INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF TECHNOLOGY AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH

ISSN: 2224-6878 | Pakistan Volume 6, No. 10.

IF: 14.91 | 2026 http://waerasia.org/index.php/ijtar

A TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING THE COMMUNICATIVE AND SPEECH SKILLS OF PUPILS IN THE PROCESS OF STUDYING THE HISTORY OF UZBEKISTAN (ON THE MATERIAL OF GRADE 8)

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https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23301959

Abstract. This article substantiates a technology for developing the communicative and speech skills of pupils in the process of studying the History of Uzbekistan, elaborated on the material of grade 8. The study proceeds from the speech paradox of the history lesson: the subject offers more occasions for extended speech than almost any other, yet pupils in it speak less than in most, since the teacher narrates and the pupil answers in single words. The author substantiates the distinction between reproductive speech, which retells a source, and productive speech, which constructs a claim and defends it with evidence, and shows that only the latter develops either historical thinking or speech competence. Four speech genres proper to the subject are distinguished — historical narration, explanation of causes, argumentation of an assessment, and the questioning of a source — each with its own structure and linguistic means. A technology of four stages and three levels is elaborated, together with a system of assessment separating the quality of reasoning from the quality of its linguistic expression. The polemic between S. Krashen and M. Swain concerning the role of output in language development is subjected to critical examination.

Keywords: communicative skills, speech development, History of Uzbekistan, grade 8, educational technology, productive speech, historical argumentation, speech genres, subject terminology, output hypothesis, scaffolding, assessment of reasoning.

INTRODUCTION

Among the subjects of the curriculum, history has an unusual relation to speech. Its content exists only as discourse: an event becomes historical knowledge when narrated, a cause becomes a cause when explained, an assessment becomes judgement when argued. Nothing in the subject is demonstrated by experiment or observed directly, so all of what is taught is constituted in language, and the history lesson ought to be among the richest sites of speech development in the school. Observation of practice discloses the opposite. In the typical lesson almost all connected speech is produced by the teacher, who narrates, while the pupil contributes a date, a name, a sentence confirming that he has read the paragraph. The paradox is not that the subject lacks occasions for speech but that its organisation consumes them: the teacher performs the operations — narration, explanation, argument — that the pupil is supposed to acquire, leaving him retrieval, which develops neither historical thinking nor the capacity to speak. The study proceeds from a distinction the lesson ordinarily obscures. Reproductive speech restates a source: the pupil repeats what the textbook said, in the order it was said, and success is measured by fidelity. Productive speech constructs what did not exist before he spoke: a claim, a causal account, an assessment supported by evidence. The two are confused because both yield connected utterance, yet reproduction requires memory while production requires the selection of material, its arrangement for a purpose and the linguistic means by which cause, condition or concession is expressed. Only the second develops either capacity at issue. A further observation follows. The linguistic means of productive historical speech are not those of conversation. To say that an event occurred is within the competence of a pupil of fourteen; to say that it occurred through a conjunction of circumstances, that it would probably not have occurred had one been absent, and

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that its significance lies less in its outcome than in what it made possible, requires syntactic resources — subordination, concession, modality, the vocabulary of probability and degree — that no pupil acquires spontaneously and the history lesson does not teach. The subject demands a form of speech for which it makes no provision. Grade 8 was chosen for a conjunction of favourable conditions. Its content — the khanates of Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand, their structure, relations and the conditions of the nineteenth century — is rich in material admitting of several defensible interpretations and therefore of argument. The age corresponds to the consolidation of formal reasoning, so that causal and hypothetical constructions become accessible, and the pupil has accumulated enough knowledge for argument to rest upon something. Earlier grades lack the material; later ones are dominated by examination preparation. The question extends beyond the subject. Communicative competence is among the key competences contemporary standards require, and it cannot be formed in language lessons alone, since the capacity to construct an argument upon evidence is exercised where evidence is handled. History is the principal such subject in the humanities curriculum, so speech development within it is a contribution to general education rather than a concession at the expense of content: a pupil who has learned to defend a historical judgement has learned something transferable to every circumstance in which a position must be justified. In Uzbekistan the question is sharpened by the reform of general education, which has reformulated the expected results of history teaching in terms of analysis, explanation and justified judgement rather than the reproduction of information. Such results are attainable only if pupils speak, since analysis that is never articulated cannot be assessed and, on the view adopted here, is not fully formed. The scholarly problem arises from the contradiction between the potential of the history lesson for speech development and the organisation that suppresses it, compounded by the absence of a technology specifying which speech genres the subject requires, by what means they are formed and how their formation is assessed. The aim of the article is to substantiate such a technology on the material of grade 8. The tasks were to establish the speech genres proper to the subject and the linguistic means each requires; to elaborate the procedural structure and the levels of its realisation; and to determine the criteria of assessment and the conditions of application. The novelty consists in the distinction between reproductive and productive historical speech as the organising principle of the technology; in four speech genres proper to the subject, each described by its structure and linguistic means; in the four-stage model with graduated withdrawal of support; and in assessment separating the quality of reasoning from that of its expression. The results may be drawn upon in the methodology of teaching history, in teacher preparation and in the design of textbook tasks.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Within Uzbek scholarship the foundation of the present study is supplied by the work of K. Qosimova and her colleagues on the methodology of mother-tongue instruction. Its principal contribution is the treatment of speech development as the organising axis of language teaching and the demonstration that comprehension and expression are inseparable: a pupil who cannot reformulate what he has understood has not fully understood it. Of particular consequence here is the principle of graduated task systems, in which each task presupposes and extends the operations secured by its predecessor — the principle underlying the four-stage structure below and the withdrawal of support it prescribes. The second pillar of the theoretical framework is provided by the research of N. Jo‘rayev on the theoretical foundations of the philosophy of history. The author shows that the meaning of a historical event is not contained in the event but established through interpretation subject to rational standards, so that historical knowledge exists as argued discourse rather than record. This supplies the subject-specific justification of the technology: if historical meaning is constituted interpretively, a lesson in which pupils do not

