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Discussion as a Method of Interactive Teaching Students of Higher Education Institutions to Communicate Professionally in Russian

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ABSTRACT: The article updates the issue of preparing and conducting discussion as a method of interactive teaching Russian as a foreign language. Group discussion used in Russian language classes contributes to the expansion of information field of university students, contains a variety of didactic techniques and implements pedagogical opportunities at all levels.

KEYWORDS: Russian as a foreign language, interactive learning, discussion communication.

At the present time in connection with the requirement to optimize the educational process, increase the amount of independent work of students of universities, increase their interest in the result of the educational process, there is an urgent need to diversify the forms of learning, using, in addition to the traditional classical lesson, such types of classes as business and role playing games, psychological and other training, group, scientific discussion, debate, debates, case method and many others in an interactive approach to the educational process.

This article will consider the possibility of using such a form of interactive learning as a discussion in the process of teaching Russian as a foreign language. Learning group discussions are often used as a control of students' knowledge and to achieve a higher level of learning efficiency. Appealing to this method is effective because it provides an opportunity to focus the learner's attention on both the language and the problem, as well as the opportunity to shift the emphasis from the linguistic aspect to the content aspect.

The term "Discussion" is defined as "a discussion of some controversial issue to clarify different points of view; a debate"; "a public discussion of any controversial issues, scientific problems, aimed at finding the best mutually acceptable solution"; "a public discussion in which by comparing different points of view a unified opinion is sought for a possibly correct solution to a controversial issue."^[1]

The question arises: how can we apply the discussion method to teaching Russian to students for whom it is a foreign language? Obviously, for teaching Russian, "finding the truth" is not so important; far more important is what is hidden in the form of the discussion itself, in other words, the process of preparing and conducting the discussion itself.

So what should be done to "redirect" the purpose of the discussion so that it becomes a productive tool in the study of Russian as a foreign language?

To answer this question, we conducted an experiment. Students of Russian as a foreign language were offered a topical topic for discussion: "Which is more important: environmental preservation or economic growth?" The teacher gave the task: to select, read, understand and be ready to state in their own words the materials from the Internet on the topic. The volume of the statement was not limited to certain time limits.

As a result, the discussion, despite the teacher's leading questions, turned into a monologue of four or five group leaders who were used to public speaking. After the class, the students were questioned about the reason for their passive participation in the discussion of the topic. The answers showed that there were several such reasons:

- poor knowledge of the factual background on the topic under discussion ("I didn't know what to talk about," etc.)
- narrow general outlook ("student S. has already told about everything", "they (students) said everything correctly without me...");
- poor command of language ("student L. spoke very quickly, I didn't understand...", "it's hard for me to say it in Russian");
- inability to join in the discussion ("they were talking all the time and they didn't listen to me");
- psychological peculiarities ("I didn't want to interfere, everyone was talking so interestingly").



The undoubted advantage of this experiment can be considered a communicative training, which activated a certain, already mastered, but formerly in the passive layer of vocabulary related to the topic of discussion, as well as a clear increase in students' interest in the lesson thanks to an unfamiliar form. The conclusion to which this experiment obviously leads is the need for more thorough and painstaking preliminary work in order to get the most out of this form of teaching.

In what should this preliminary work consist practically? First, the teacher should choose the topic of discussion in such a way that it should be interesting and relevant to all the students in the group, taking into account their national characteristics (culture, religion, family values, etc.); narrower, so that it would be possible to come to certain conclusions during one class; it should imply the presence of different points of view on the solution of the problem, i.e., ambiguously solved.

Second, prior preparation is required (necessarily under the teacher's guidance) to select materials for a deeper and more detailed exposure of students to the issues of the discussion. This preparation may take the form of individual assignments for students (e.g., reading a certain (selected by the teacher) article).

Thirdly, it is necessary to conduct systematic work throughout the whole period of training, aimed at the assimilation of special language formulas-cliches.

Fourthly, it is necessary to conduct a preliminary lesson on mastering the vocabulary and the conceptual apparatus directly related to the topic of discussion. At home, the task can be to learn new words and make sentences with them, to write out definitions of new terms from the dictionary.

An important role is given to work with professionally oriented texts on the material related to the science that students choose as their future specialty, and assignments to them.

The topics of the texts involved in teaching discussion are determined by the specifics of the students' future professional activity. The texts should meet their interests, as well as the level of their linguistic and theoretical training, and be useful in terms of the possibility of using this material in further academic work. The texts offered should arouse students' interest and encourage active communicative activity in the field of specialty. In addition to the cognitive and general educational value, the text material should not only be a source of relevant, useful information for the student, but also contain polemical statements on an interesting problem with elements of comparison, reasoning, justification of a certain point of view.

It is not advisable to read materials on the topic of discussion together in class, since the different points of view will be known to the students in advance and interest in the discussion will be lost.

When the preliminary stage is completed, we can move directly to the discussion. And here a few important points should be noted.

The instructor undoubtedly assumes the role of facilitator, moderator. It is his task to guide the discussion. It is important for the instructor to minimize his/her statements, avoid imposing his/her point of view, and not to correct mistakes that do not lead to communicative failure, so as not to stop the course of the discussion by throwing the speaker off his/her train of thought. The teacher's task is to involve all students in the group in the discussion of the problem, to give everyone the opportunity to speak, to bring the discussion to its logical conclusion and to formulate conclusions, if these are not formulated by the students themselves.

A short video or a video clip in Russian can also serve as supplementary material for the discussion. This will help students prepare for the upcoming discussion, think about the topic in advance, familiarize themselves with the available information on the topic of discussion and the video, and create for themselves a general idea of the problem to be discussed.

One of the advantages of video is its emotional impact on the viewer, who is faced with the task of awareness of real and imagined situations. Audio and video materials allow hearing real authentic speech in the language being studied, experiencing and understanding the foreign language culture, and immersing oneself in the world of another language space. Therefore, attention should be focused on the formation of students' personal attitude towards what they see. The use of video film also helps to develop various aspects of students' psychological activity, and first of all, attention and memory, which have a positive impact on the learning of foreign language material, especially on memorization of vocabulary and stylistic cliches. Watching a film or a video clip encourages learners to create dialogical situations, discuss the plot and personal impressions, and increases the level of creativity in performing the following tasks.^[2]

Also, one of the effective tools for presenting the problem and levers of persuasion in discussion communication is the use of visual presentations, which allows the teacher not only to activate the students' attention, but also to bring some variety to the traditional lesson. Schemes, drawings, tables, diagrams, charts, and photographs related to the topic of discussion communication can be used as such presentations. This approach has two advantages:



it helps the moderator to present the problem of the discussion more clearly and the students to follow the discussion, and secondly, such presentations provide language and speech material that will help in presenting their ideas.

Educational group discussions in Russian provide a powerful impetus to stimulate language learning, maintain interest in the subject, develop the intellectual and creative activity of students, form the skills of competent foreign language speech through regular practice of communication in a living language.^[3]

The relevance of using this method is seen in the fact that in the sphere of future professional activity much depends on the specialist's ability to realize himself through communication, to think freely and critically, to manage the team. Group discussion used in the classroom contributes to the expansion of the information field of students, the development of communication skills. This method activates true learning because it is personally oriented, contains a variety of didactic approaches, meets pedagogical goals at all levels, brings satisfaction to students who see the product of their own work.

Application of this method in combination with other research methods makes it possible to train a thinking and competent specialist, competent in various fields of knowledge, capable of navigating rapidly changing information flows and ready for an open and constructive dialogue with colleagues.

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