Types of communicative coordination in dialogues in academic sphere of communication

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Abstract: The educational and professional sphere of communication is one of the dominant in the Russian language teaching of foreign students. In this regard, the topic is significant for the practice of teaching Russian as a foreign language. The main goal of the work is to study the types of communicative coordination in the dialogical texts of the educational and professional sphere of communication (philology profile). The paper explores peculiarities of educational and professional speech of language students. The authors propose to use the concept of Borisova in relation to the analysis of the speech interaction methods in educational and professional dialogues. The authors concluded that all four types of communicative coordination of speech behaviour are presented in such dialogues. The authors suggested that it is necessary to develop interaction skills among foreign students studying the Russian language professionally for successful communication with native Russian speakers. In addition, it helps to improve the level of communicative and professional competence of foreign students. When developing a system of exercises for teaching dialogical communication in the educational and professional sphere, different types of communicative coordination should be taken into account.

Keywords: dialogue; text; types of communicative coordination; foreign students-philologists; communication initiative; Russian language.

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1   Introduction

An inter-subjective teacher-student relationship plays an important role in education and teaching of foreign students. This statement is confirmed by the work of such a researchers as Frelin and Grannäs (2010), Vanderstraeten and Biesta (2006), and Uzum (2013). The forms of communication in multicultural classrooms were researched by Baraldi (2005).

As Dan (2008, p.3) rightly notes, "The specific character of pedagogical and, in particular, philological education is the orientation toward broad general cultural training of foreign students-philologists." At the same time, according to the author, the skills necessary for philological communication, being an element of the teacher's professional competence, acquire special importance, since the leading practical goal of teaching Russian as foreign language is teaching Russian-language communication (Dan, 2008).

The authors of 'practical psychology' name "insufficient level of development of skills for interaction with other people" among the psychological problems of teaching communication [Tutushkina, (2001), p.4]. The development of such skills among foreign

students studying Russian language could contribute to the successful formation of not only communicative, but also professional competence.

In this article, we would like to turn to the peculiarities of the educational and professional speech of students-philologists, which refers to the academic style of speech.

Referring to the works of Kuhn (1975), Stepin (2011), and Mishankina (2015, p.127) notes that modern philosophy "considers science, on one hand, as an integral social structure aimed at the formation of a system of objective knowledge of the world, on the other – as a field for the activities of individuals who have pragmatic interests, among other things." To identify the specifics of verbal interaction and pragmatic interests of communicants, 25 authentic dialogues were selected between Russian-speaking students and their supervisors, as well as between students (or candidates for academic degree) and members of the commission (dissertation board).

To analyse the educational and professional dialogues, we considered it possible to apply the concept of Borisova (2009), according to which four types of communicative coordination in the dialogue can be singled out: *consensual*, *conformal*, *polemical* and *conflictual*.

The authors considered dialogical texts of the educational and professional sphere of communication of students-philologists, based on the above-mentioned types of communicative interaction.

2   Consensual communicative coordination (consensual dialogue)

Consensual communicative coordination is characterised by the following features:

> "Consistency of communicative intentions of speech acts in the interaction; cooperativity of speech behaviour; solidarity of modal and evaluating meanings of speech acts; unison tone of communication; the interest of communicants in the continuation of contact and their activity in the mutual support of communicative initiatives; a positive, harmonious communicative result."
> [Borisova, (2009), p.168]

Most often in academic sphere of philologists' communication, a consensual dialogue is carried out in the course of defence of research work, when a student or candidate should answer the questions of the members of the commission or the dissertation board about the content or requirements of the thesis, abstract or introductory report. Here is an example of a consensual dialogue (Appendix 1).

