

THE XXV ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC CONFERENCE, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE, 20-22 October 2014

Modern Information and Communication Technologies in the Development of Learners' Discourse Skills

Pavel V. Sysoyev^{a*}, Ilona A. Evstigneeva^b, Maxim N. Evstigneev^c

^aSholokhov Moscow State University for Humanities, 16-18, Verkhnyaya Radishevskaya St., Moscow, 109240, Russia

^{abc}Derzhavin Tambov State University, 33, Internatsionalnaya St., Tambov 392000, Russia

Abstract

This paper addresses the issue of students' discursive skills development via new modern information and communication technologies (ICT). The authors discuss the notion of discourse, define the structure of the discourse competence, and develop a nomenclature of discursive skills, which can be developed by the use of modern information and communication technologies.

© 2014 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of National Research Tomsk State University.

Keywords: Modern information and communication technologies; discourse; discursive competence; discursive skills

1. Introduction

1.1. Importance

One of the dominant issues in the field of modern language education is the optimization of the learning process. In this regard, it is clear that the more methodical solutions offered, the more productive the search for new ways of foreign language learning and teaching.

Researchers have noted, firstly, a strengthening of the communicative orientation of the educational process, which means more than knowledge of a foreign language - phonetics, grammar and vocabulary, but also the ability to use the language in real communication situations in accordance with its rules and, secondly, the spread of modern information and communication technologies (ICT) in pedagogy, contributing to learning intensification and

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +7-4752-72-3631.

E-mail address: psysoyev@yandex.ru

individualization. As a consequence, there is a need to prepare students for orientation in a multilingual community, for “dialogical cooperation”, for expression and achievement of communicative goals of partners in communication, with the help of modern ICT.

1.2. Definitions

“Discourse” and “discourse competence” are key concepts in this paper. However, scholars have not reached an agreement on the definitions of these terms. In the middle of the twentieth century discourse was defined as a sequence of related sentences or speech acts, and, in this interpretation, the notion of discourse was considered close to the notion of “text”. But by the end of the twentieth century the term “discourse” was considered as a complex of communicative phenomenon as a system of knowledge, which, in addition to text, includes some extralinguistic factors necessary for a full understanding of the text: knowledge of the world, attitudes, opinions, goals, etc. Thus, discourse is not viewed solely from the standpoint of syntax and semantics.

There are so many different definitions of discourse in the modern literature in which researchers tried to reflect communicative orientation and structure of the concept. For example, Arutyunova (Arutyunova, 1990) defines discourse as a coherent text, coupled with extra-linguistic, socio-cultural, psychological and other pragmatic aspects of the language. In his definitions of discourse, Karasik (Karasik, 2000, 2004) notes that this is a text immersed in the situation of communication, in which “many dimensions” are permissible, as well as a large number of complementary approaches to the study, including pragmalinguistic, structural-linguistic, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and linguocultural approaches. Definition of the term “discourse competence” is also very important for didactic purposes. The special significance of discourse competence is stated in works by Almazova (Almazova, 2003), who brings this competence to the fore, as she believes that its formation in the students’ acting is the primary goal of foreign language learning. The main purpose of education, according to Almazova, is to prepare highly qualified specialists in various spheres, who are capable of full international cooperation; it is assumed that they have the skills to apply adequate strategies of verbal behavior in the course of professional intercultural communication, taking into account, the certain forms of interaction between people in a communicative situation.

According to Bastrikova (Bastrikova, 2004) discursive competence is the ability to generate and interpret different types of discourse, which requires the ability to use and interpret language constructs (words) to create text, as well as skills of organization of a coherent text. In her works, Bastrikova focuses on the ability to achieve compliance with the text of thought, which must be able to effectively use the cords - conjunctions, pronouns, adverbs, and other grammatical means. A similar definition is given by Kolesnikova & Dolgina (Kolesnikova & Dolgina, 2008), stressing the importance of knowledge and skills in the process of creating texts of various functional styles and, consequently, the ability to choose linguistic tools with the type of utterances. In addition to knowledge of the peculiarities inherent in certain types of discourse, Shchukin (Shchukin, 2004) highlights the skill of using a variety of strategies to create and interpret texts.

However, the most complete, in our opinion, is the definition of discursive competence proposed by Popova (Popova, 2011), who understands it as the ability to create a coherent verbal expression, taking into account the thematic organization, cohesion, coherence, effectiveness and rhetorical logic within the real situation of communication and adequate functional style.

