VI International Forum on Teacher Education

The Role of a Teacher's Speech Behavior in the Process of Developing the Students' Thinking within the Digital Environment

Larisa N. Fedoseeva* (a), Tamara N. Demko (b), Tatyana E. Alekseeva (c)

(a), (b), (c) Academy of the Federal penitentiary service of Russia, 390000, Ryazan (Russia), 1 Sennaya street, ln-fedoseewa@yandex.ru

Abstract

The relevance of the research is determined by the fact that nowadays the intellectual life of mankind poses great problems for a teacher.

In this connection the authors seek to prove that in the context of their joint intellectual activities the teacher sets the task of having spiritual impact on a student. Within the present-day digital environment, you have to clearly formulate the task for teaching: while educating your students it is necessary to enhance and improve their thinking.

The major approach to investigating the problem is observation: a direct and dynamic interaction of the teacher and his class creates the best conditions to achieve this goal. Above all these meanings there is a super meaning that involves connotative language resources, non-verbal language, and the "I" images that spiritualize the joint thinking process.

The article reveal that the teacher should not only master the rules of live speech but should realize that these are his professional tools. Previously, applied linguistics distinguished pedagogical linguistics designed for special professional philological training of a teacher. Nowadays this practice is retained only in the pedagogical educational institutions, however it is needed for all those who enter the classroom and start teaching.

The authors draw the conclusion that under the present conditions of total digitalization, speech communication has acquired a strategic significance for bringing up a well-educated person.

Keywords: speech communication, speech behaviour, language, thinking, digital environment, spiritual transformation, well-educated person.

---

* Corresponding author. E-mail: ln-fedoseewa@yandex.ru

Introduction

In response to the challenges of the times, education has been changing throughout all the periods of human history. These changes have involved both the contents of the learning material and the ways of transmitting it. The younger generation of our times is getting education when information technologies and new communication methods are developing at a rapid pace, and this factor effects not only the contents and the ways of receiving and transferring information but the human being too. It is this very fact of changing the subject/object of learning that poses specific tasks for those involved in the educational process.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of a teacher's speech behavior in the process of developing the students' thinking within the digital environment.

Literature review

Each new stage in receiving, processing and transferring information has been changing a human being. This was happening when people created writing, printing, photography, cinema and video. However, the digital technologies, which have brought about intensive accumulation and spread of knowledge cause huge transformation of intellectual processes. These are followed by some noticeable transformation of a person's spiritual life.

To confirm this statement we will refer to the opinions and considerations of some competent authors. A number of studies in psychology, neurophysiology, theory of communication, and applied sociology have noted some alarming trends. Thus, a distinguished psychologist Andrey Kurpatov (2020) diagnosed "an epidemic of digital autism" among younger people. The major symptom of the disease is the inability to communicate with the surrounding world. The scientist believes this is caused by "constant consuming the digital content" (Kurpatov, 2020).

According to the latest data, the users spend 100 days a year on-line. This is about a quarter of one's lifetime. It takes about 6 hours and 42 minutes to read the news, go through the sites and communicate in the messengers (50% of this time using their mobile devices). Lately, the figure has been rising: the Android designers have issued a special application that counts how many times a day a user checks his phone (more than 150 people took part in the experiment). It appears that the users unblock their phones 110 times a day (Publishing house Novosty). A well-known political analyst Mikheev calls it metaphorically "digital madness" (Radio Vesti FM).

While constantly staying in the network environment, some structures and functions of the brain are being shaped in isolation from reality. Absorption in the virtual reality results in a serious problem of maladjustment of brain activity as well as reduction in the activity of those brain parts that are responsible for one's thinking abilities. As a result, the number of schoolchildren unable to learn has increased considerably.

Another important consideration is that ousting live communication into on-line causes the decrease in speaking activities and the subsequent inability to fully express oneself. There is no need of statistics here – the disease has been evidenced by the teachers' observations of late.

