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Формирование психологической атмосферы на уроках английского языка

Аннотация: В статье предоставлена некоторая ценная информация о факторах, влияющих на атмосферу в классе, начиная с характеристик социальных групп, поскольку учащиеся внутри школьного класса образуют тип социальной группы, на атмосферу которой значительное влияние оказывает групповая структура, Ведущий стиль учителя и действия, которые он или она инициирует, факторы, влияющие на атмосферу на уроках английского языка, таких как, например, группы учащихся, отношение учеников к изучению английского языка или их уверенность в языке.

Ключевые слова: педагогическая психология, педагогическая атмосфера на уроках , речевые навыки.

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FORMATION OF A PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE IN ENGLISH LESSONS

Abstract: *The article provides some valuable information about the factors that influence the atmosphere in the classroom, starting with the characteristics of social groups, since students within the school class form a type of social group, the atmosphere of which is significantly influenced by the group structure, the leading style of the teacher and the actions that he or it initiates factors that influence the atmosphere in English lessons, such as groups of students, students' attitudes towards learning English or their confidence in the language.*

Keywords: *pedagogical psychology, pedagogical atmosphere in the classroom, speech skills.*

INTRODUCTION

Classroom organization and control have turned out to be key concepts when planning a foreign language lesson nowadays. The way a teacher plans and develops a lesson, his/her attitude and position towards the students, the kind of activities selected and the time she/he confers to each of them, together with classroom and students' distribution, will influence the lesson's pace and the learners' achievement in the subject a great deal [2, p.291].

Teachers and educators should be completely aware of the importance of establishing a suitable relationship between them and their students from the beginning in order to create a favorable atmosphere in the classroom and thus have a positive role in the students' performance. Their motivation towards learning a foreign language (first or second) could be increased or diminished depending on the relationship they have with their teacher, the grouping modality he chooses for every task or activity, his sense of power and authority over them, the students' participation and control, etc.

However to teach science well also requires a specialized approach to how learners make meaning for abstract scientific ideas.

And there are quite a lot of ideas designed for pupils of any age proposed in many publications, which will be very useful for teachers in putting them into practice. The elementary-level pupils always and everywhere form a large group of learners and have a great interest to learn a foreign language. And here we should not forget the important fact, that the beginning and capability of forming psychologically warm atmosphere in the classroom is the most important phase in the whole process of learning. For a beginner, for example, everything is new and exciting. S/he has heard many words, phrases or songs in English, probably without understanding them, and now his/her chance has come. And what is even more

important – his/her mind is lean with respect to this language, so everything he/she learns first will be taken in without any of the confusion which may come later, when more and more rules and words will have to be assimilated. This might not be a new idea. Many methodologists have pointed to the importance of first learning steps. For instance, H.E.Palmer says, “...it is the early lessons which are going to determine the eventual success or failure of the study” [3, p.29]. Here, one should keep in brain, that a successful beginning, keeping a good relationship from the very start of the lesson will pave a way to the successful ending.

There are many materials for teachers to have a chance to improve their teaching in terms of teaching the four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing or grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation but there isn't much practical material concerned with the affective part of teaching/learning process as classroom atmosphere or classroom dynamics dealing with topics like relations among students, tolerance or cooperation. I share the opinion of Hadfield that this may be due to the fact that these topics were probably not as important in the past when teacher-centred learning was the most common in language classrooms. However it is very important to pay attention to the affective part of learning now as today cooperative and communicative language learning employing pair work and group work has become the norm and it wouldn't be effective or successful without good relationship and supportive attitude between pupils as they are the source of learning to one another. Even research in social psychology confirms that cohesive groups have better results.

A great deal of the theoretical writing about learning in the 1970s and 1980s drew on humanistic psychology and was concerned with human potential for growth with a focus on 'self'. The drive for this came from the emerging belief that personal freedom, choice, motivations and feelings also had a place in developing understanding of how and why people learn. The most well known researcher was Abraham Maslow who developed a hierarchy of motivation. At the lowest level he classified physiological needs and at the highest self actualization.