In the aforementioned dialogue, the intentions of the communicants are coordinated: the communicative initiative, the estimated solidarity and activity are evenly distributed; tone of replicas of communicant *A* is neutral: information request (answer, clarification) from *B*; the general tone of the dialogue is informative. In this dialogue, communicant *B*. uses the information strategy, which is "to provide a new, unknown knowledge to the addressee to have a complementary picture of the problem situation in his mind as a result" [Poluikova, (2012), p.108]. Communicant *B* actively supports the theme proposed by *A*, and gives a detailed answer to the question of a communication partner. This speech behaviour has a setting for cooperation. The interest of *A* is manifested in initiating questions (*What was the age of the children, and at what time this work was organised?*) and clarifying questions (*Were the children in the group of different ages?*). In this part of the dialogue, *B* actively responds to questions posed by *A* (*As for the age, we worked with adolescent students of the secondary school ...; the age was varied only*

for 1 year...; I started speaking Finnish when I was 18 years old.). In addition, there is a symmetrical communicativeness throughout the conversation in the replicas of both interlocutors. Evaluation of the communicative result is positive (Appendix 2).

3   Conformal communication coordination (conformal dialogue)

Conformal communicative coordination is

> "Characterized by the consistency of communicative intentions of speech acts in the interaction; a few deviations from the cooperativeness of speech behaviour; lack of demonstration of evaluation solidarity; neutral tone of communication; low interest of one of the communicants in the contact continuation, its communicative passivity, lack of initiative; neutral result in the modal sphere." [(Borisova, (2009), p.170]

Conformal dialogue is most often possible when discussing a student's research paper during a consultation with a supervisor. Let us give an example (Appendix 3).

It is easy to see that the participation of communicants during the dialogue is uneven, and the speech contribution of *B* in the dialogue development is minimal. Focusing on differences in social status (teacher-student), communicant *B*, chooses cooperative subordination, agreeing with *A*, out of respect for the teacher and unwillingness to enter into a potential conflict, i.e., in this case we can state a low degree of cooperative speech behaviour (explanation → aha-reaction). There is an uneven distribution of initiative and activity during the dialogue. In this dialogue the communicant *A* always is the initiator, he informs *B*. Due to this, the communicative activity of *B* is insignificant: in the course of the dialogue the communicant *B* serves as a passive listener (non-reflective listening), i.e., demonstrates "the ability to remain attentively silent, without interfering in the speech of the interlocutor with his remarks" [Vvedenskaya et al., (2005), p.179], therefore he uses 'aha-reactions' (*yes*, *yes*; *aha*, *aha*; *of course, etc.*). These are *aha*, *aha* replicas in the analysed fragment.

We found it necessary to agree with the statement of Prokhorova (2003, p.66) that "the success of identifying the referent largely depends on the interest of the interlocutors in the subject matter of the conversation, on the readiness of the addressee to cooperate, and to fulfil his share of communicative duties."

4   Polemical communicative coordination (polemical dialogue)

A polemical dialogue is distinguished by the

> "Consistency of communicative intentions of speech acts in the interaction; weakened cooperative speech behaviour; lack of solidarity of modal-evaluating meanings; neutral tone of communication, with possible deviations from the unison; various degrees of interest and activity of communication participants, as well as mutual support of communication initiatives; neutral or not quite harmonious communicative result." [Borisova, (2009), p.172]

Polemic communicative coordination occurs in the event when a difference of opinion arises. Let us turn to the next dialogue (Appendix 4).

