Conceptual Structures for the Achievement of e-Tandem between Immigrant Parents and Their Children

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Abstract

Considering the existing social reality in Republic of Moldova where are tens of thousands of children whose parents have gone abroad, we consider the proposed project as very appropriate and welcome. In addition to the financial aid sent to the family it is important to implement a course for parents that are not close to their children. The objective of the joint activity between parents and children is to grant an aid for the study of the language of the country where the parents are working. Parents will have the role of teacher. The method of information transfer will be presented as algorithms, taking into account the fact that some parents do not possess didactical knowledge. The means of communication with their children will be those traditional: e-mail and Skype. The combination children - parents, could be optionally implemented with the help of a professional counseling of a specialist in the field.
The project has the following structure:
Content items will be focused on the following theme area: personal, family, education. The structure of a learning unit will be proposed by the implemented project. This can be a photo album made by the parents of the new place of employment and indicating the name of places in the language of the country where they work (via email) or (via Skype) sent videos with the pronunciation of lexemes in the studied language. The archetypal structure will suggest some lexemes important for the thematic area.
Usually children are interested in various everyday situations the parents encounter in their work. Thus, the parents may produce mini-dialogues in various circumstances: on the plane, on the train, at the hospital, in the park, at the mall, at the cinema, etc.
Children will analyze together with the parents these communicative situations and, in accordance with the presented circumstances, will establish similar elements, linguistic interference at lexeme and morphological-syntactic structures level. In addition to observing wild words, it will be discussed the cultural and mentality interferences. The project will provide suggestions for parents to help children to develop their powers of inter-comprehension. For some discussions, it will be used the forum or chat.
The materials provided by the project will have as its objective the description of activities that parents will perform in order to develop the children's inter-comprehension skills and abilities. It will be offered some written materials and video guides.
Parents will be given the opportunity to respond to a questionnaire concerning the way they studied the new language and some aspects that were advantageous to them and could be applied in practice for the study of a new language by their children.
Teaching strategies will be discussed in the parent-child – teacher triad (head teacher or language specialist).
All data and materials will be archived in order to use them for the development of the second stage. The second step will be the development of a virtual textbook.

Introduction

The educational reality in Republic of Moldova synchronizes with international methodology in terms of perspectives and visions. I considered the constructivist paradigm of education as a way to achieve the objectives of contemporary education. The user of one or another langue goes through the stages of a language modeling, deconstruction and reconstruction of mental architecture as a continuous process(1). The representation stages of cognitive and operational powers are in full harmony with the social reality and perpetual changes which are specific to it. The continue mobility of citizens in different states with the objective to improve the material condition or to develop the professional experience generated a new educational reality and created the opportunity for a new approach to educational process. The effect of physical distance as result of the migration of the parent/parents in other states is partially minimized due to the modern information technology (Skype, email, social networks, forums, chat, etc.). The use of these means of communication got an authentic friendly atmosphere and was the natural answer to the need for communication of the human beings. Such dexterities and habits that are already deep-routed within the social environment should be exploited in order to facilitate the involvement of the immigrant parent/parents in the process of the education of their children.

"E-Tandem in family" project description

The parties involved in the project are aware of the fact that the language is a means of communication, a tool for social integration and an indispensable element in the process of self awareness in relation to his own person and other social group members. The language represents the opportunity of exploring the social and cultural environment of the user and the immigrant parent/parents(2). Children and parents will discover the existential universe through an ongoing process and not just by separate elements. Everyday life elements of the participants in the project will form the basis of the thematic content of the foreign language learning concept. The user (child/children) will learn the language their parent/parents are speaking in the country they work. First step in this process will be the evaluation of the parent/parents implication in the training of their children right from the country he/they work. Next it would be possible to put the emphasis on exploration other ways to achieve an efficient foreign language study, created over the centuries - linguistic interference. Such objectives may constitute the basis of a research for the development of visions on foreign languages learning.

In a professional environment where currently e-tandem is used as a means of communication and training has an innovative character, that is why the information and motivation training activity will have a special role.

The participants in the project are the parent/parents who work in another state and are using in daily activity a foreign language and their own child/children. The project duration is one year. Each tandem-couple will receive scientific and methodical guidance from the teacher. The conceptual structure of the project involves linking personal vision regarding the process of education to the training views at the family level, but also to exploit the role of facilitator of the teacher. The conceptual architecture of the project is based on algorithmic execution of activities. We opt for the use of algorithm method on the grounds that the participants in the project - the parent/parents - do not possess, in most cases, didactic competencies. The participants in tandem will be able to implement changes to the proposed project, but will take into account the fundamental structure of the project conception for achievement of proposed objectives. Creating an overall vision regarding all project activities can generate a state of psychological comfort guaranteed by the self confidence, the perception of the role of each participant in the general activity, the vicinity of work procedures for the achievement of some tasks. From this point of view it is essential to conduct a pre-implementation phase of the project.