Maslow argued that only when the lower needs are met is it possible to fully move on to the next level because a motive at the lower level is always stronger than those at higher levels. Some of his critics dispute these stages of progression, arguing that people can be self actualized without all the other steps having been fulfilled. Nonetheless Maslow did produce a helpful analytical tool. The levels are defined as:

Level one: *Physiological needs* such as hunger, thirst, sex, sleep, relaxation and bodily integrity must be satisfied before the next level comes into play.

Level two: *Safety needs* call for a predictable and orderly world. If these are not satisfied people will look to organize their worlds to provide for the greatest

degree of safety and security. If satisfied, people will come under the force of level three.

Level three: *Love and belonging needs* cause people to seek warm and friendly relationships.

Level four: *Self-esteem needs* involve the desire for strength, achievement, adequacy, mastery and competence. They also involve confidence, independence, reputation and prestige.

Level five: *Self-actualization* is the full use and expression of talents, capacities and potentialities [5, p.84-85].

Maslow believed that learning can be seen as a form of self-actualization, yet while self actualization may be seen as the primary goal, other goals, linked to the other stages, also prevail. These include a sense of accomplishment and the controlling of impulses.

Carl Rogers further developed the idea of ‘self’ and the importance of engaging with the whole person, with their experiences and that learning combines the logical and intuitive, the intellect and feelings. He saw the following elements as being involved in significant or experiential learning.

‘It has a quality of personal involvement with the whole person in both feeling and cognitive aspects being in the learning event.

It is self-initiated. Even when the impetus or stimulus comes from the outside, the sense of discovery of reaching out, of grasping and comprehending, comes from within.

• *It is pervasive. It makes a difference in the behavior, the attitudes, perhaps even the personality of the learner.*

• *It is evaluated by the learner. She knows whether it is meeting her need, whether it leads toward what she wants to know, whether it illuminates the dark area of ignorance she is experiencing. The locus of evaluation, we might say, resides definitely in the learner.*

• *Its essence is meaning. When such learning takes place, the element of meaning to the learner is built into the whole experience’.*

“A positive group atmosphere can have a beneficial effect on the morale, motivation, and self-image of its members, and thus significantly affect their learning, by developing in them a positive attitude to the language being learned, to the learning process, and to themselves as learners”.

Hadfield uses the term “Successful group” connecting all the attributes mentioned above to describe what this term stands for in particular:

- Cohesiveness of a group

- positive, supportive atmosphere of trust among members as well as positive attitude to the learning experience, the language and culture studied
- positive self-image of its members supported by others, tolerance
- members feel comfortable with expressing their individuality, feel secure and accepted
- ability to compromise
- ability to define the goals both group and individual
- willingness to cooperate with all members of the group productively
- ability to listen to each other
- ability to take turns in speaking and activities
- ability to be open-minded, welcome new ideas, empathize with others and respect their different point of view
- self-reliance of the group, ability to overcome problems on their own
- sense of fun

When a new group is formed and a good atmosphere is established it does not necessarily mean that it will stay that way throughout the whole year because maintaining a cohesive group is much more difficult than forming a new group.

Here I would like to give some concrete examples which raise children's interest and help them to be encouraged, stimulated and be interested in learning your subject:

1. Songs. – A very important way, of course, is taking songs. Children are very enthusiastic learners. There are very many songs for young learners such as “Greeting Song”, “Family Song”, “Rainbow Song”, “Happy Mothers’ Day”, “Christmas Day” and many others, which might be taken even in the nursery schools or for the junior students.

In the 2nd class children especially like to sing a “Greeting Song” at the beginning of each English Lesson. It sounds like this:

Good morning, good morning,

Good afternoon.

Good evening, good evening,

Good night, good night.

Nice to meet you,

Nice to meet you.

Good bye, good bye,

See you, see you...