Some futurologists foresee the inevitable increase in the trend and describe the miserable future of a human being submerged in the network reality. The Israeli historian Yuval Harari (2019) states "On the basis of the advance development and integration of digital technologies into various spheres of life the 21st century will witness a cardinal stratification of society into those few thinking individuals who follow the progress of artificial intelligence and a great many of those who live in the network and are capable of feeding on other people's ideas only" (p. 358, 372, 405). The latter will turn into a useless class. The artificial intelligence is likely to oust the greater part of people into the digital world and being submerged in virtual reality in head mounted displays they will lead an absolutely worthless life. In accordance with this gloomy prediction the life of "the useless class" people is going on *without any participation in real life*.

Against this background, centuries long educational methods, live dialogue in particular, are losing their popularity. The diverse electronic educational programs are replacing real communication. They compete with scientific knowledge, the teacher, the textbook, specialized literature, i.e. traditional components of higher education.

Methodology

"Human face" of education

Under the conditions of overall technological progress when quite a number of cognitive operations are performed by a clever machine the problem of education is becoming critical. Introducing informatization and digitalization in this particular area makes you think not only about such eternal issues as how to teach, educate, and develop skills using new tools, but how *to safeguard and preserve the essential characteristics of a human being* too. A person connected to the interface, constantly looking at the keyboard and the screen, unknowingly becomes a function himself. The more life problems he solves with the help of a computer device, the more his conscience is likened to this device. Speaking metaphorically, his brain is *becoming digital.*

What can be opposed to such digitalization? Nowadays an educator should realize that a human being responds to the surrounding world with a multitude of reactions besides the abstract mental processes. He/she should take into account those resources that are beyond the interactions of a machine and a human being and that can never be reproduced by any program or a robot. A human being is endowed with soul and spirit and ignoring this fact leads to depriving any communication, educational one in particular, of its spirituality. The favorite term of modern pedagogy – technology – has not appeared by chance. The teacher and the student are currently presented as if they were the parts of a mechanism operating in accordance with a specified program.

Using the word "stamping", the concept will be logically complete. Presently, it is necessary to overcome this approach in order to safeguard and develop those qualities that make a person human. Formerly, pedagogy and didactics were considered an art, a creative activity. Their goal is a human being as a whole and not his separate abilities. *An educated person* is an integral structure. Such person is perhaps more valuable than a narrow specialist: educated people constitute the creative potential of a society.

In fact, the problem of making education personally-centered is the problem of its humanization. The principle of humanization in bringing up future generations is a permanent task facing the mankind, which actually defines a human being as a species. At different stages of human history the reasons, the aims, the nature and the degree of humanization varied. Under the conditions of wide-scale usage of digital technologies the problem of humanization is highlighted particularly clearly. For the last two or three decades, the value of human nature that needs preserving has been actively discussed in the theory of education. Golisheva (2006), a lecturer at the Russian State University, calls for returning a human being

into the theory by arguing "From the point of view of humanism the issues of a person's uniqueness, autonomy, spirituality are dealt with as primary and decisive" (p. 30).

Results

The spiritual, spiritualization, lack of spirituality

The concept of the spiritual is defined as an immaterial essence independent of the body (Modern dictionary of philosophy). The *spiritual* results from *spiritualizing* by a human being of the phenomena, relationships, thoughts and events. There is a famous parable of the three masons. Each mason is carrying a wheelbarrow full of stones and answers the same question asked by a passer-by "What are you doing?". The first mason answers angrily "Don't you see? I'm pushing this damn barrow". The second one replies "I'm earning money to feed my family and myself". And the third mason says "Do you see that construction site over there? I'm building a beautiful palace" (The fable of the three masons).

A man can turn any phenomenon into a down-to-earth, vulgar and commonplace thing as well as to romanticize and elevate it to a moral and aesthetic ideal, in other words to spiritualize the phenomenon. Here originates the exceptional ability of a human being to compose music, write poems, construct palaces and put on plays. Being active, the spiritual strives for realization. In each person's life the spiritual is expressed in the values and ideals, in the goals and attitudes. The spiritual is secured in the psychological responses – the consciousness, emotions, feelings, experiences, full of aesthetic, moral reactions thus *spiritualizing* them.