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argue withholds the operation in which the subject consists, and speech development is not an auxiliary aim but the form in which the subject is learned. The value and institutional dimensions of the question are illuminated by contemporary research: S. Ergashbaev demonstrates that stable orientations are formed through sustained processes of continuous education and, in a further study, singles out independent critical reflection as a central outcome, while M.M. Mirzaolimjon og‘li and E. Shohbozbek disclose the institutional context of educational reform. Within international scholarship several traditions bear upon the problem. L.S. Vygotsky established the relation between thought and speech and the conception of the zone of proximal development, which supplies the criterion by which the difficulty of a speech task may be calibrated. M.M. Bakhtin elaborated the theory of speech genres, demonstrating that utterance is organised by relatively stable compositional types proper to particular spheres of activity, which grounds the identification of the genres of historical discourse undertaken here. D. Barnes examined exploratory talk, in which understanding is formed in the act of speaking rather than displayed afterwards, while S. Krashen and M. Swain debated whether language develops through comprehensible input or requires the production of output. Uzbek scholarship has thus elaborated the methodology of speech development and the nature of historical knowledge, international scholarship the analysis of speech genres and of language acquisition; the gap addressed here is the absence of a technology relating the genres of historical discourse to the operations of thinking that produce them.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological foundation of the study is constituted by the systemic approach, which made it possible to treat the development of speech and the development of historical thinking not as parallel aims but as a single process, since the operations of the subject are performed in language and cannot be separated from the means of their expression; within this framework the activity approach performed the leading function, since speech competence is formed only in the pupil’s own speech production, and the competence approach supplied the formulation of results in terms of utterances the pupil is able to produce. The theoretical analysis of linguistic, psychological and methodological literature served to reconstruct the conceptions of speech genre, exploratory talk and historical thinking and to delimit them from adjacent notions. Content analysis of the grade 8 curriculum, textbook and its apparatus of questions established the proportion of tasks requiring reproduction and those requiring the construction of an argument, and identified the topics affording defensible disagreement. Linguistic analysis of model historical texts established the syntactic and lexical means characteristic of each genre, which furnished the content of the support provided at the second stage. Pedagogical observation of lessons, with transcription of episodes, measured the distribution of speech between teacher and pupils and the length of pupil utterances, while discourse analysis of the transcripts identified the forms actually produced and the conditions under which extended reasoning occurs. Diagnostic tasks in each genre established the initial and final levels of competence, and questioning of teachers and pupils the perceived obstacles to speaking. Pedagogical modelling yielded the genre typology, the four-stage structure and the criteria of assessment, which expert assessment verified. Elements of the pedagogical experiment, organised in ascertaining, formative and control stages with comparable classes, served to verify the technology, and mathematical statistics established the significance of observed differences. General scientific procedures of analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, abstraction, generalisation and modelling were applied at every stage and secured the coherence of the conclusions.