Analysis of these definitions shows that most linguists define discourse as other than a result of communication, and as a proper verbal behavior, the process of actualization of the author's speech intentions and the interpretation of these intentions by the recipient/recipients in a particular communicative situation, and the result of this process is the text. Therefore it can be argued that every discourse is a text, but not every text can be a discourse.

Since the discourse is seen as a process and is determined from two perspectives - the author’s and the recipient’s - one should not talk about writing, but discourse-oriented writing, not about speech, but discourse-oriented speaking, not about listening but discourse-oriented listening and not about reading, but discourse-oriented reading.

Thus, from the productive side of communication (the author’s position), discourse is understood as the process of encoding information in accordance with lexical, grammatical and syntactical rules, taking into account the stylistic, genre, social, cultural, psychological and emotional factors, with the use of cohesion and coherence in order to achieve a communicative goal - to convey information to the recipient. From the receptive side of communication (the recipient’s position), discourse is the process of decoding information in accordance with lexical, grammatical

and syntactical rules, taking into account the stylistic, genre, social, cultural, psychological and emotional factors, with the use of cohesion and coherence in order to achieve a communicative goal - to get information from the author (Evstigneeva, 2013).

By discursive competence of students it is necessary to understand a set of specific knowledge and skills that are needed for students to learn foreign languages in order to be able to encode and decode information using a foreign language in accordance with its lexical, grammatical and syntactical rules, taking into account the stylistic, genre, socio-cultural, psychological and emotional factors, with the use of cohesion and coherence in order to achieve communicative goals.

According to it, discursive skills of students are defined as the ability to encode and decode information using a foreign language in accordance with its lexical, grammatical and syntactical rules, taking into account the stylistic, genre, social, cultural, psychological and emotional factors, with the use of cohesion and coherence to achieve communicative goals.

In this regard, it is worth noting the difference between “discourse” and such concepts as “speech act” and “communication”. The main difference between discursive skills and speech skills is the focus of the second on the management of language skills to solve specific communicative tasks: to be able to speak, read, write, etc. On the contrary, discursive skills are treated slightly wider than speech skills by incorporating extralinguistic factors: stylistic, genre, social, cultural, psychological and emotional.

2. Nomenclature of discursive skills developed on the basis of modern ICT

The methodological potential of modern ICT in foreign language learning is unlimited. The development of entirely new methods of foreign language teaching with the use of modern ICT allows one to review such processes as getting information, its processing and further use, taking into account individual characteristics, knowledge and students’ skills. The use of ICT as a pedagogical tool allows one to get a quality education at a lower cost of time and effort by teachers and students (Sysoyev, & Evstigneev, 2009, 2010).

Analysis of modern requirements for secondary school leavers, identified in the Federal State Educational Standard (2011), shows that on the basis of modern ICT the following discursive skills can be developed: 1) the skill to use a foreign language’s lexical resources in order to create an oral and written text; 2) the skill to use stylistic and genre resources in order to create foreign language oral and written text; 3) the skill to organize a sequence of statements in a foreign language so that they represent a coherent oral and written text; 4) the skill to build logical statements in a foreign language; 5) the skill to formulate and express a point of view by means of a foreign language; 6) the skill to describe and explain facts by means of a foreign language; 7) the skill to plan text in a foreign language; 8) the skill to provide motives and goals of communication in a foreign language; 9) the skill to build communicative behavior according to the main theme of communication; 10) the skill to build verbal behavior adequately to the socio-cultural specifics of the target language country; 11) the skill to define the scope of the communicative situation; 12) the skill to take into account the historical and cultural contexts; 13) the skill to take into account the individual level of culture and the cultural level of the social group; 14) the skill to take into account personal experience; 15) the skill to predict the relevance of communicative speech in accordance with the style/genre of oral and written text; 16) the skill to predict the course of the communicative situation; 17) the skill to use the lexical resources of a foreign language to interpret oral and written text; 18) the skill to use the rules, codes and algorithms for interpretation of oral and written text in a foreign language; 19) the skill to predict the informative content of the oral or written text; 20) the skill to segment and classify an oral or written text; 21) the skill to predict the semantic content of an oral or written text; 22) the skill to identify the topic and the problem in the text in a foreign language; 23) the skill to analyze text and interpret it in terms of evident and hidden, primary and secondary information (Evstigneeva, 2013).

Table 1 shows the discursive skills which are developed on the basis of modern ICT, and which are focused on the productive side of communication (discourse-oriented speaking and discourse-oriented writing).

Table 1. Discursive skills development focused on the productive side of communication.

