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Conversation in Theoretical and Methodical Training System for Future Teachers: A Case of the Ukrainian Language

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Abstract

This article analyzes the different scientists' perspective on the classification of teaching methods in pedagogy and linguodidactic. Conversation is one of the active methods of teaching that forms a coherent system in combination with other methods. It also has a wide range of usage (in the process of acquiring new knowledge, repetition and generalization of the studied material and etc.). Types of conversations as examined in this paper include: heuristic, reproductive, generalized, control and corrective, analytic and synthetic. This paper also presents the purpose, structure and methods of implementation. It is worth mentioning that the methods of discussion and debate are also similar to the methods of conversation. The effectiveness of these methods, in the process of theoretical and methodical training of future teachers of the Ukrainian language has been proven in the system of integrative study in normative disciplines of linguistic and psycho-pedagogical cycles.

Keywords: Conversation, Debate, Discussion, Future Teachers, Teaching Methods, Theoretical and Methodical Training, Ukrainian Language.

Introduction

Theoretical and methodical training for future teachers in the Ukrainian language is based on the choice of effective teaching methods, which also depends on a lot of criteria. These teaching methods have been described as the way of interaction between a teacher and a student focusing on the achievement of learning goals in pedagogy (Babanskyi, 1989; Kharlamov, 1990) and linguodidactic (Pentyliuk et al., 2004).

Today, there is no generally accepted classification of this methodological phenomenon. For example, Babanskyi (1989) distinguishes the groups of methods according to: the source of knowledge [verbal, visual and practical methods]; the appropriate stage of training [each of the stage solves the original problem]; the method of management of training activities [teacher's explanations and different ways of students' individual work organization]; the logic of educational process [inductive and deductive, analytic and synthetic methods]; the didactic purposes [students'

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activity organization, methods of activity stimulation: competitions, contests, games, incentives, etc.] (Babanskyi, 1989).

Kharlamov (1990) rather defines such five groups of teaching methods as: method of oral knowledge presentation [narration, explanation, lecture, conversation; illustrations and demonstrations during the oral presentation of knowledge]; methods of fixation of the studied material [interview, work with a textbook]; methods of independent work for understanding and assimilation of new material [working with textbook, laboratory work]; methods of educational work for the development of skills of practical knowledge application [exercises, laboratory lessons]; the methods of verification and assessment of knowledge and skills (p. 193). Other scientists categorize the classification of teaching methods according to the level of pupils' cognitive activity. Such classification includes; explanatory-illustrative method [supply of ready information through verbal words and visual aids]; reproductive method [reproduction and repetition]; problem solving method [creating and solving problematic situations]; heuristic method [independent decision of educational problems]; research method [stimulation to creative activity] (Lerner, & Skatkin, 1982). Underlying the importance and effectiveness of existing classifications in pedagogy, Yu. Babanskyi expresses an opinion on the substantiation of these methods as "*versatile integrated approach to activity*". He says that "*the choice of methods will depend on various factors*" (Babanskyi, 1989, p. 386). Essentially, the classification of methods according to interaction among students and teachers proposed by Beliaiev and colleagues [i.e. oral presentation of learning material, conversation, language observation, textbooks usage and exercises] is much accepted presently in linguodidactics (Pentyliuk et al., 2004).

A brief analysis of these classifications show a deep reflection of scientists' research. Building on the opinion of T. Donchenko about the process of selecting teaching methods, a diverse approach to the learning process requires a careful selection and consideration of teaching methods. This will certainly ensure the successful achievement of all learning objectives and will also cover all acts of the educational process. The definition of the meaningful learning goal is that "*the problem of methods in relation to individual techniques is not so much theoretical as practical*" (Donchenko, 2005, p. 4).