The example cited shows that the intentions of verbal actions are coordinated, the communicative initiative and activity are uniform, but the interaction has a very weak cooperative character. The replies of the communicant *A* contain provocative questions, which are due to his disagreement with the position of *B*, expressed implicitly: *Maybe you just do not know that last year a PhD thesis on this topic was defended in Pomor University?/Why do you have only two works in Russian in the list of references?/Do you mean that there are no Russian-language works on this topic?/Why do not you refer to their works?/Do you mean that all Russian works are bad, and only foreign ones are worthy of attention?).* In this example, there is no appraising solidarity of communicants; the positions of the interlocutors absolutely do not coincide. Both communicants have their own point of view, but the communicant *A* considers the position of *B* to be unreasonable: the question word why is used in the initiating questions, in which the disagreement with the interlocutor's opinion is hidden (*Why do not you refer to their works?*). As Arutyunova et al. (1992) notes, questions why, what and why are associated with the assessments, opinions and judgments that are undesirable for the addressee and can provoke a conflicting response. Replicas-questions of the communicant *A*, which are comments, in fact (*why do you have only two sources in Russian in the list of references; Do you mean that all Russian works are bad, and only foreign ones are worthy of attention?*) cause the communicant *B* to give a forced excuse (*It does not always make sense. Sometimes in Russian works the results of studies conducted in other countries are simply retold/No. There are five works by Russian authors that make a significant contribution to the study of this topic. Three of them are written in English, two are in Russian. I used all five in my work.*). Communicator *B* tries to 'extinguish' speech aggressiveness of communicant *A* (*Why do you not refer to their works?*) throughout the dialogue, clearly and succinctly answering questions and avoiding not answering the question: *No. There are five works by Russian authors that make a significant contribution to the study of this topic. Three of them are written in English, two are in Russian. I used all five in my work.* Communicant *A* changes the subject for further dialogical interaction in order to find out the reasons for the position of *B: Good. And how do you distinguish the essential contribution from the nonessential?* It is interesting that the reaction Good in this case does not at all indicate the agreement with the point of view of *B*, but on the contrary – it indicates understanding of the inability to convince the interlocutor.

5   Conflict communicative coordination (conflict dialogue)

Conflict communicative coordination is

> "Characterized by increased impulsiveness and reactivity of speech acts with an unpredictable perlocutionary effect in the risk zone; non-cooperativity of speech behavior with formal coherence of communicative intentions with predominance of delayed (reproach-echo question), competing (accusation-counter accusation), correcting (reproach-rebuff) and rejecting reactions (statement of fact-denial of fact); emphasized conflictness of negative modal-evaluating reactions, shifted to the personal sphere of communicants; dissonant tonality of communication with hypertrophy of emotionality and self-centeredness; mainly a high degree of activity of communicants in the presentation of personal claims, an unpredictable communicative result in the psychological and communicative spheres." [Borisova, (2009), p.175]

1   At consultation (before the defense) (Appendix 5).

This fragment of the dialogue clearly demonstrates the dissatisfaction of both communicants, indicating a conflict. Conflict is an "open clash of parties, opinions, forces, related to the difference in ideas about the goals, ways and methods of achieving them, the nature of the tasks and ways to solve them, etc." [Lebedev, (1998), p.107]. According to the statements of the participants of the above discussion, we can judge the cause of the conflict. Among the reasons revealed by psychologists and sociologists, we can identify the causes of conflicts in the educational and professional sphere: "the interdependence of tasks, differences in goals, perceptions and values, behaviour, level of education", "reaction to working overload or underload" [Basovsky, (2003), p.170]. The conflict tone of the dialogue that we are discussing is set by the first replica of the communicant *A* (supervisor), who is dissatisfied with the situation created by the disagreements between *B* and Ivanova: *What did you say to Ivanova?* Such a conflict situation hinders the successful completion of the preparation of *B*s thesis for defense. Communicator *B* tries to justify herself: *You and Anna Yuriyevna have different idea of what the expert's job is*. The tone of this dialogue is mismatched, it is characterised by negative emotionality, intentions of speech actions are uncoordinated (question-brief answer), and communicative initiative and activity are unevenly distributed. Expanded answers of *B* (*She said 'yes' to both questions, and then she began to make remarks. I listened, wrote them down. Then she said that I need to discuss everything with you. At what point I should have left?//You say, she must check the work, the suitability of the specialty, the presence of the parts there... She says that she must find controversial points, make observations to... take into account.../I absolutely did not want to make a problem out of it, I did not intend to antagonise both of you. I just want to finish the work. What is needed for this?*) show a high degree of activity of the communicant *B* in an attempt to explain own actions, as well as implicitly express personal claims to the research advisor. At the same time, communicator *B* understands that her argumentation can cause irritation or discontent of *A* and lead to a negative communicative result.

