INSTRUCTIONAL CONVERSATION AS A SOCIALLY-CONSTRUCTED COGNITIVE TOOL SERVES SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING BY MEDIATING ITS OWN CONSTRUCTION, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ITSELF

Natalya A. Chernova
Kazan Federal University, Republic of Tatarstan, Naberezhnye
natalchern@gmail.com

Jamila N. Mustafina
Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor, Kazan Federal University, Naberezhnye Chelny
muss_jane@mail.ru

ABSTRACT
The article deals with the implications for second language learning and teaching of a sociocultural theory of mind, as originally conceived of by L.S. Vygotsky. In second language research the study showed how pre-and intermediate speakers' performance breaks down in the face of a difficult narrative task and self-regulation and control over the mediational means are lost. More advanced speakers are able to guide themselves through the task. In other words, they are able to control psychological and social activity through the language. Individuals move through stages of being controlled by the objects, then by the others, and finally they gain control over their social and cognitive activities in the environment. Attention is drawn to a highly interactive class identified through the actual experience by a student the socialized active personality development prospect. Necessity of compiling a textbook based on the above-mentioned principles is stressed.

Keywords: *second language learning; mediational means control; zone of proximal development; self-regulation; activity theory; internalization; educational setting; participation.*

INTRODUCTION

The article is squarely situated within the research tradition discussed by Luria and Bruner (1981). It means theory-guided observation and interpretation of people engaged in the activity of teaching, learning (in educational settings), and using second and foreign languages, compiling specific features of sociocultural theory. The classes given based on the English Language Textbook for Russian learners by N.A. Chernova and Z.M. Kuznetsova (2013) bring to light important differences between purely instructional talk on the part of the teacher and instructional conversations between teachers and students in which they have the opportunity to regulate the conversation in ways they cannot when teachers engage in instructional talk. As it turns out, only instructional conversations relate human mental functioning to positioning themselves as individuals in carrying out a task in a foreign language. Increasing independence in the use of a foreign language through activities allows to move from a focus on form to a focus on meaning and hence societal context participation. The achievement of this aim is very complicated if you take into account standard theories of language development. The authors' aim is to provide evidence of a shift away from the so called *'acquisition'* metaphor to a new *'participation'* metaphor.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The study examined in this article involves an overt application of activity theory to classroom language learning. Continuing the theme of scaffolding and learning in the zone of proximal development, special attention should be drawn to four themes: 1) language, cognition, and communities; 2) language-based theories of learning and semiotic mediation; 3) private speech; 4) activity theory (Vygotsky, 1986). In analyzing the recorded interaction between the students and the teacher, it is shown that instructional conversations are developmentally sensitive to the students' growing ability to use the language required to carry out a specific task. The grammatical learning is achieved as a consequence of their interactions, which is evidenced, among other things, by shifts from other-regulated to self-regulated error correction. The positive effects of learners verbalizing strategies by N.F. Talyzina (1975) were extended to language learning. The study shows that overt collaborative verbalization of metacognitive strategies such as predicting, planning, and monitoring can be a more effective means of mediating learning than just instruction in learning strategies alone. All the above-mentioned was used when writing the Textbook (Chernova & Kuznetsova, 2015) in the way of communicative language teaching which is relevant to activity theory, since, as the theory maintains, different actions, linked to the same goal, can give rise to similar outcomes. The succession and number of exercises help students and teachers as well help in the process of communicative and cognitive activities in an ESL class.

Referring to the private speech in his study, J. Smith (1996) operationalizes it as a 'verbal attempt of self-regulation during problem-solving tasks', that is, the result of stress that accompanies construction of the meaning in L1 or L2, the private speech is distinguishable from the interpersonal communication. Smith examines a grammar class of high intermediate ESL students and claims that private speech can arise in a discussion. When teacher assumes the status of listener, it allows students to make public their problem-solving talks (Smith, 1996). Thus, this co-construction process is triggered through the externalization of the student's thinking and the tolerant and persevering responses of the teacher. The authors included such provoking tasks to arise private and social speech in a dialogical context. The thing is that classroom discourse is usually analyzed for its social, communicative value, neglecting the cognitive function of instructional talk (Shulenkova, 2013).

Instructional Conversations are based on Vygotsky's idea that conversation and the semiotic mediation provoke learning, development, and human action. Later the concept of scaffolding was regarded as a mediational tool for language improvement (Wood, Bruner, & Gross, 1976). Two important ideas about language and learning are reflected. On the interpsychological plane, any sign system is a psychological tool used to communicate. On the intrapsychological plane, the use of these cultural signs influences learning and cognitive development (Rotter, 1954). Classroom *conversations* depend on spontaneity, unpredictability and focus on new information. If the discussion is shaped toward a curricular goal, and teachers in their turns build or activate background knowledge in students, these *conversations* can also be *instructional*. Direct instruction or modelling are used to promote more complex language expressions, at the same time, questions help students to expand, elaborate or restate their statements and replies. Instructional conversations are relevant to language classrooms because they provide opportunities for experiencing how language is used outside of the classroom. Current models of input, output, and interaction are insufficient as a framework for analyzing classroom talk. The question of instructional conversations was explored within the frames of a PhD study, compiled by N.A. Chernova. The motivation for the study was the following observation. It turned out that instructional conversations usually arose with fairly advanced ESL learners. The question remained, was it possible to have an instructional conversation in a beginning foreign language class? Limited linguistic resources are not available for a topically coherent, extended, and meaningful conversation. The following data were received. If a teacher followed a predictable pattern a) setting up the vocabulary practice exercise; b) completing textbook exercises using the new vocabulary; and c) spontaneous questions and comments by students and teacher embedded within the practice exercise, conversational communication was out of the question (Chernova & Mustafina, 2016). The possibility of such conversation depended on management talk and extension activities, which show features of it most consistently and impressively (Talyzina,

