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THE IMPACT OF INTERACTION ON PROVIDING CONDITIONS FOR LISTENING IN TEACHING⁷

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Abstract

It can be stated that there is no education and upbringing beyond interpersonal relationships, so it can be stressed that upbringing and education are impossible without interaction. Interaction begins at an individual's early age, first in the family and then it continues in school, social groups and organizations. In correlation with other people in his/her environment, an individual develops his/her own personality and views. P. Brajsa believes that what a man does to a man is actually his "I" which is formed in interpersonal relations between people from early childhood. Therefore we can conclude that most of the interaction in the educational process is accomplished through communication.

Interaction in communicating is an active mutual relationship of communicators and recipients, i.e. in the teaching process between teachers and students, where listening and exchanging opinions about what is discussed in the communication process are exchanged.

Key words: *interaction, teaching, active listening.*

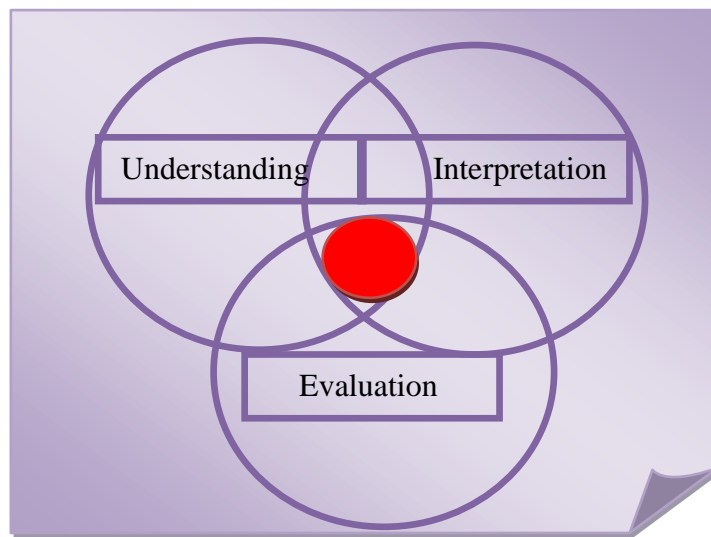
The term interaction term suggests, in its very etymology, the idea of a mutual, reciprocal action. Applied to human relationships, this notion imposes communication to be regarded as a circular process, where each message, each conduct of a protagonist, acts as a stimulus to the recipient and calls for a reaction which, in turn, also becomes a stimulus for the first one. It equally leads to co-presence and refers to situations face-to-face. This latter aspect allows the notion of interaction to be distinguished from the notions: relation, connection, relationship.

Interaction is not limited only to verbal communication: any behavior (position, gestures and facial expressions) that occurs in the presence of another person, causes certain position in that other person, which in turn affects the first communicator. This confirms the previous thesis that even when we do not speak, we communicate and in that sense various communication schools claim that "you cannot not communicate". Finally, the term interaction is obviously inseparable from that of context, because the environment in which communication occurs is the carrier of rules and codes that try to give it a specificity (we do not communicate in the same way in the office, in the amphitheater, in the street, etc.).

Suzić⁸ defines interaction as a current relationship between two or more entities where one entity must influence the behavior of the other, whether in a positive or in a negative sense. For these reasons, he supports the thesis that human relationships are impossible without at least minimal presence of interaction. In any relationship a minimum sum of mutuality and interdependence for shaping the relationship of interaction can be met.

⁷ Revisional scientific paper

⁸ Suzić, (2005), p.134



Graph 1: Elements that improve interaction between interlocutors

According to Kathleen K. Reardon⁹, interaction in communication can have many forms and it can be expressed in the form of greetings, disagreements, debates and negotiations. Whatever the form of interaction is applied, it requires that all participants in the communication process learn and be trained to use communication rules, which would facilitate and intensify this process (e.g. the rule that while someone is speaking we should not turn our back on him/her, i.e. we should look into his/her eyes).

The graphic presentation no. 1 shows the elements that enhance interaction between the interlocutors in the communication process.

Emphasizing the significance of the most important elements that enhance interaction in communication, we are pointing to the complexity of the process, particularly in terms of teachers and students. *Understanding* of messages in the process of active listening is fundamental in this mutual relationship. The establishment of interaction with the student by the teacher, showing friendliness, knowing his/her needs, desires and possibilities, and the adaptation of the teacher's speech to the student's age, ensure full and clear understanding of the sent message. It is the first stage in the interactive relationship where *interpretation* of the received message occurs by the student, i.e. interpretation of that message. This stage of the interactive relationship must be verified by the sender of the message - the teacher in order to verify his/her perception of the message (positive or negative). After checking on how the student interprets the message, we pass on to the third stage, *evaluation*, i.e. assessment, acceptance, application of acquired information received with the message. Then we can say that there is a positive interaction relationship between teachers and students, whose ultimate goal is gaining additional knowledge that will be applicable in further learning.