Taking into account the specificity of theoretical and methodological preparation of future teachers, this paper attempts to analyze conversation, an active learning method. Conversation as a method provides the effectiveness needed for training in the disciplines of linguistic and psychopedagogical cycles. It is also seen as the normative component of the curriculum. The features of conversation as a learning method were explored in the writings of teachers such as Yu. Babanskyi, N. Volkova and other specialists in linguodidactics like T. Donchenko, S. Karaman, S. Lukach, and M. Pentyliuk.

The purpose of this article is to describe the methods and types of conversation, their application and to exemplify using author's inventions.

Definition of the Essence of the Concept – “Conversation”

Conversation is a dialogical method, which essentially consists of answers to the teacher's questions in order to reproduce previously acquired knowledge (Pentyliuk et al., 2004). According to Volkova (2007), conversation relates to active learning methods, it is implemented using four types of didactic dialogues: "*teacher – student*", "*student – student*", "*student – textbook*" and "*student – computer*" (p. 323).

Over the years, the types of conversation include; *the heuristic conversation* [develops the creative activity of the student; directs his/her activity to search for the new; creates preconditions for the implementation of problem-based learning; promotes the organization of independent work], *the reproductive conversation* [aims at the reproduction of the acquired knowledge and memorization through reproduction and repetition]; *the generalized conversation* [involves preventing the forgetting of the learned material, forming the ability to analyze the studied materials, drawing conclusions from the facts; forming practical skills]; *the control-correction conversation* [aims at verification, correction and control of knowledge, which requires the establishment of students' logic thinking, understanding the content of the studied material and the level of its awareness]; *the analytical-synthetic conversation* [it is used for the purpose of establishing causal relationships, comprehension of knowledge based on their own observations and life experience] (Lukach, 1990).

The method of conversation has a wide range of uses. It can be used when, learning new material, repeating and generalizing the acquired knowledge. It can also be used in controlling the level of developed skills and abilities. These methods can be implemented both independently and in combination with other methods, particularly with the method of exercises, observing the linguistic material, etc.

A Wide Range of Usage of the Method of Conversation

The analysis of linguistic-didactic literature and personal experiences in higher educational establishment gives the reason to assert that the choice of the method of conversation is influenced by several factors. These include; the form of the learning session, its purpose and objectives, and the level of preparedness of the group. In consequence, the introduction of the heuristic conversation can be offered for a lecture where new material will be presented. Selected cases below are based on approved document by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, which defines the purpose and objectives of the course, the scope and system of knowledge, the range of the Ukrainian language skills, which must necessarily be achieved by students in the learning process (Pentyliuk et al., 2004).

Case 1: At our lecture titled; “Methodology of the Ukrainian language as a science and a discipline” we offer such questions as:

1. *What in your opinion is the most important theoretical or practical preparation of the future teacher of the Ukrainian language? Explain the idea.*
2. *What is the methodical preparation of the future teacher of the Ukrainian language?*
3. *Based on the analysis of the acquired knowledge of linguistic, psychological and pedagogical disciplines, prove why the study of the methodology begin at the third year?*
4. *What do you think are the main problems of the course: the “Methodology of the Ukrainian language”?*
5. *What is the peculiarity of the course of “Methodology of the Ukrainian language”?*

Such a conversation will help students to actualize the background knowledge of normative linguistic, psychological and pedagogical lessons attained in previous courses. It will also help to develop research skills and introduce search elements to learn new information. Nonetheless, it is advisable to introduce the reproductive conversation into lectures and practical classes.

Case 2: At our lecture titled; “Methods and techniques of learning the Ukrainian language” we propose to start with the following questions:

1. *Give the definition of “teaching method” in pedagogy.*
2. *Describe the existing classifications of methods in pedagogy.*
3. *What is a technique in pedagogy?*
4. *Is there a clear line between the method and the technique? Give an example.*

Through the reproductive conversation, it is possible to identify the students’ knowledge of pedagogy (didactics) and psychology and some of linguistic disciplines in order to create the preconditions for mastering “Methodology of the Ukrainian language”, which will help to determine the problem of choosing forms of work, methods and techniques.