In different circumstances the spiritual life of people has different coloring. For example, it used to be patriotic at the times of liberation wars, constructive-communist when building BAM, confessional and religious nowadays, etc. Davis (2008), an author of a profound study "TechGnosis: Myth, Magic, and Mysticism in the Age of Information" assumes that "many aspects of modern spirituality are formed by the language and ideas of the information society" and by the consumer society (p. 6). A person with such values can hardly be called spiritual and the notion "lack of spirituality" has appeared. Therefore, this society and the type of human being it produces are increasingly exposed as lacking spirituality.

Here comes to mind the prophetical conception of Marcuse's (1994) one-dimensional human being. He believes that the lack of spirituality in people is caused by equating the spiritual development with technological one as well as by the morality of a consumer society. A person whose only interest is consumption is opposed to a "two dimensional person" possessing critical mind and spiritual and moral

values. But for "a two dimensional person" able to have a positive impact on society to appear is not so easy: "The Great Denial" is needed.

Education can also be accused of lacking spirituality. The ideals and objectives of material requirements and basic instincts distract a human being from the principles of humanization. What are we training our thinking capacities for? To do the Unified State Exam? To pass an IQ exam? To please the employer? The bookshelves are full of manuals on how to become rich, leave behind the rivals, to be lucky and to be liked. In one of his books Gardner (2006) states the necessity of new thinking but its main idea is to learn those things that *will be needed*. And the question remains whether this requirement for knowledge and education is motivated by high beliefs. What educational values are we focused on?

The ideal of an "educated" person is that of a smart individual capable of calculating the profits. This is the way how many teachers understand the "restructuring" of their activities to fit the new *standards*. The teacher should follow the goal-setting basics of thinking that are reduced to benefits and gains while it is the human being who is the ultimate objective of an education. Isn't it an indication of the lack of spirituality to make a teacher play the part of a coach seeking the personal growth of a student whereas knowledge is simply an instruction how to achieve it?

This is quite correct from the point of view of market psychology when the brain is tuned to acquiring the knowledge for advantage and practical success. Nothing can be done about it. The popular principle of "practice-oriented education" is in demand nowadays. No wonder that humanization and spirituality of an individual stay outside the educational process ("nothing personal"). Even in terms of practice, the present day education fails to realize that both the abstractions and the spiritual world equally serve the practical purposes. The spiritual fullness transforms a person into a true citizen, a personality, a creator.

Thus, spiritualizing a human being presupposes his involvement in the active life. A learner should be ready to participate in some activity with his creative potential, opinions, ideals, sense of measure, harmony, patriotism; in other words to do it wholeheartedly. It means to easily use his inner resources, including them into the labor process. So, for an educated and spiritual person the profession is not limited to an established algorithm, it is rather the search for self-realization in his job. Spirituality does not make us free. In the time of network and consumer addiction and conscience manipulation inner freedom is deficient.

The above-mentioned Davis (2008) states that while moving along the network road, following the chaos, passing through "a set of sensational topics", "catching at the fictions, striving for novelty and all those things that are imposed by a hyperactive society", a man is called upon "to expand the mind, to enlighten the heart, to breathe in unison with other beings" (p. 33, 464-465). Simply stated, it is necessary to resist, to activate the intellectual reactions that put the conscience outside life experience, set it free.

Professor Tom Nichols (2019) is his "The Death of Experience. The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters" expresses the same idea. Speaking of the necessity to make some alterations in the education system under the conditions of rapidly changing realities, he claims that the university and college students lack an essential skill called metacognition – the ability to look at an object from the outside. It is the distanced and analytical judgement that can set an individual free from the power of a phenomenon. Metaposition is the viewpoint, the fundamentals composed of an intricate network of one's attitudes to the world and to oneself. This is an approach from the outside, the shift of consciousness when an object is perceived against the background of other conceptions.

