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Communication Skill Formation at Mentally Disabled Children

Margareta CÎRLIGEANU[1]

Abstract

Communicative skill formation at mentally disable students becomes possible to be achieved be teaching/ learning/ assessment of disciplines and solicits on one hand, formation of capacities, skills, habits, abilities, attitudes at didactic process level, and on the other side, developing the relational behaviours, in this way, students' integration in a modern society. From this perspective the communication skill formation at mentally disabled students that have become an objective of theoretical and praxiologic studies, the actuality of the research being confirmed by the necessity of components specification and elaboration of a methodological step of didactic communicative skill formation. The main approached directions in the research from the didactic communication domain in general, of communication skills at mentally disabled students especially, target the communicative behaviour formation by diverse strategies of educational interaction. This situation generates the research problem that consists in identification the components of communication skill in the context of modern educational concept of the pre-university education reform and of theoretical-experimental markers of communicative skill formation in the didactic communication skill.Among the main objectives of research we enumerate: determining the theoretical markers of didactic communication skill concept; elaboration of communication skill model at mentally disabled students and the formation aims for the communication skill; elaboration of curricular step of didactic communication skill formation at mentally disabled students. The research methodology will include pedagogical methods (scientific documentation, observation, sounding, mentally disabled students' products from their activities, comparison, observation charts).

Keywords: *communication, skill, students with mental disabilities.*

1. Determining psychological and pedagogical fundaments in the communication skill formation

All the activities for the human sphere have the communication skill on their basis. To understand the means how this skill is formed on mentally disabled students, there are involved two components: the psychological and the pedagogical aspect.

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From the *psychological* point of view, there is followed the contemporary psychological approaches treating concerning the communication skill formation, on the following aspects:

- communication concepts and communication skill definition;
- characteristics identification and communication skill components elements;
- classification of communication skills;
- establishing the psychological factors involved in communication formation skill on mentally disabled students;
- presentation of specific elements which the language development presents on mentally disabled students.

On *pedagogical* plan, there is elaborated the instructive-educative model of formation the communication skills, which have as basis a series of components:

- formulation of instruction objectives based on communication skills development;
- elaboration of specific instruction strategies for developing the communication skills;
- specification of instruction results assessment means by reporting the skills objectives;
- conceptualization of curricular project of communication skills formation.

Between the two approaches there is a tight interdependence, both contributing to the understanding of formation and perfecting way of communication skill by the teacher both at mentally disabled students' level and at their own professional formation level.

2. Communication skill characteristics

Communication education has as product *the communication skill,* which, as L. Şoitu finds, „reunites the personality dimensions acquired after a formation process. The communication skill accumulates the whole assembly of personal abilities: *to know; to know what you do; to know what to be; to know what to know to know to become*; it is an equal result of science and of art, not existing an ideal communication way" (Şoitu, 1997, p. 31). An essential feature of communication skill is the relational dimension. A communication resumes itself, every time, at the satisfaction given and kept sometimes amplified for the two parties. But it is not sufficient one's skill if the interlocutor lacks minimal abilities. The author find that it is impossible to

exhaustively enumerate all the qualities that a person who is skilful in communication should have, that's why many specialists manifest certain reserves in defining the communication skill. However, there can be identified a series of common features.

Firstly, starting from J. Wiemann, this is *a large fan of behaviours*. This thing shouldn't create the impression of a pauperization, because, being thought as an interrelation, communication, if it is blocked, then the poorness of manifestations and the incapacity of revising these ones, doesn't gain any partners. The need to give life to communication motivates the search for intervention variants and making sustained effort in maintain this relation. The savant affirms that a communication only if it passes *over me* and *over you* can become *ours, we* offering the chance to other connection. The students should have the capacity to establish, to find the suitable behaviour, the start sensibility, meaning that he/she knows with what we can start with, what encourages, what motivates the communication action. The listener firstly is obliged to listen well, then to judge the situation with interlocutor's arguments, not his. A second feature, starting with R. Adler, *the cognitive complexity,* which means the capacity to elaborate different scenarios, but comprehensive for every communication situation (apud Şoitu, 1997, p. 49). This thing allows to interlocutors to mutually integrate in an universe which can become common. The attention given to the partner is a positive revival for self in a communication which wants to be efficient. Therefore we can accept L. Şoitu's (1997) idea that acquiring communication skills has some generative components, which have the role to stimulate, by a hierarchized mechanism, certain verbal-communicative units acceptable in the field of activity. These generative components are named by L. Şoitu: communicative attitude; communicative capacity; skills, habits, abilities of using a communicative arsenal; knowledge (concrete) about communication. The simple examination of this succession allows prefiguring the domination character of some personality features: attitude, capacity, skill, ability, knowledge.