Case 3: Generalized conversation provides the basis for seminars and practical classes in high school. It is also vital in the preparation for control module works, and in the defense of individual tasks as this type of conversation provides control over the developed skills and abilities. On the topic of “Psychological and didactic principles of the Ukrainian language learning”, we offer such a system of questions for holding general discussion such as:

1. *Define the connection among the methods of the Ukrainian language, pedagogy and psychology.*
2. *What is the speech activity? What are its components? What is the linguistic and communicative competence of a specialist?*
3. *What are the patterns of learning?*
4. *Compare the classification of the learning principles. What are their different quantities? Explain the idea.*

5. Find and compare existing concepts in the methodological and pedagogical literature of the definition of “method”. Which of them can give qualitative characterization of the method as a system of purposeful educational activity?

6. What functions do these teaching methods fulfill? The answer should be illustrated with examples.

7. What innovative methods are introduced into the system of the Ukrainian language teacher’s work? Give examples.

Thus, the selected questions for the general conversation address the fundamental and key issues of the topic, organize the training material, focus students’ attention and provoke them to generalizations and conclusions. Each subsequent question complements the previous one by building a harmonious system of learning materials and creating conditions for the control of the obtained knowledge in the form of a frontal and individual survey.

The peculiarity of the control-correction conversation gives the right to state that, it can be used in practical classes and in the course of checking the quality of students’ independent work.

Case 4: The analytical-synthetic conversation affords a logical division of the educational material into separate thematically completed parts. Disclosure issues, as a rule, are usually completed by summarizing.

1. Find out the features of the content and structure of the current Ukrainian language programs.

2. According to which content lines is the program of the Ukrainian language built? Give them characteristics.

3. What are the basic principles for the construction of the Ukrainian language active program?

– Demonstrate the principle of continuity.

– How the principles of systematic and accessible are realized in the program?

– What are the linear and concentric principles of constructing the Ukrainian language program, what are the deviations from these principles?

It is noted that the implementation of the analytical-synthetic conversation involves fragmentation of teaching material into small parts, highlighting the main one in each of the parts.

Similar Methods to the Method of Conversation

The discussion and debate methods are close to the conversation. According to Pometun and Pyrozhenko (2004), a discussion is “a wide public debate of a certain controversial issue, which promotes the development of critical thinking, makes it possible to state their own thoughts, convictions, views on certain problems, to select and convey persuasive arguments, to defend their own point of view and take the side of the interlocutors” (p. 64). Thus, the subject of discussion for future Ukrainian language teachers may be to substantiate scientific linguistic and pedagogical problems, to solve the disputed issues, to form certain beliefs with the use of reliable facts and arguments, to teach listening and to weigh the assessments and opinions of the participants in a discussion.

N. Volkova introduces the following types of discussions into the practice of higher education:

1. “a round table” is a conversation, in which there is an exchange of views between its participants;

2. an “expert group meeting” (“panel discussion”), where the chairman and members of the group analyze a certain problem, proposing their own way (position) for solving it;

3. a “forum” is deliberation of the group’s thoughts with the audience;

4. a “symposium” is a presentation of own position in the process of discussing a certain topic with further answers to the questions of the audience;

5. a “debate” is a discussion built on pre-planned performances of rival members (Volkova, 2007, p. 351).

Conclusion

The study suggests that the choice of method depends on the form of learning process organization, its goal and objectives. A special place in the hierarchy of methods is given to a conversation whose main purpose is to conduct a dialogue with a student, to check the level of mastering of the educational material and the ability to express an opinion. Future topics for dispute and discussion should be used in the system of integrative study of normative disciplines in the linguistic and psycho-pedagogical cycles. Such are targeted at enriching students with adequate educational information, vocabulary and terminology resources, and the skills to prove and defend their own points of view.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares the work has no conflicts of interest.

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