Particularly important for the development of interactive relationship is when teachers volunteer some private information about themselves (self-discovery) so that listeners - students could get to know them better. Revealing information about oneself has a very important role in initiating, developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, since with the disclosure of certain information (messages) about oneself, students understand the messages they receive with less uncertainty and with greater attention, they perceive a smaller interpersonal distance in relation to the teacher, and thus they are stimulated to talk more about themselves (to "reveal themselves"), which may lead to a higher degree of

⁹ Kathleen Reardon, (1998), p. 3

convergence, and to greater interaction in communication. Of course, there must be moderation because too much disclosure of information about oneself can lead to negative consequences, i.e. information/messages sent by the teacher must be filtered.

For teaching, the division of kinds of listening based on interactivity are particularly relevant. Interactive listening (this kind of listening is also called reciprocal listening) is listening during which listeners (mostly students) are asked to play an active role in the process of interaction, or to listen and speak alternately. This kind of teaching is appropriate because students, in the role of listeners, have the chance to seek clarifications from the speaker (usually the teacher), explanations or slower pronunciation of sentences. This kind of listening in the classroom is considered advanced because it is collaborative and implies social interaction in small groups, and it can be a "test" for the teacher to see if students are really listening to him/her. During interactive listening, in pairs or groups, students receive new information they are constantly recognizing, and with it they are immediately understand the interlocutor and formulate responses at the same moment, as it happens, in fact, in everyday life.

Interaction in teaching, as a circular process that is a mutual, reciprocal action, where every sent and received message acts as a stimulus to the interlocutor, is an important determinant of active listening. Therefore, the subject of this study is whether ***there is a significant statistical connection in the responses of teachers, pupils and school staff about the level of presence and significance of the interaction impact on the elements of active listening in teaching.***

In terms of the interaction impact on the elements of active listening in teaching, this was reviewed and analyzed through the following question: **How present and how important interaction is (two-way communication, involvement and cooperation) for active listening in teaching?**

Willingness to listen

To show how interaction affects the willingness to listen, and the level of significance and presence of impact, we interpret the research results¹⁰ that are processed with statistical calculations in order to obtain relevant data.

Regarding the level of presence and significance of the interaction impact on providing listening conditions, the analysis shows that most of the 546 respondents (69.29%) have chosen the alternative *Extremely important*, but, at the same time, concerning the level of presence of the interaction impact on providing conditions for listening, 617 respondents (78.30%) responded with the alternative *Fully present*, indicating that there is an awareness among respondents that interaction has an impact on all segments of the teaching process. Opposite to these responses, only a small number of respondents disagree with this statement: 13 respondents (1.65%) believe that it is *Partially present* 32, and respondents (4.06%) that is *Partially significant*. One teacher from an urban school believes that the level of significance of the interaction for providing listening conditions is *Not significant*. One student from a suburban school has the same opinion.

Regarding the level of presence and significance of the interaction impact on training students to listen, from the analysis it appears that the majority of respondents from all three areas have chosen the alternative *Extremely important* – urban schools 71.72% (312) of respondents, suburban schools - 22.93% (36), and rural schools - 100% (196).

¹⁰ This research included elementary schools in Eastern Macedonia, which surveyed 38 teachers, 28 expert associates, and 787 students.

Regarding the level of presence, the statements of the respondents who answered that the impact of the interaction on the ability of students to listen is *Fully present* and *Present* dominate, as much as 685 respondents - 86.93%.

Concerning the level of presence and significance of the interaction impact on asking understandable questions, the analysis shows that the majority of respondents chose the alternative *Extremely significant* and *Significant* - 95.94% (756). The situation is the same with the answers provided by the respondents about the level of presence, i.e. 771 - 97.84% said that the level of presence of the interaction impact on asking understandable questions is *Present* and *fully Present*.

As to the level of presence and significance of the interaction impact on mutual communication among students, the index performance level of significance of the interaction impact on the mutual communication among students shows that a total of 688 respondents (87.311%) chose the alternatives *Extremely significant* (452 - 57.36%) and *Significant* (236 - 29.95%), while 100 respondents (12.69%) answered *Partially significant* or *Insignificant* and *Not significant at all*. As for the other part of the question - the level of presence of interaction in mutual communication of students, the majority also answered *Fully present* (564 to 71.57%) and *Present* (23.49%). Other respondents answered with the alternative answers *Partially present*, *Not present* and is *Not present at all*. These responses are more noticeable in all environments, especially in students' responses. As much as 86 students - 11.91% responded *Partially significant* and 37 (4.69%) *Partially present*. This number is not negligible and points to communication problems among students themselves, which generally speaks about insufficiently developed school climate and culture.

CONCLUSION

The challenges and demands of modern teaching also impose new principles that teachers must accept and realize that they need to change old habits in their own teaching practices and to improve them with new forms, methods and techniques in their work. This means adequate permanent education of all parties involved in the teaching process which would result in higher quality implementation of the educational process, i.e. in raising the level of understanding and learning, which is, actually, the primary objective of every society. Higher quality teaching means competence of teachers and students for successful communication, or their mastery of communication skills which include active listening, as one of the crucial ones in the teaching process, which directly affects the process of teaching and learning in the classroom.

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