M. Iacob (1995) affirms, in this order of ideas, that overpassing the linguistic capacity, which is the correct language mastering, *communicative skill* appears as a dispositive of attitudes where linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge are indispensable. It includes, „next to verbal and para-verbal material mastering, together with mastering the contextual placement rules of mutual interaction, of politeness principles and communicational ritualization" (p. 237).Mostly, competence gets its name in correspondence with those actions during the achievement of whose they are formed.

The fundamental features of communication skill can be found from presented definitions and approach perspectives:

- the purpose of this one consists in solving some tasks because it involves cognitive abilities which make possible the choice among behaviours;
- component elements of the communication skill are knowledge, skills, habits, constructive attitude, behaviours;
- component elements of the communication skill are optimally integrated, in order to determine the adjustment and transfer in diverse situations;
- the communication skills can be perfected, improved and developed with the help of specific didactic strategies.

According to V. Ilie (2003, p. 359), this type of skill is characterized by the following aspects: it represents a consequence of capitalization in practice of all knowledge and habits formed in a certain period of time; it expresses the direct expressing way which is determined by speaker's temper, degree of culture, socio-linguistic environment.

It is observed that in skills definition there is referred both to knowledge and acquired habits through learning in education. Communication skills necessity three dimensions: cognitive, axiological and praxiological. The *cognitive* dimension targets the acquisition of certain information with linguistic character, which solicits the thinking, curiosity, interest. The *axiological* dimension assumes the values transmission concerning communication skills development, with individual significations and collective under attitudes forms. The *praxiological* dimension contributes to behaviours formation and unfolding the actions capable to promote the objectives of communication skills development.

These dimensions of the educative act are unrolled according to the algorithm: *to know; to know to be; to know what you have to do; to act in this sense.* Knowledge inclusion in approaching the skill is necessary, because it is considered that a capacity can't vainly function, without an informational support. From the knowledge sciences perspective, the manifestation of competence assumes the mobilization of some corresponding knowledge and some action schemes previously practiced and validated. The skills designate student's concrete acquisitions, acquired by his/her assimilation of theoretical knowledge and practical abilities (Cazacu, 1992, p. 124).

Competence is appreciated not only by the number (volume) of assimilated information during a certain period of time, but also by the understanding degree of these ones, after the ease of their integration in the previous knowledge system and, especially, according to the ability to operate with these ones (in practice, in some problem solving, in material production) (Neacşu, 1990, p. 340). Understanding is thinking in action,

represents the functional side of thinking in the generic meaning of conceptual codification and especially referential, semantic unscramble. The way of being of conscious thinking is the understanding of informational contents, which is an activity with conscious necessity (Dumitriu & Dumitriu, 2003, p. 107).

Such an educational action assumes both the presentation of some notions of theoretical order, and cultivation and consolidation by prism of concrete activity, of *motivations and attitudes,* norms and practical principles of approach and linguistic problems solving. The importance of formation and adequate attitudes transfer to students comes out of their central position in the character structure, from the propulsive force, regulatory that it generates, from the decisive role which they acquire in the individual/social achievement, self-achievement and self-overpassing. In psycho-pedagogy, there has been shown interest, as attitude, as cognitive attitude with a motivational nucleus addressed to an education object and knowledge, is a facilitating and mobilizing factor of first rank in supporting the school activity (Dumitriu & Dumitriu, 2003, p. 113). Learning motivation represents the totality of mobiles that energetically support, activate and direct the unfolding of learning activities. It confers the meaning and coherence to learning acts and it is lived subjectively as a tension state.

Behaviours constitute „objective manifestation of a global human action" (Neveanu, 1978, p. 123). At level of communication skills expression, there is achieved a synthesis of knowledge, skills, habits and specific attitudes. As consequence, there results a visible and measurable product, defined concrete problematic solving situations created during classes of Romanian language and literature, and of life situations that involve solving some oral and written expressing difficulties.

In conclusion, the communication skills are constituted by cognitive-theoretical and actionable-practical structures. There are established connections, associations and there are achieved new syntheses, which give profoundness to knowledge and contribute cognitive-theoretical communication skills formation. This fact is proved by long lasting knowledge, by habits and ability to act, to unfold diverse practical activities and to obtain results appreciated by the ones around them (teachers, colleagues, parents). These abilities, rightfully, can be named actional-practical communication skills (to express themselves correctly, to organize their work).

All component elements are necessary for mentally disabled student for an adequate formation of the communication skill. The physical disability doesn't affect the intellectual capacity or ability of informing process.

Speaking difficulties and physical limitations are usually a result of stimulator control loss – by processes that doesn't affect.

A part of physically and mentally deficiency disabled people can affect communication. Therefore, a mentally disabled individual is more heavily handling in a communication; it can take him/her a little longer to finish a phrase or a sentence. This one can't feel comfortable on oral tests because of the disability he/she has. That's why it is preferable to discuss previously the modality in which this one can concentrate himself/herself on a certain thing, on a certain demand.

After an overloaded program and some courses, the mentally disabled student needs more time for recovery because his/her energy for daily activities is lower than normal students' one and they might feel more tired.

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