

Motivational Potential of Using the Social-Game Model in Teaching A Foreign Language

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Abstract

Updating language education in Russia today requires implementing the newest and most efficient pedagogic techniques in teaching process. The main trait of these techniques is the presence of a means-and-methods package of enacting theory-based teaching process that allows one to accomplish targeted teaching objectives. It is connected with the transition to communication-oriented teaching of foreign languages, which indicates a change of modern paradigm in teaching of foreign languages. It is not merely a foreign language itself along with its expressive means, but also the speaker's behavior under the conditions of actual communication that become the subject of teaching within the framework of this paradigm. Moreover, a principally different approach to teaching of foreign languages in higher education institutions is needed to implement major changes in the entire educational system, due to constant demand of specialists that actually have a good command of foreign languages. That is why motivational setting of learning also changes when students want to master at least one foreign language as a communication means and as a means of studying other cultures. Therefore, the main goal of education is to provide students with efficient command of a foreign language as a means of creation and formulation of ideas in the sphere of daily casual and professional communication. It means that a speaker's behavior under the conditions of actual communication is understood today firstly as animated and activity-oriented realization of lingual, psychological and social-cultural knowledge that is necessary for communicating in a foreign language. Thus, the following aspects of the problem are reviewed in the article: capabilities of motivation in learning a foreign language; using the social-game model as an educating device; pedagogical potential of the social-game model as an educational resource; possibilities of forming communicative and social skills in teaching a foreign language and etc.

Keywords: Student; Teaching; Foreign language; Education; Model.



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1. Introduction

As it is generally known in the system of theory and practice of learning, increase of motivation in learning activity is one of the most important aspects of didactics. In regards to learning a foreign language, actual involvement in the process of mastering a foreign language can be considered a realistic means of sustaining the motivation, and then the activity brings some personal meaning to the students. With that said, by activity, we firstly mean speech-based foreign-language activity, the one based on communicating and students' aspiring to properly use grammatically correct language both in speaking and in written form. In that respect, the principle of using the social-game model to increase students' motivation in learning a foreign language becomes particularly significant, even though higher education teachers do not often pay due attention to the possibilities of using such a methodological means in organization of their classes. At the same time, using the social-game model as a teaching device serves as a rather efficient mechanism in animation of thinking activity that is connected with learning a foreign language. Furthermore, any game model focuses on the active participation of all students in learning a foreign language, as an active participant in the educational process, the student, one way or another, will be involved in speech activity. According to a researcher [Derkach \(1991\)](#), the social-game model must be used in educational process as a task (or a problem situation), solving which is directed at achieving a certain educational objective. Therefore, the social-game model can be viewed as creating a situation, in which the process of language-features assimilation and speech-based communication tasks are combined. With that said, the social-game model has in its basis all the elements of an activity, the contents of which are disclosed in the process of its performance. It also includes such an important part as social relationship reconstructing between individuals, regardless of practical application of their fields of knowledge. Thus, the social-game model has some definite advantage over other teaching means. For instance, it offers an opportunity to use various organizational forms of work during classes, whether the students' activity is individual work, work in pairs, or in groups. All this, in turn, discloses communicative nature of the social-game model, which gives an opportunity to develop communication skills, when students, voicing their opinions and commenting on other students' actions, begin active interaction within the group, therefore activating both their own speech-based skills and social interaction strategy. In particular, this has been noted by a researcher [Schoff \(1966\)](#), who emphasizes such a common trait of gaming models as he ability to reflect the reality to some extent ([Khisamova, 2015](#)).

Based on the stated above, it can be noted that the social-game model has all capabilities to become an efficient incentive for students in their mastering a foreign language, when speech-based situations, created by their higher education teacher, encourage students' readiness and desire to communicate in another language. This circumstance helps to make the transition from the task of traditional foreign-language teaching to the task of communicating in a foreign language in order to increase each student's personal significance in the direction of updating the manifestation of his or her motivation in mastering a foreign language. Consequently, it is important to note that the social-game model is used from the point of view of increasing the efficiency of stages of foreign-language teaching, since classes of such a form are connected with enlarging meaningful context of educational communication in a foreign language. This, in fact, is reflected in its being problem-type and dynamic, including the professional field of higher education students' learning activity, too. Nevertheless, the conducted research gives the grounds to claim that in the educational process of modern higher education institution, a successful formation of professional competences in students is indeed possible (Gardner and Lambert, 2012).

