improvise, too. The situation is fixed and they make up their own "script" as they get along. Situations we use for a role play should, as far as possible, be within pupils' experience. In general, the more familiar a role or a situation is, the easier it will be enacted.

Pupils are given role cards at the beginning of the lesson, not beforehand as a home task. The value of such improvisations consists in forming pupils' habits in speaking freely on a topic suggested without any previous preparation. Besides, everything that is going on in the class during the improvisation is effectively comprehended and learned by pupils, even by those who take a less active part in role play. Every pupil is responsible for carrying on the discussion, and follows the proceedings with great attention in order to be able to join in.

Role play is such a form of the teaching process which enables the teacher to combine group, individual and pair work at a lesson [3, 87].

Even the preparatory stage of role play is very important as it unites pupils, stimulates their work and thus raises their motivation for learning.

Role play is a useful oral activity because:

1. Pupils speak in the first and second person. Texts are often given in the third person.
2. Pupils learn to ask questions as well as to answer them.
3. Pupils use short complete bits of the language and respond appropriately.
4. Pupils practise not only words and phrases but also the necessary tone of voice, stress, intonation, facial expressions.
5. Pupils are encouraged to have a natural «hat» in the class, to make up dialogues about little things which have happened and which occupy them at the moment.

To use role plays effectively in the lesson one should know the main peculiarities of roles, their functions in the process of studying and the conditions for realization of these functions.

If we compare educational roles with other types of roles we may discover that educational roles, with their own peculiarities, have much in common with social, stage and other types of roles.

Like social roles educational ones have a generalized character (brother, friend, customer, actor) typological variants (sociological and psychological roles) [4, 29].

The difference between them consists in their relation to reality. The former are imaginative roles and the latter are real ones, i.e. a person acts in real life.

Educational roles have peculiarities of different role activities, that is why they perform different function.

1. *The programming function.* Role play is to provide for a certain programme of speech activities. For example, questions are typical of correspondents, investigators, and inquisitive persons; imperative sentences – of policemen and parents; the medical terminology – of doctors, the alimentary terminology – of dieticians.
2. *The motivational function* is designed to encourage pupils to speak and thus to assimilate the language material more effectively.
3. *The protective function.* Using role play may help to remove such factors as constraint, fear, anxiety and to avoid stress situation.
4. *The function of the "second socialization"* (the term is used by Ye.F.Tarasov). When students play a role their role behaviour is influenced by some elements of the culture of the country of the target language.

It should be noted that this does not hold true of every educational role or situation. But it is important that every role performs a definite function (or functions), and this can not be treated as a surplus component of a speech situation [4, 30].

The teacher should know his pupils' interests, academic standard, skills and habits, as well as relations. This will help him to distribute roles adequately. It is necessary to take into consideration psycho-physiological characteristics of pupils, types of their emotionality. Pupils of sthenic and emotionally stable types can be given any roles. Pupils of asthenic type of emotionality may be given very interesting roles. Highly emotional pupils should be suggested roles which require seriousness and self-control on their part. Passionately infatuated pupils are usually given roles which correspond to their interests. Impassively calm pupils are suggested roles of fairy-tale heroes [4, 32].

Roles should meet certain requirements. They should correspond to the teaching objectives, language knowledge and pupils' experience; have a communicative potential, which can be a source of certain discrepancy between participants of communication (one knows – others do not know; one sees – others do not see); be attractive to pupils [4, 31].

There are many different classifications of roles the knowledge of which enables the teacher to plan his lessons more efficiently.

According to one classification roles, in terms of social psychology, are traditionally divided into: 1) social; 2) interpersonal; 3) psychological [5, 19].

Social roles are of more abstract character. They are actions within the bounds of known stereotypes (a doctor, a patient). V.L.Skalkin subdivided social roles, according to their teaching aims, into: a) professional; b) socio-domestic; c) domestic; d) connected with entertainment [5, 20].

Interpersonal roles overlap social ones. The former reproduce the personal orientation of speech communication, stipulate the character of relations.

Psychological roles reveal personal characteristics. We can discriminate:

- a) roles which characterize a person positively (modest, joyful);
- b) neutral roles;
- c) roles which characterize a person negatively (greedy, spiteful, etc.) and
- d) roles of concrete character (wolf and hare) [5, 20].

There is also another classification of roles according to the learner's experience [6, 11]. For example, there are roles which correspond to a real need in pupils' lives. In this category we can include such roles as a doctor dealing with his patients, or a salesman travelling abroad. In these cases it is easy to match role play in the classroom to the essential preoccupations of pupils.

In the second type of role pupils play themselves in a variety of situations of which they may or may not have direct experience. A customer complaining or a passenger asking for information, both fall into this category. They require neither specific professional experience nor any particular

personality traits as anyone of us could find ourselves in these situations.

Other roles are of the type that few pupils will ever experience directly themselves, but which are easy to play because we have such vast indirect experience of them. A television journalist is a good example of this very useful kind of role taken from real life.

Finally, there are fantasy roles, which are fictitious, imaginary, and possibly even absurd [6, 12].

Pupils' imagination can be helped along for the first few times a teacher carries out role play with the "character identity sheet" which is given out with role cards. Pupils are asked to fill it in for their own use, after they have read their cards. Role cards should be concise and contain only essentials. If linguistic structures are suggested for use they should be ones that pupils are already familiar with.

Some role cards say things like: 'You are Mrs Smith, a sceptically-minded young girl of 21, a student of geography'.

It is often difficult to decide how to distribute role cards. The teacher can decide who is who, pupils can choose, or the distribution can be done at random. In a class in which the teacher is attempting to shift some of the responsibility for learning from his own shoulders to those of pupils, the second and the third solutions are infinitely better than the first. In the second the negotiation about who will play which role may well give rise to an opportunity or authentic communication. However, it may also mean that a very weak pupils get a key role, and the role play falls apart. Teachers soon acquire the necessary judgement as to which is the best solution on each occasion. Organizing role plays the teacher should treat every pupil as a personality, who can prefer a certain theme or role. Knowing motivations, interests, individual characteristics of pupils and their relations in the class, the teacher will be able to choose the very roles which perfectly correspond to pupils' personalities.

Role plays or simulations should be followed by discussions or debriefing. The kind of questions that are raised are:

- a) Who participated?
- b) Who did not?
- c) Why not?
- d) Who was very good?
- e) Who could have done better?

The teacher should insist on evaluation rather than criticism, and make sure that pupils talk about what went well before they get on to what went badly. This encourages positive thinking about the experience. Building up pupil's confidence, creating an atmosphere of trust, teaching the pupils to relax – all these things take time and demand exercises where the individuals in class are working together, getting to know each other well.

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ВИКОРИСТАННЯ КРАЇНОЗНАВЧИХ МАТЕРІАЛІВ НА ЗАНЯТТЯХ З ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ НА НЕМОВНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЯХ

Положення про необхідність засвоєння іноземної мови в тісному зв'язку з культурою народу – носія даної мови – вже давно сприймається у вітчизняній методиці викладання іноземних мов як аксіома. Використання країнознавчої інформації в навчальному процесі