Discourse skills	E-mail	Web Forum	Blogs	Wikis	Podcasts
	Discourse-oriented writing				Discourse-oriented speaking
the skill to use a foreign language's lexical resources in order to create an oral and written text	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to use stylistic and genre resources in order to create foreign language oral and written text	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to organize a sequence of statements in a foreign language so that they represent a coherent oral and written text	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to build logical statements in a foreign language	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to formulate and express a point of view by means of a foreign language	+	+	+	-	+
the skill to describe and explain facts by means of a foreign language	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to plan text in a foreign language	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to provide motives and goals of communication in a foreign language	+	+	+	-	-
the skill to build a communicative behavior according to the main theme of communication	+	+	+	-	-
the skill to build verbal behavior adequately to the socio-cultural specifics of the target language country	+	+	+	+	+

Table 2 presents the discursive skills developed on the basis of modern ICT which are focused on the receptive side of communication (discourse-oriented reading and discourse-oriented listening).

Table 2. Discursive skills development focused on the receptive side of communication.

Discourse skills	E-mail	Web Forum	Blogs	Wikis	Podcasts
	Discourse-oriented reading				Discourse-oriented listening
the skill to use the lexical resources of a foreign language in order to interpret oral and written text	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to use the rules, codes and algorithms for interpretation of oral and written text in a foreign language	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to predict the informative content of the oral or written text	+	+	-	+	+

the skill to segment and classify an oral or written text	+	-	-	+	+
the skill to predict the semantic content of an oral or written text	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to identify the topic and the problem in the text in a foreign language	+	+	+	-	+
the skill to analyze text and interpret it in terms of evident and hidden, primary and secondary information	+	+	+	+	+

Table 3 presents the discursive skills that focus both on the productive and receptive sides of communication (discourse-oriented speaking, discourse-oriented writing, discourse-oriented reading and discourse-oriented listening).

Table 3. Discursive skills development focused on productive and receptive sides of communication.

Discourse skills	E-mail	Web Forum	Blogs	Wikis	Podcasts
the skill to take into account the individual level of culture and the cultural level of the social group	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to take into account personal experience	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to define the scope of the communicative situation	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to take into account the historical and cultural contexts	-	-	-	+	+
the skill to predict the relevance of communicative speech in accordance with the style/genre of oral and written text	+	+	+	+	+
the skill to predict the course of the communicative situation	+	+	+	-	-

3. Conclusion

The study shows that modern ICT greatly expands educational opportunities. Such modern technologies as blogs, wiki, podcasts, e-mail and web-forum can contribute to the development of foreign language learners' discourse skills.

References

- Almazova, N. I. (2003). *Cognitive aspects of the intercultural competence formation in foreign language teaching in non-linguistic colleges*: Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. St. Petersburg.
- Arutyunova, N. D. (1990). Discourse. In *Linguistic Encyclopedic Dictionary* (pp. 136-137). Moscow: Sovetskaya Encyclopedia.
- Bastrikova, E. M. (2004). Communicative competence as lingvodidactic phenomenon. In *Russian and Comparative Philology: Lingvokulturological aspect*. Kazan: Kasan University Press.
- Evstigneeva, I. A. (2013). *Methods of students' discourse skills development on the basis of modern information and communication technologies (English language school)*: Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Moscow: Sholokhov Moscow State University for Humanities.
- Evstigneeva, I. A. (2013) Students' discursive competence formation in linguistic high schools on the basis of the modern Internet technologies. *Language and Culture, 1*, 74 - 82.
- Karasik, V. I. (2000). About types of discourse. In *Linguistic personality: personal and institutional discourse* (pp. 5-20). Volgograd:

Classroom.

- Karasik, V. I. (2004). *Linguistic Circle: Personality, concepts, discourse*. Moscow: Gnosis.
- Kolesnikova, I. L., & Dolgina, O. A. (2008). *English-Russian glossary of terms for the foreign languages teaching*. Moscow: Drofa.
- Popova, N. V. (2011). Teaching discourse analysis for senior students (English grammar). *Foreign Languages at School Journal*, 3, 64 - 70.
- Popova, N. V. (2011). The discourse competence development. *Foreign Languages at School Journal*, 7, 74 - 80.
- Sysoyev, P. V., & Evstigneev, M. N. (2009). Web 2.0 technologies in creating a virtual educational environment for foreign language learning. *Foreign Languages at School Journal*, 3, 26 - 31.
- Sysoyev, P. V., & Evstigneev, M. N. (2010). *The methodology of foreign language teaching using new information and communication Internet-technologies*. Moscow: Glossa-Press.
- Shchukin, A. N. (2004). *Foreign Language Learning: Theory and Practice*. Moscow: Filomatis.