It seems relevant to mention the notion of estrangement that has been introduced into the theatre practice by an outstanding German playwright and director Brecht (1898-1956) and later on into the aesthetics by a well-known philologist Shklovsky (1983). Estrangement presupposes a change in the focus of perception. Outside direct perception, being in a metaposition, the subject of learning looks beyond the boundaries of a phenomenon thus setting oneself free from direct vision. We speak here about the approach to the phenomenon studied. If the approach is unexpected, creative, stimulating further thinking, then it undoubtedly spiritualizes one's thought.

Another significant feature of spirituality should be mentioned. The aim of a spiritual personality's inner activity is not only to achieve some immediate result, but to improve the surrounding world and oneself. The ultimate priority of education is to acquire the determination that would raise the personality. In his work "The Religious Meaning of Human Thought" Trubetskoy (1995) claims that our primary calling is to transform human mind.

Teacher
Humanization of education is the direct concern of a teacher whose primary goal has always been to spiritually influence a younger generation. Thanks to the joint intellectual activities with the students, which is in itself a spiritual phenomenon, the teacher has the maximum of these opportunities. Characterizing thinking as a form of spiritual work Trubetskoy (1995) writes "A thought is too closely

connected to all the emotional experiences" (p. 223). And the philosopher is quite right. The process of "switching" the thinking processes of a human being cannot be equated to switching an operational system, which is done by pressing a button: a click – and it starts running. It is difficult to separate thinking processes no matter how simple and formally logical they are from the subject of thinking, his human nature, his inner world, his self-consciousness and the ability to feel, to evaluate the surrounding reality. It is not a machine but a personality with its complex reactions and its personal experiences that thinks.

Why should we state the obvious? We speak about the basics of a teacher's work – developing the students' thinking, which is not an abstract object of our activities. To develop thinking means to impact one's personality, not just one's intelligence. The impact is produced by another personality, that of a teacher who influences the thinking process not only by his logic but by his individuality too. This is the real way of spiritualization as well as the most effective method of resisting "technognosis".

Speech behavior

"Speech behavior" is the term of linguistic pragmatics that studies the language as it functions in people's communication (Zherebilo, 2010). Speech behavior is determined by the communication conditions, which comprise the subjects of communication (who are they?), the speech itself (what are they speaking about?), the situation in which the communication is taking place (where and how?) and the objectives, motives and intentions (what for?). In terms of this branch of linguistics the word is treated as a force and the means are sought to effectively influence the recipients of people's speech.

The topic of this paper requires us to distinguish those aspects of a teacher's speech behavior that spiritualize one's thought. Undoubtedly, speech behavior of a teacher is based upon the contents of the academic subject he/she teaches. The teacher's primary duty is to enrich his course with the latest scientific data and concepts, to spiritualize it with high purposes and lofty ideals. We will leave this aspect (what about?) aside because it is not directly related to the topic of speech behavior.

Effectiveness of live speech or the question "how?"

Speech behavior is realized in live communication when the recipient reacts in different ways – by visual and auditory sensations, esthetic feelings, ethical evaluations, emotions of satisfaction or doubt. In real communication the listeners get what cannot be reproduced by any other means. Klyuchevsky (1996) in his "S.V. Soloviev as a teacher" notes "Teaching is an activity that only those who are taught can feel. A teacher is like a preacher: a sermon like a lesson can be written down word for word and the reader can reproduce the notes but he will hear neither a sermon nor a lesson" (p. 310).

It is true that one cannot put into words all the pragmatism of relationships. It does not mean, however, that what is not expressed by words does not contribute to enriching the meaning. Gestures, mimics, intonation also "work". For example, what is the meaning of the expression achieved by paralinguistic means – intonation, tempo, pitch and vibrations of the voice? In fact, it reveals a lot – subjective view, evaluation, intellectual emotion, such as appreciation, disagreement, mockery, etc. It supplements that stream of thinking that flows in communication.