2   At consultation (discussion of the list of references) (Appendix 6).

A verbal conflict is clearly expressed in the above dialogue, based on "discord, alienation, inability to understand and anticipate each other's behaviour..." [Stolyarenko, (2003), p.489]. Such a conflict is of the most common type – interpersonal, the essence of which is that a student cannot find the right book and asks for help as an ultimatum: I need the book *Argumentation, Communication and Fallacies: A Pragma-dialectical Perspective*. The discrepancy of intentions is due to the difference in opinion of communicants about who should search for sources for writing scientific work: supervisor or student. Communicative intentions of speech actions in this dialogue are inconsistent (request-reproach), interactions are characterised by the non-cooperativeness of the communicant *B*, contain a non-cooperative response (*So what? Do you think I must find it for you?||These are your problems*). The tone of communication of the research advisor differs by hypertrophied emotionality, which is manifested in the transition to another register of communication – conversational: *So what? Do you think I must find it for you?* During the dialogue, communicator *B* suppresses his partner, ignoring his request

(*These are your problems|Continue to look for it*). Communicative evaluation is negative.

The analysis of dialogues with different types of communicative coordination revealed features of communicative interaction of Russian speakers in the educational and professional sphere of communication, ways of harmonising their speech actions in various interactive dialogues. It should be emphasised that in real communication the boundaries of the types of communicative coordination are fuzzy, not only they can be 'blurred', but also intersect in a number of cases.

As can be seen, the cooperativity of speech behaviour plays an important role in successful communication, other features are secondary factors of speech interaction, so a high degree of cooperativeness should ensure the effectiveness of communication, and vice versa, if the degree of cooperativeness is low, this leads to communicative failures. Consensual and conformal types of communicative coordination make it possible to provide a positive communicative result in the educational and professional sphere of communication; however, with the help of a polemical type of communicative coordination, one can make a joint decision or convince the interlocutor of one's righteousness.

Two types of dialogues can be attributed to the conflict type of communicative coordination: with functional and dysfunctional consequences. The functional consequences of conflicts between students and supervisors: "the problem is solved in such a way that all parties are happy, and as a result, people feel involved in the solution of an important problem for them", and dysfunctional consequences lead to the formation of "an idea of the opposite side as an enemy, about own position – as an exceptionally positive one, about the opponent's position – only as a negative one" [Morozov, (2000), p.189].

It seems that since language is not only a means of communication, but also an instrument of influence, it is important for an effective communicative result to avoid the dysfunctional consequences of conflicts, as they do not allow making a constructive decision and testifying to the lack of desire for cooperation.

6   Conclusions

Language teaching practice shows that Chinese students often face certain difficulties in communicating with Russian speakers (teachers, research advisors, etc.): they cannot reach communicative goals while discussing their research, they do not observe the norms of Russian speech etiquette, they cannot adequately respond to the behaviour of the interlocutor in different situations of the educational and professional sphere of communication. In this regard, in order to optimise the teaching of dialogic communication in a non-native language for students, it is necessary to identify the patterns of dialogue development and to explore the general linguistic laws of dialogical interaction in different types of communicative coordination.

The formation and development of communicative coordination skills is especially important for Chinese students studying Russian in the linguistic environment, since mastering such skills can reduce the number of communicative failures, significantly increase communicative activity, provide an adequate understanding of the received information of a professional nature, contribute to a correct assessment of the situation

and subject matter of communication, in order to achieve maximum effectiveness of educational and professional communication.

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Appendix 1

Situational context: situation – thesis defence

A – member of the council and B – candidate.

A   Could you tell me more about supplementary education mentioned in your thesis? What was the age of the children, and at what time this work was organised?