The teacher, in collaboration with the parent/parents, will prepare a questionnaire to identify the learning style of the user. The parent/parents and teacher will discuss via chat with the user about his the personal training style; will identify strengths and aspects that are generating stress, ways to improve weaknesses and to exploit maximum strengths. The teacher will ask parents/parent to complete a questionnaire setting out the teaching style that they considers they possess(3). After completing the questionnaires, obtained data will be interpreted in tandem teacher-parent/parents and parent-child, teacher-child as well as in triad. A project of this type involves some degree of unpredictability that is why it is important to establish clear rules of behavior of the parties involved in the implementation of the project. Each participant will set out/choose behavioral rules that he will be follow by himself and those to be applied by other tandem participants. Next follows the phase of agreement of a common behavioral index. In the spirit of constructivist learning perspective, the thematic areas of the project will be in line with the majority sources of language study at European level, personal, family, professional and educational level. Everyday situations are fundamental for each unit of study. The users will be provided a video clip or a written text in the language their parent/parents are speaking in daily activities. At this stage it is essential to apply the development strategies of the abilities to exploit the linguistic interferences. The written text is an excellent way to identify the graphic interfaces and morpho-syntactic structures interfaces. The video clip offers the user the opportunity to discover the phonetic and lexical interferences. According to specialized studies during the history, lexical interferences had formed within the languages belonging to the Romance family of languages at a very high level. Linguistic elements and metalinguistic elements will be taken into account within the strategies of discovering the meaning. For the identification of the message meaning it will be taken into account the use of linguistic interference from any level, the circumstances where the action takes place, the semiotic value of the elements from the background as well as from the foreground of an image. The user will notice and will interpret facial expressions and gestures, vocal registers, the feelings characters are transmitting.

The process of uncovering the meaning will be made independently by the user or in collaboration with the parent who will not reveal the meaning of the message, but will be a partner for the realization of learning process dialog. Such activities contribute to the awareness and responsibility of study. It will be applied the meaning recovery strategies. The means to bring more efficiency to the teaching process will be presented to the parent/parents. The project will contain auxiliary headings which will refer to: grammar in images of languages the learning sessions are taking place in. This folder will contain definitions, tables, diagrams, graphs, images that are meant to facilitate grammar rules learning the

studied language communication is based on. Another file of the same folder relating to the study of grammar will contain various types of interactive exercises. Models of such exercises could be developed by parent/parents or the user, or can be modified. Interactive exercises will be accompanied, optionally, by audio or video segments. Within the framework of the tandem/triad discussions the role of exercises created by parent or user, will be commented, it will be argued the implemented changes and it will be shown their role in carrying out the proposed task.

A dvantages of the proposed project design

From the point of view of the idea the project is based also on the pursuit of achievement of all autonomy levels in learning as mentions Phil Benson(4). Teachers will be given a teaching guide which explains arrangements for the application of the conception of autonomy in learning. The work in tandem/triad is an undeniable method that implies conceptual difference between autonomy in learning and autonomous learning. The proposed files of the project general algorithm will also include dictionaries with minimum words containing relevant images and audio segments that contribute to improve the pronunciation in studied language, as well as, video segments that facilitate the process of comprehension. Both the teacher and the parent will implement periodically metacognition strategies based on user's comments on the implemented tasks, the level of comprehension, the link between the task to be done and its role in the progress of the whole project, the way to improve the aspects involving certain impediments and capitalizing on the strengths, arguing of the options for the tasks proposed by other participants or its modification. The user will apply the headings of the project web: an educational supplement that contains basic grammatical elements, chat/forum- for triad discussions and discussions within virtual learning group the structure of which is discussed by all participants in the educational process, the virtual library that contains various types of multilingual and bilingual dictionaries, as well as thematic bibliographic and websites lists.

The boxes which are presenting educational materials developed by the parent/parents and users are welcome as well as spaces for colloquial discussion, useful information, study models and proposals for the settlement of certain projects. A model of such activities is the development of a photo album sent via Skype with pictures of the parents ' daily life, placed thematically that represent sources of information for the study. The project is based on the algorithm of study in parent-child partnership, and the second part of the project concerns the development of the capacity mediation and creativity for the digital user's manual creation. The experience of both sides in drafting a manual will be compensated by the experience gained by all parties in the process of completing the first part of the project, as well as due to the materials submitted by the professor explaining the procedures for compiling a digital user's manual and the algorithm proposed by professor having a guiding role. The communicative flow will be managed through the use of ICT as well as predefined behavioral rules. The manual will be elaborated on the basis of the suggestions offered by the teacher and changes issued by the parent and the user. The amendments will be attached to the work together with sheets of argumentation. The personalized manual will contain the same thematic area and will have the same didactic structure as the activities developed in the first phase of the project, but will also include improvements included the conclusions of the first part of the work. The manual will contain tasks and activities that were effective means of learning for the user. Both the parent and the user will notice the role of proposed activities for tasks implementation. The collaboration between parent and child in order to carry out educational process through training activities will be based on the constructivist vision application; each participant in the project will have the role to facilitate the modeling of the mental structure process, and not only to transmit the information.

We present some possible sections of a unit of study for the personalized user's manual: communication situation based on the material submitted by the parent, daily activity situation with additions provided by the user in the bases of his daily. The next heading is the presentation strategy for the identification of the message followed by the meaning recovery strategy. The other heading of the custom manual is the presence of blanks with boxes that are filled in by the user with metacognition elements and with own impressions on different stages of activity. The information on grammar is essential, but it has to be presented in an interactive manner with attached audio and video materials. The user will describe the role of linguistic interference, will highlight the "false friends" . The sections that make the connection to the existing bilingual/multilingual dictionaries and those developed by the user himself are very important(5).

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