2. Methodology

Conceptually, the social-game model as a teaching technique is intended to modernize foreign language teaching for higher education students, especially those majoring in non-language-related fields, in order to perfect the organizing structure of gaming cognitive activity through various types of educational role-play. Currently, following social-game models (or types of educational role-play) are often used in higher education institutions: 1) training games; 2) situation-based educating role-play; 3) professional educating role-play; 4) instrumental-competitive educating role-play. Let us review a type of instrumental-competitive educating role-play as an example. This type of game has gotten the name because it has the highest criterial data in all its specifications, especially in the quantity of means (or segments) of educational gaming space. These means act as control elements of all the game. They deliver high level of communication during completing complex creative content-based tasks, intellectual difficulty-solving (problem situations) and so forth, for instance, in the following topics: Political system of the US, Immigration policy of Great Britain, Cultural peculiarities and the commonality of English-speaking countries and others. Educational role-play of this type is related to the peak creative level of education, the so-called heuristic phase. The phase is characterized by a relatively high communication level at the final stage of teaching a foreign language to higher education non-linguistic students, thanks to its being systematic and to inter-connectivity of all types of role-plays used in the teaching process (Khuziakmetov and Valeev, 2016). That is, role-play types that function systematically and constantly in teaching the foreign language subject. In foreign language teaching, the social-game model delivers full self-regulation and self-evaluation of playing teams and their members, favorable psychological climate, high motivation levels during cognition process, professional reasoning development, diversification of tasks and improving speech-based skills. The stated above allows us to formulate overall didactic requirements for a functioning system of educational role-play, and, first of all, their professional orientation. The requirements are the following:

- Harmony and justifiably of a functioning system of profession-oriented educating role-play of gradually increasing difficulty: this system of educational role-play must include contents of the entire foreign language course (Maley and Duff, 1981).

- Feasibility of the system of educational role-play of professional orientation: this system defined by the trait, that based on creating the illustrative means of gaming field and modeling of problem situations of professional orientation, the system of educational role-play also allows one to significantly enlarge cultural spectrum of education for higher education non-linguistic students;

- Validity of the system of educational role-play: it includes due accordance with the targeted objectives of education (that is, formation of lingual, communicative, speech-based and other competencies);

- Practicality of the system of educational role-play: it is expressed in usage of acquired foreign-language professional knowledge, skills and abilities in purpose-modeled, developing situations of professional orientation;

- Succession and systematicity of educational role-play technique: it is expressed in inter-connectivity of different levels of role-play based on the previously acquired knowledge with simultaneous moving on to the new knowledge based on system approach;

- Correspondence of functioning system of educational role-play to the conditions of gaming cognitive activity: the contents of a role-play must have cognitive nature; certain educational tasks must be solved; novelty and attractiveness of a gaming plot must be present; all of the students must participate in creation of a new subject-matter, etc.;

- Corresponding of the system of educational role-play to the requirements of pedagogy of collaboration: it helps to develop creative potential of all the subjects of educational process;

- Reliability of the system of educational role-play: it is connected with the fore-running development of the learning subjects' activity, their formation of learning-and-cognitive motives, development of such traits of personality as decisiveness, persistence, initiative, intellectual curiosity, etc (Kondrateva and Valeev, 2015a; Kondrateva and Valeev, 2015b).

It is important to note, that entire gaming system delivers efficiency of the social-game model based on gradual increase of difficulty of professional-lingual and topical actions, materialized in the game. Furthermore, as it is commonly known, it is gradual difficulty increase in students' activity that is a necessary condition for personality development of a future professional by means of a foreign language. Additionally, it involves the presence of cognitive paradigm. Thus, within the concept of personal and activity-based approach the social-game model constitutes an element of a system, each element of which is systematic by itself in its inner structural-and-semantic

contents, as it has a solid didactic base in form of cognitive paradigm. And in this case cognitive paradigm constitutes an algorithm of consecutive development of both cognitive and topical activities of a student in a foreign language. Moreover, it is from the point of view of function-oriented education that cognitive paradigm makes its notional orientation of students' gaming cognitive activity (Abisheva *et al.*, 2018; Nazarova and Valeev, 2017).

3. Results and Discussions

As the research shows, using the social-game model to increase the level of motivation in learning a foreign language, particular attention must also be paid to creating a developing situation of social orientation, which must bear certain intellectual challenge, i.e. increasing the dynamics of the class by means of a problematic topic offered to them. Thus, within the framework of the social-game model, students reproduce some activity that is connected with a language, foreign speech in particular, and they practice the mechanism of performing this activity in their minds and in real-life situations in the future. Hence, it is desirable that social-game models contain certain parts in a play and rules of communication in a given gaming situation (for instance, a volunteer student meets a foreign scientist at an airport). Consequently, foreign-speech based activity must feature communication with an element of unexpected problem, solving which requires that the students have definite communication and social skills of conducting a dialogue, which also includes such a personal quality as quick thinking in making a decision. Therefore, let us consider some of the statements, connected with essential features of the social-game model, that presuppose animation of students' activity in an academic group (Vaysburd, 1991):