B   Thank you very much for your question. As for the age group, we worked with adolescent students of the secondary school, that is, from the 6th to the 9th grades. The members of the experimental and control group were 14–15 years old students. As for the mode of conducting classes, it was after-school time, for example, from three to four, from four to five. And that is why we chose this unique method of work, so that children do not get tired so much. Moreover, the classes lasted not 45, but 90 minutes.

A   Were the children in the group of different ages?

B   The age was varied only for one year: 12–13, 13–14, 14–15 years. In addition, concerning the inclusion of students in an age-diverse group, for example, scholars Builova and Budanova said in their monographs that this is one of the advantages of additional education, since it allows students to be engaged in such an age-diverse audience of communication.

A   When did you start speaking Finnish?

B   I started speaking Finnish when I was 18.

Appendix 2

Situational context: situation – consultation

A – research advisor and B – student.

A   It is possible to shorten here.

B   Possible.

A   Of course.

B   Yes.

Situational context: situation – thesis defence

A – member of the council and B – candidate.

A   Indeed, it is well developed, but you do not have it in the abstract.

B   Yes, it is not in the abstract.

Appendix 3

Situational context: situation – discussion of research paper structure

A – research advisor and B – student.

B   Is it like a goal?

A   It is like a goal, you still have to think about how to formulate it. Therefore, the tasks … first, this is it, the transcription of this text.

B   Aha.

A   It was necessary to restructure the text. Next, to identify, right? Specific features ... In vocabulary, syntax. Vocabulary and syntax, right? First of all.

B   Aha.

A   Lexical and grammatical features, yes? Hence, to describe the features of vocabulary, given the influence there, next, to identify specific features of the texts like these...

B   To identify features?

A   So, to identify the features of the vocabulary, you did it, yes?

B   Aha.

Appendix 4

Situational context: situation – research paper defence

A – member of the commission and B – undergraduate student.

A   Please tell me why do you have only two sources in Russian in the list of references.

B   The main literature on the topic of my research paper is written in English.

A   Do you mean that there are no Russian-language works on this topic?

B   There are, but their results are not as significant as the results of English-speaking researchers.

A   Maybe you just do not know that last year a PhD thesis on this topic was defended in Pomor University?

B   The topic is rather relevant, and many researchers of various universities are involved in it.

A   Why do not you refer to their works?

B   It does not always make sense. Sometimes in Russian works the results of studies conducted in other countries are simply retold.

A   Do you mean that all Russian works are bad, and only foreign ones are worthy of attention?

B   No. There are five works by Russian authors that make a significant contribution to the study of this topic. Three of them are written in English, two are in Russian. I used all five in my work.

A   Good. And how do you distinguish the essential contribution from the nonessential?

B   If the author has discovered a pattern that no one wrote about before, it is a significant contribution.

Appendix 5

At consultation (before the defence)

A   What did you say to Ivanova?

B   I said that I could not withdraw the work from the website without your permission. I called you, I asked what to do. You answered: "What do you want from me?" I hung up, asked her two questions: would she agree to accept me again, if I consider all the remarks, and there are many of these remarks? She said 'yes' to both questions, and then she began to make remarks. I listened, wrote them down. Then she said that I need to discuss everything with you. At what point I should have left?

A   At once.

B   And yet. You and Anna Yuriyevna have different idea of what the expert's job is. You say, she must check the work, the suitability of the specialty, the presence of the parts there... She says that she must find controversial points, make observations to... take into account... Then work might be posted on the website. I absolutely did not want to make a problem out of it; I did not intend to antagonise both of you. I just want to finish the work. What is needed for this?

Appendix 6

At consultation (discussion of the list of references)

A   I need the book *Argumentation, Communication and Fallacies: A Pragma-dialectical Perspective*.

B   So what? Do you think I must find it for you?

A   Well, no ... I do not know...

B   These are your problems.

A   I looked for it everywhere and could not find it.

B   Continue to look for it.