Children not only sing this song, they dance, imitate greeting, sleeping position, and parting. It is a kind of entertaining moment which might pave the way to the success at the beginning of the lesson. Moreover, singing this song, children learnt how to greet at each part of the day, what to say when they introduce with somebody and what to say while leaving or at the end of the lesson. All songs for children interpret something new, and children do not make much effort to learn new words, to know phonetic and grammar rules. Songs help children do all these things automatically and with a great pleasure.

2. *Games* are also a helpful tool for learning or teaching English especially for junior students.

“Parachutes” is a game for consolidation of the theme, especially, of the new vocabulary taken at the previous lesson and it doesn’t take long to check it. It would be better to take this game 3-5 minutes before the bell. Children begin to be prepared to leave the room, put everything into their bags, be divided into two groups and stand in two lines facing the door with their bags on the backs. This very point shows them as parachutists. A teacher said one by one new word in the native tongue or in the English language and pupils must find their equivalents. A row, from which a pupil finds the word, makes a step towards the door. Those who reach the door first may leave the room and the next team - after the bell.

The next game “A pupil on duty” is also a game which motivates children to feel themselves as individuals and motivate to educational activities. At the beginning of the lesson a pupil on duty does not answer the teacher’s everyday habitual questions. She / he plays a role of the teacher asking the questions she / he knows. In the practice we felt sure that this game so motivates children that they try to put more questions to her / his classmates.

3. *Jaw and Tongue-Training Games*. - As for other activities, we always try to take Jaw and tongue training games after greeting or checking the home assignment, which are tongue twisters and rhymes.

It is a usual activity that teachers always try to take such kinds of exercises at the beginning of every lesson after greeting. As the children are active learners, it is very important to arise their interest to learning a foreign language by motivating them to it:

That fat black cat sat on a mat and ate a fat rat.

Betty bought some bitter butter

Can you can a can?

Daring dolphins dive deep,

Up and down when they leap.

Great grey goats.

Mary and Clare have a bear and a hare

While taking tongue twisters we tried to show pictures or slides concerning the meaning of the tongue twister for it helps them not only repeat the sounds without understanding, but feel what they are talking about.

As for the rhymes, it is not easy for young learners to repeat the whole rhyme after the teacher, that's why it would be the easiest way to repeat just the separately taken lines to the exact sounds and imitate it.

a. Children, have you ever seen a kitten drinking milk? In fact, it doesn't drink it. It laps it. Now, I'll recite a rhyme about it and when I say "Lap, lap, lap!", please, make your kittens lap milk.

Little kitty laps her milk,

Lap, lap, lap!

Her tongue goes out,

Her tongue goes in,

Lap, lap, lap!

Little kitty likes her milk,

Lap, lap, lap!

Oh, see her tongue,

Goes out and in,

Lap, lap, lap

b. Little brown rabbit went hippity hop,

Hippity hop, hippity hop.

Into the garden without any stop,

Hippity hop, hippity hop.

He ate for his supper a fresh carrot top,

Hippity hop, hippity hop.

Then the rabbit went home without any stop,

Hippity hop, hippity hop.

When we took the rhyme given above, we had the children hop like rabbits and at the same time say "hippity hop". It was fun for them to act like rabbits, and they learnt to pronounce the sound [h] without any problem (usually they say [x] instead of [h]).

In conclusion I would like to add, that young learners attitudes towards learning English will be influenced positively by forming warm atmosphere for the successful beginning, effective preparatory course of the English classes. A teacher of English should be creative and innovative. Searching for new approaches to effective teaching pupils will help to make the process more interesting, motivated, useful and effective, and encourage children to learn a new foreign language and they might feel themselves even happy to "master" it.

CONCLUSION

This thesis conveys detailed information, theoretical and practical, with the meaning and importance of educational activities which should be used while teaching English by means of new approaches of teaching English in the lower primary education. We focused on the impact such a course can have on junior students' adaptation, enjoyment and motivation in learning English.