Emotional speech affects the mechanisms of perception, activates those brain parts that perform cognitive functions. The interlocutor, the listener understands both the underlying emotions and the shadows of meaning that are conveyed by non-verbal expressive means. Thus, above all these meanings there is a super meaning that enriches the joint thinking process. In real communication, a recipient receives more information than is conveyed by words.

Spiritual speech

Koshanskiy (1781-1831), who was a teacher of Alexander Pushkin at the Tsarskoye Selo Lyceum, wrote in his textbook in rhetoric (cited in General Rhetoric, 1996) "Oratory (Ars Oratoria) is the art of affecting the intellect, passions and will of other people … The speaker influences the listener's mind by his eloquence, intelligence, the force of argument, convictions and at the same time by the eloquence of his heart, his emotions, his spirit" (p. 161-163).

The whole rhetorical canon contributes to spiritualizing one's speech, but the artistic and expressive features of speech behavior are of particular significance. This section of classical rhetoric is called elocution. It includes two kinds of expressive means: tropes and figures of speech. Both represent the infinitely rich language resources and are an essential factor of cognition. Elocution devices reveal the finest trains of thought, its shadows. By including them into the abstract scientific discourse the spirituality of the thinking process is definitely increased.

Why are the tropes and elocution figures so valuable for thinking? As such, the tropes like simile, epithet, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony, hyperbole, litotes, and paradox expand the word boundaries and introduce secondary meaning into the speech. The brain encounters a multiple meaning image and has to decipher the information which is, in fact, some new reality. Concise, vivid and dramatic imagery does not only embellish one's speech but serves to express and improve the thought in a way that cannot be done by

any formal and logical language means. There is often no other device but metaphor or some other figure of speech to penetrate into the nature of things or to explain it to a listener.

This language resource gives a teacher a lot of possibilities to introduce knowledge: to look into the phenomenon, to deepen one's understanding, to clarify a problem, to specify and to generalize as well as to express one's personal attitude – "to raise to heavens", "to drop to the ground", to astonish, to strengthen the effect, and so on and so forth. That's what we call factors of speech behavior. (An example would be suitable here, but each academic subject would require a different illustration).

Consequently, the two intersecting meanings in a trope complicate the thinking process. For instance, in Socrates' philosophy, irony used to be the main instrument to reach the truth in the discussions with his pupils. Its double meaning forced them to extract the thought not from direct statements but from the implied meaning, as has been described by the outstanding Russian philosopher and philologist Losev (1966). These techniques are undoubtedly of great cognitive significance. Their power lies in launching the mechanisms of catching the "super meaning" that does not coincide with the meaning of a particular word.

Speech behavior of a teacher is also realized in terms of syntactic (stylistic or rhetoric) figures. A wide-spread device is a rhetoric question. As writes the author of "Homiletics" (theory of church sermon), master of theology Archbishop of Polotsk and Glubokoe Theodosius (2007) "The aim of this figure is to draw the listeners' attention, to activate their thinking, to make the argument become *their own conviction*" (p. 200). Many other means of expression – parallel constructions, polysyndeton, antithesis, repetition, rising and falling gradation, and anaphora are aimed at producing the same effect. They serve to highlight the road followed by the speaker, to emphasize the meaningful centers, to focus on the principal ideas. The syntactic structures help to considerably enhance the effect on the listeners.

Discussions

The means of expression described are not the only components of a teacher's speech behavior, though those are involved in the spiritual thinking process most of all. The interaction of virtual personalities in cyberspace excludes such a possibility. In our opinion, to spiritualize a thought there needs to be a direct interaction of the students' personalities and that of a teacher in the creative surroundings.

Consequently, it is difficult to imagine the situation in which one can become a fully-educated person with the help of gadgets, through the telecommunication application Skype or solely by distance learning or

part-time education. Nothing can substitute real communication of the teacher and the learners, oral speech with its huge potential, the involvement of a human being in the cognitive process. Live dialogue of a teacher and his students provide the conditions vital for spiritual thinking so much in demand today. However, this viewpoint has its opponents.