- Out of necessity, work in a group and work with a group determine such functions of the social-game model as psychological-pedagogical and social-psychological influence on a person;
- The social-game model must cover stand alone situations of developing activity of students;
- The social-game model must constitute free forms of students' activity, which they comprehend keeping in mind that it is a foreign language that they learn, which provides them with opportunities of personal creativity and self-expression;
- The social-game model must always have lingual personality practice at its basis;
- Using the social-game model, there need to be created situations, connected with involvement in and compassion towards the events in the play;
- The social-game model must always be built on students' sub-conscience that animates forming of the students' motivation towards learning a foreign language;
- The social-game model must be oriented to make mastering one's knowledge, skills and abilities easier and to encourage their actualization;
- The social-game model must include tasks of cognitive type, encouraging students' intellectual activity and animating their mental activity;
- The social-game model must help to secure, control and correct knowledge, skills and abilities in the course of learning given lingual material;
- The social-game model must act as an indicator of students' success in mastering a foreign language;
- The social-game model must deliver emotional influence upon students, animating their potential of learning a foreign language;
- Overall, the social-game model must bring up students' communication culture and enrich their interpersonal relationship experience in poly-cultural medium.

Based on the above, the review of social-game model functions allowed us to pinpoint the following ones:

- Communicative function of the social-game model may consist of creating educational-communicative preconditions for: a) mastering the technique of speech-based actions and corporate behavior in situations of intercultural communication; b) teaching the basics of discussion in interpersonal/intercultural communication; c) development of integrative creative skills to communicate based on cross-subject knowledge;
- Developing function implies development of students' intellectual capabilities, creative imagination, interpersonal skills, ability to learn in social environment (including teamwork, mutual assistance and responsibility) (Suizzo, 2000);
- Culturology function includes enrichment of students' social, regional-geography and culturology viewpoint, development of skills to adopt and understand specific peculiarities of behavioral traditions, manners in communication, mentality of representatives of another culture, bringing up tolerance and friendliness towards their partners in communication.

All of the functions mentioned above are inter-connected; they complete each other and directly influence personality development of a student as a future specialist. Experience has shown us that students actively and willingly take their parts in a play, because gaming gives them perspective to feel the specificity of social forms of behavior and to see gaming situations come closer to real-life situations, not being afraid of trying to express one's point of view. Gaming encourages actualization of students' language skills and abilities, makes them plunge into social-cultural medium of the studied-language country and leads them to constructive thinking and to searching for a solution in a possible conflict situation. This, in turn, requires stepping outside of a given topic framework and searching for additional information based on cross-subject connections.

4. Summary

Having conducted the analysis on psychological-pedagogical literature on the problem of motivation potential of using the social-game model in teaching a foreign language, we have concluded the following:

- Gaming techniques significantly increase level of motivation in learning a foreign language;
- The social-game model is a means of animating students' cognitive activity, encouraging its actualization;
- The social-game model contributes to communicative and activity-based nature of teaching, delivering development of students' speech-based and cognitive activity.

Therefore, motivational potential of using the social-game model in teaching a foreign language, for example to non-linguistic students, must also become a substantial educational resource for increasing students' level of interest in educational process itself, which in turn will allow one to increase his or her cultural, scientific and creative potential. In addition, since one's motives in learning can be of various nature (such as cognitive and professional, social and communicative, personal and status-based, etc.), motivation of students in their own education is a relevant issue for the teachers, too. From our point of view, that is the reason why it is important for the teachers to learn various pedagogical conditions of using educational techniques in motivation towards learning a foreign language for students of any training level and majoring in any field. For instance, that includes such a trait as taking into account peculiarities of one's mother tongue in teaching a foreign language (Antúnez, 2016; Dudeney and Hockly, 2008).

5. Conclusion

Based on the above, we can state the following uniform didactic requirements for organization of the social-game model use in foreign language teaching:

- Feasibility of introduction of the social-game model in Foreign language curriculum in order to broaden the specter of language teaching within the framework of mastering the major discipline for students majoring in non-language fields of study;
- Exact compliance of social-game models that are included in educational process to the targeted educational objectives;
- Providing continuity with earlier acquired knowledge in using the social-game model for students to constantly move forward in acquiring new knowledge and forming new skills;
- Providing practicality of the system of social-game models, directed at perfecting one's acquired professional and foreign-language knowledge, skills and abilities;
- Justification of gradual increase in difficulty of the social-game model, taking into account its professional orientation;
- Consideration of students' idiosyncrasies and language training level in the course of gaming cognitive activity, etc.

Thus, the reviewed motivational potential of using the social-game model in teaching a foreign language from the point of view of increasing the motivation level in learning constitutes some definite actuality. Therefore, we have concluded that motivation creating is justified, since it is also connected with development of a lingual personality. In this regard, based on the existing practice, it is important to take the following recommendations:

- Usage of students' subjective experience in their self-organization in learning a foreign language;
- Transition from spontaneity and traditionalism in teaching a foreign language to providing conditions for students to create their own individual educational space in that sphere;
- Organizing foreign-language medium for students to implement their personal motivational base in mastering a foreign language;
- Provision of foreign language teaching with value orientation in order to broaden students' scope of cultural knowledge about the studied-language country;
- Usage of pedagogical potential of interactive techniques to the full extent, both in the course of teaching a foreign language and essentially in increasing a student's level of motivation in learning (Kaskabasov, 2018).

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