The project consists of Introduction, two chapters, conclusion, list of used literature and appendix. The Introduction threw light into what to expect in the body of the work. In the theoretical part we focused on specific characteristics of methods of foreign language teaching, new approaches and the importance of teaching English. Suitable techniques and strategies that made junior students' language development possible was also concerned in the theoretical part of the project.

In the practical part of this thesis we created and tested some pieces from lesson plans based on characteristics of students mentioned in the theoretical part, psychological peculiarities of beginners as well as their needs connected with learning a foreign language. Moreover, we explored that assessment also plays a great role in learning and teaching for its importance to know their knowledge level. Moreover, encouraging children also helps them to feel themselves free and open in taking an active part in all steps taken during the lesson.

In order to achieve the aim we put forward the following *tasks*:

- To study the methods of teaching foreign languages and components of teaching process;
- to introduce with the new approaches of teaching English;
- to explain the importance of forming psychological atmosphere at the lessons and the actuality of learning how to learn and of learning English activities of junior students;
- to experience the interactive methods of teaching which give the foreign language teacher the possibility to master some new techniques of communicative methods of foreign language training;
- to prove the importance of developing communicative competence of children through games and songs and dialogues.

In the diploma thesis three aims of the preparatory course for children were formulated:

1. to investigate the easiest ways of learning English activities;
2. to explore the interactive methods of teaching English that have attracted the attention of the teachers in recent years, to show reason for interest in them, in

what they are exploring, in what they accomplish, the principles and ideas that guide them, to identify factors that play an important part in influencing classroom atmosphere;

3. introduce some interesting activities aimed at improving classroom atmosphere in English lessons detecting their contribution regarding this aim.

All of these aims were fulfilled; they were also formulated for my research. Supporting the children to be adapted to learn English and the role it plays in communication, culture, and day-to-day life was introduced. The main objectives of the work were enumerated as well as the expected outcome.

During my teaching practice we realized how important classroom atmosphere is for both pupils and teachers. Pupils need to feel comfortable in order to be able to learn and develop positive attitude towards the English language as well as teachers need to feel good in the classroom in order to be able to use and keep developing their teaching skills. Realizing this we decided to address this topic in this diploma thesis to learn more about the factors that influence classroom atmosphere and the ways teachers can improve it.

The theoretical part of this thesis deals mainly with the factors influencing classroom atmosphere with concentration on those that can help improve this atmosphere specifically in English lessons. As a school class is a type of a social group the first chapter of this thesis deals with the characteristics of a social group. Its second part concentrates on the school class and its atmosphere more specifically looking also at teacher's role and its influence. The last chapter of the theoretical part concentrates more specifically on the atmosphere in English lessons discussing topics as student's groupings, disruptive behaviour as well as the affective aims of activities that can be used in English lessons to improve classroom atmosphere.

The practical part contains activities designed to be used in English lessons with the aim of improving classroom atmosphere. We used these activities in different classes of Elementary school to learn more about the groups of pupils and detect the influence of these activities on these groups. This was realized by a form of an action research which consisted of my observation of the course of these activities and pupil's feedback which was done by an exchange of letters between me and the pupils. From both my observation and pupils feedback it was clear that all these activities were successful fulfilling both aims of the practical part of this thesis in informing me about the classroom dynamics and pupils themselves as well as having a very good influence on pupils, motivating them evolving positive feelings and this way contributing to the atmosphere in their classes showing me that these activities when incorporated regularly would have a beneficial long term effect on the classroom atmosphere as a whole.

In conclusion we would like to add, that students' attitudes towards learning English will be influenced positively by the capability of forming psychologically warm atmosphere from the very beginning or during the whole teaching process; effective preparatory course of the English classes and to strive to encourage children to feel free and autonomous and to adapt them to various kinds of educational activities at the lessons. All of them marked a happy face for learning English in general in 'How I like to Learn English' sheet. A teacher of English should be creative and innovative. Songs and games, puzzles and rhymes in ELT will help to build psychological atmosphere in the classroom before at the beginning and to make the process more interesting, useful and effective.

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