Conclusion

What has been previously said about the importance and necessity of direct communication does not mean you should drive the students off the computer, oust them from cyberspace. The teacher makes use of the Internet as much as his pupils do and his work is largely dependent on digital technologies. Being an exclusively ample resource for spiritualizing a personality, the teacher's speech behavior should be organically combined with the newest methods of acquiring knowledge. The circumstances require analytical work on his part, creative search for the best patterns of speech behavior aimed at spiritualizing his students' thinking under the conditions of total impact of virtual universe.

Nowadays, the teacher has a sort of medical responsibility to prevent "digital autism", to maintain the cognitive brain functions. It is necessary to conscientiously confront the tendencies of modern civilization that bring about lack of spirituality, deprive of personal character, divert from the real world. At the same time it is necessary to strive for bringing up a thinking person who is free, spiritual and creative.

A teacher is a professional speaker. The ability to speak clearly and distinctly as well as to think systematically is a component of his competence. But it is not enough. The search for "drastic means" should be included. Not everyone has a gift for eloquent speech, but to be a professional means to know how to achieve this.

Previously, applied linguistics distinguished pedagogical linguistics intended for special professional philological training of an educator. Nowadays this practice is retained only in the pedagogical educational institutions, yet it is needed for all those who enter the classroom and start teaching. Presently, under the conditions of total digitalization, specialized preparation of a teacher for speech communication has acquired strategic significance for bringing up a fully educated person.

It is common knowledge that teaching elementary particle physics, psychology, astronomy or vegetable cultivation require different types of speech behavior. However, no matter what the content of the subject taught is, the impact of a teacher's personality cannot be separated from communication, the laws of live speech, which is his professional tool. Thanks to the teacher's personality, the richness of his inner world,

culture, professional skills and competences society has the force for personality's inner transformation, its spiritualization.

References

Archbishop of Polotsk, Glubokoe Theodosius Biltchenko (2007). *Homiletics.* Moscow: Samshit-izdat.

Davis, E. (2008). *TechGnosis: Myth, Magic, and Mysticism in the Age of Information*. Ekaterinburg: Ultra. Kultura.

Fable of the three masons. Christian fables. Retrieved from http:///www.wisdomlib.ru.

Gardner, H. (2006). *Thinking of the Future. Five Intelligences Ensuring Life Success*. Moscow: Alpina Digital.

Golisheva, O. A. (2006). The Problems of Humanization and Humanitarization of Modern Russian Education. *Vestnik MGOU. Series Philosophy, 4*(36), 26 – 32.

Harari, U. (2019). *Homo Deus. Shorter history of the future*. Moscow: Sindbad.

Klyuchevsky, V. O. (1996). *S.M. Soloviev as a Teacher.* Russian rhetoric: Reader. Moscow: Prosveshcheniye.

Koshanskiy, N. F. (1996). *General Rhetoric*. Russian Rhetoric: Reader. Moscow: Prosveshcheniye.

Kurpatov, A. V. (2020). *Speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos.* Retrieved from https://www.regnum.ru.

Losev, A. F. (1966). *The irony antique and romantic. Aesthetics and Arts. From the history of pre-Marxist aesthetic thought*. Moscow.

Marcuse, H. (1994). *One-dimensional Man.* Moscow: REFL-book.

Modern dictionary of philosophy (1998). Minsk: PANPRINT.

Nichols, T. (2019). *The Death of Experience. The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters*. Moscow: Eksmo.

Radio Vesti FM. Retrieved from http:///www.radiovesti.ru.

Shklovsky, V. B. (1983). *On the theory of prose.* Moscow: Sovetsky pisatel.

Trubetskoy, E. N. (1995). *The meaning of life.* Selected works. Moscow: Canon.

Zherebilo, T. V. (2010). *Dictionary of linguistic terms.* Retrieved from http:///www.rus-lingvistics-dict.slovaronline.com.