RESULTS

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Four speech genres proper to history were established, each defined by a compositional structure and the linguistic means realising it. Historical narration organises events in temporal sequence and requires the lexicon of chronological relation and the aspectual means distinguishing completed action from continuing circumstance; its deformation is enumeration without connection. The explanation of causes organises circumstances by their contribution to an outcome and requires subordination, the distinction of condition from cause and the means of expressing degree; its deformation is the single-cause account. The argumentation of an assessment advances a judgement supported by evidence and requires concession, qualification and modality, since a defensible assessment acknowledges what tells against it; its deformation is assertion without ground. The questioning of a source interrogates a document — who produced it, for whom, with what interest, what it omits — and requires the vocabulary of attribution, reliability and inference; its deformation is treating the source as a transparent report. A second result is the four-stage procedural structure of the technology. At the stage of exposure the genre is met in a model text analysed for its structure and linguistic means, so the pupil sees what he is to produce. At the stage of supported production he composes an utterance of the genre with scaffolding — a structural frame, connectives and modal expressions, a bank of subject terms — which removes the linguistic obstacle so that attention may go to the historical operation. At the stage of independent production the supports are withdrawn in order: first the frame, then the term bank, last the connectives, retained longest because they carry the logical relations on which historical reasoning depends. At the stage of interaction the utterance is addressed to other pupils, who question it, which converts speech from performance for the teacher into communication with a purpose. A third result distinguishes three levels: the reproductive, at which the pupil retells a source in its own order; the structured, at which he produces an utterance of the genre with support; and the productive, at which he constructs and defends a position without support and answers objection. A fourth result is the system of assessment, separating two dimensions practice conflates: the quality of historical reasoning, measured by the relevance and sufficiency of evidence, the recognition of alternative interpretation and the fit of conclusion to argument; and the quality of linguistic expression, measured by coherence, terminological accuracy and the fit of syntactic means to genre. The separation is necessary because a pupil whose reasoning is sound may lack the means to express it, and conflation penalises reasoning for a linguistic deficiency. Finally, the conditions of application were determined: topics affording genuine interpretive disagreement, of which grade 8 furnishes many; the explicit teaching of the linguistic means of each genre; protected time for pupil speech, requiring less teacher narration; the toleration of exploratory formulation while thought is being formed; and the acceptance that the technology reduces content covered in exchange for the operations it develops.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained require to be situated within the principal controversy concerning the mechanism of language development, namely the opposition between S. Krashen and M. Swain. In his input hypothesis, S. Krashen held that language is acquired in one way only: through the comprehension of messages slightly beyond the learner’s present level, which he called comprehensible input. Production is thus a consequence of acquisition rather than its cause; speaking emerges when enough has been understood, and forcing it before readiness produces anxiety that impedes acquisition. Instruction should therefore maximise input and not require speech until it appears of itself. M. Swain argued the contrary case from observations Krashen’s account could not explain. Pupils in immersion programmes, exposed for years to abundant input, understood a great deal yet remained markedly inaccurate in production. Her explanation is that comprehension and production impose different demands: a message may be understood from

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vocabulary and context without attention to grammatical form, whereas producing an utterance compels the speaker to move from semantic to syntactic processing, since he must decide how the elements are related. Output, on this account, performs functions that input cannot: it reveals to the learner the gap between what he wishes to say and what he can say, it permits hypotheses about the language to be tested, and it induces reflection upon form. The disagreement concerns whether production is a symptom of development or one of its mechanisms. Two further positions clarify its application here. D. Barnes's account of exploratory talk shows that speech in learning is not confined to displaying what has been formed: the speaker thinks by speaking, formulating tentatively and revising, so that an utterance may be valuable in proportion to its imperfection. L.S. Vygotsky supplies the theoretical ground, since on his account thought is not merely expressed in words but completed in them, so that the unspoken argument is not withheld but unfinished. The position advanced here is that the controversy, transposed from second-language acquisition to subject teaching in the first language, is resolved in Swain's favour with a qualification from Krashen. Her analysis describes what occurs in the history lesson: the pupil who has read the textbook has received abundant input and can follow a causal explanation without producing one, since following requires only that the relations be recognised while producing requires that they be constructed. The syntactic processing Swain identifies is precisely what subordination, concession and modality demand, and it is not exercised by reading. Krashen's qualification is nevertheless retained in the design: exposure precedes production, the model text supplies the input from which the genre is learned, and the scaffolding of the second stage answers his concern about anxiety by removing the linguistic obstacle before the historical demand is made. The sequence of the four stages is thus not a compromise between the positions but an ordering of them.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown that the history lesson possesses an exceptional and ordinarily unrealised potential for speech development, since the content of the subject exists only as discourse. That potential is suppressed by an organisation in which the teacher performs the operations of narration, explanation and argument the pupil is supposed to acquire. First, the distinction between reproductive and productive speech was substantiated as the organising principle of the technology: reproduction requires memory, production the selection of material, its arrangement for a purpose and the linguistic means of logical relation. Second, four speech genres proper to the subject were identified — historical narration, explanation of causes, argumentation of an assessment and the questioning of a source — each described by its structure, its linguistic means and its deformation. Third, a four-stage structure was elaborated — exposure to a model, supported production, independent production with graduated withdrawal of support, and interaction with other pupils — with three levels of competence: reproductive, structured and productive. Fourth, assessment was separated into the quality of reasoning and that of its expression, since conflating them penalises sound reasoning for a deficiency of means. Fifth, among the conditions of application, the explicit teaching of the linguistic means of each genre and the acceptance that the technology reduces content covered in exchange for the operations it develops proved most consequential. Further research might address the transfer of this argumentative competence to other humanities subjects.

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