1975). In this case instructional conversations were possible in elementary classes (19 per cent of the total vocabulary practice) and pre-intermediate (34 per cent) foreign language classes. The lack of pragmatic appropriateness of the larger discourse into which these instructional conversations could be embedded accounts for compiling the English Textbook for Russian Learners (Chernova & Kuznetsova 2013). The task was to allow the teacher talk to the class as a co-participant in the interaction. On the basis of this Textbook it is possible to digress from a routine Inquiry-Response-Evaluation interaction. The language material and teaching techniques are presented to illustrate the above-mentioned (Fig.1).
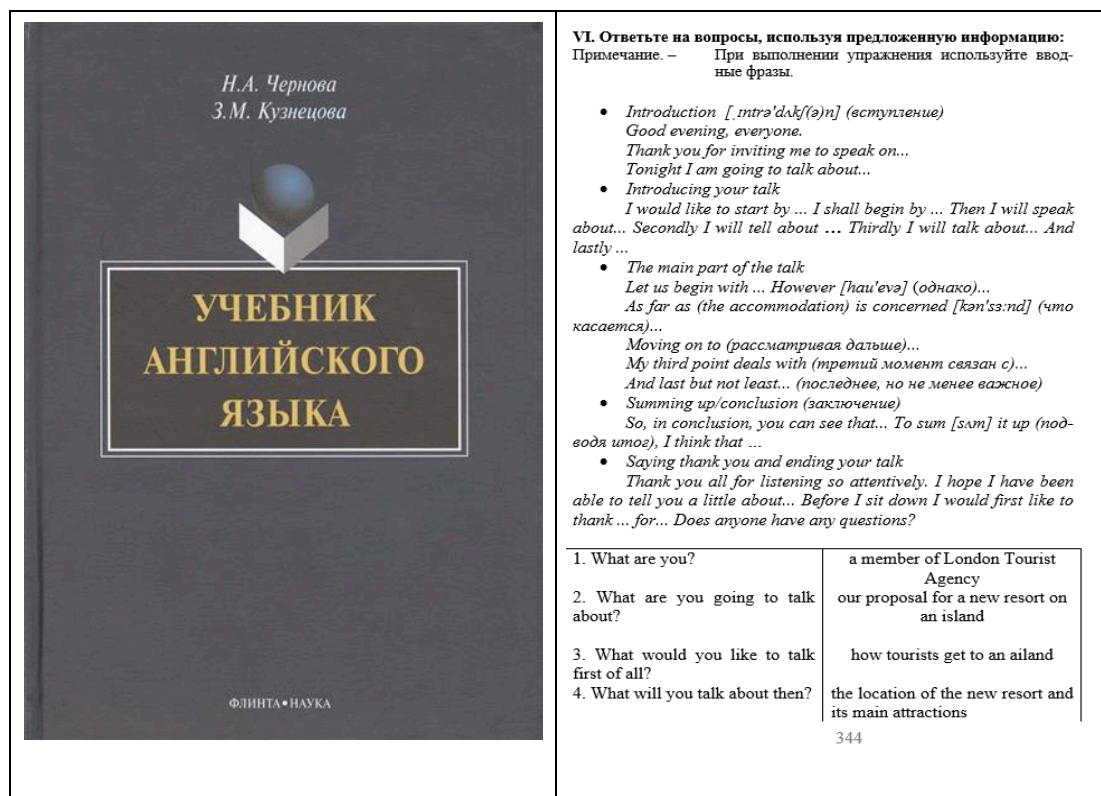

Fig. 1. Extract quotation from the English Textbook for Russian Learners.

COLLABORATIVE DIALOGUE IN SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

The study shifts the governing concept of learning away from the acquisition metaphor toward the participation one. The participation metaphor finds evidence for learning in an individual's growing and widening activity. Classroom language learning tasks are thus best seen as uniquely situated, emergent interactions based on participants' goals. In other words, students are taking part in a collaborative dialogue. Communicative collaboration is based upon the active and purposeful agent on the part of a student. The authors offer the following model of ESL classes: 1) self-directed activity comprising self-dependence, activity, social direction, self-government, reflection → 2) reflective, problem-solving orientation in SLA class → 3) internalization of social interactive process in the zone of proximal development with the English language as a cognitive tool for the individual → 4) the second language mediated process of an agent formation in learning and professional activities.

This model allows to be sensitive to students' needs and abilities and support the overpowering and transformative agency embodied in the learner. It has to aim at positive attitude stimulating the best possible progress and achievements. When working in a classroom, it is important to arrange the teaching

process based on the strengths of the students developing their confidence and ability to work and study independently and in a team. The sociocultural context of the teaching process contributes to the development of the students' identity within the society. The diversity of sociocultural contexts used during the classes has to teach them to think critically and creatively, solve problems and recognize the advantages. These approaches applied during the teaching process provide students not only the knowledge and skills, but also emotional comfort and sufficient self-esteem.

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