

## Interaction and communication in schools

LULZIME LUTFIU KADRIU (Doc.Dr.)

Faculty of Philosophy, State University of Tetova

VEHBI KADRIU (PhD)

Faculty of Pedagogy "St.Kliment Ohridski"-Skopje

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Macedonia

VALBONA HABILI SAUKU, (PhD student)

Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana, Albania

### Abstract:

*The process of interaction and communication nowadays are regarded as primary focus in the interest of theoretical and practical research in the educational process in general. The interactional function appeared especially in the last decade, when the educational process took some contemporary characteristic features, giving the pupil a central place. There is no education without interaction. In the educational process, interaction is represented through the manner of teaching, communication and the changes that pupils undergo accordingly to the teachers' influence.*

*The interaction between the teacher and the pupils in the educational process is established through communication. However, for both their overall success a major impact lies in the interactional link i.e the scale of their interactional communication. Accordingly, there are four scales of interactional links in communication: 1. the physical link; 2. the action-reaction link; 3. the empathetic link; and 4. the dialogue.*

*There is no doubt that communication in the school environment presents a main factor and main importance for both the teacher and the learner, which with their central position in the educational process make it more attractive, more dynamic, more effective and fruitful.*

*Hence, the process of communicative interaction in the process of education is found in the focus of interests, research and the application of theory and pedagogical practice, by actualising the vision, ideas, attitudes and thoughts that are focused on the process of education itself. As an interactional-communicative activity, the educational process integrates the role of the learner and the teacher with clear, defined aims and duties. For the educational process, communication is seen as an implicit need, because no activity can be undertaken in teaching and learning without the process of interaction and intercommunication.*

**Key words:** interaction, intercommunication, teaching, learning, teacher, pupil, interactional tie, empathic communication.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The topic that will be elaborated proceedingly is today's necessity, which is always increasing in order to maintain a brighter future and a successful educational one.

The process of interaction and communication nowadays partakes a central role in the interest of theoretical and practical research in general. Contemporary teaching, especially teaching which aims at enhancing communication competencies presents a two-way process: from teacher to pupil from one side and pupil to pupil or pupil to whole class on the other. Therefore, in order for communication to take place, interaction between speakers in communication is needed. The center of the teaching process is compiled of mutual exchange of information and experiences that occur between teacher and pupil, pupils between themselves, or pupil and some other source of knowledge.

With the term interaction between teacher and pupils or pupils between themselves we refer to all types of relations that occur in class during the teaching-learning process. Interaction in the process of teaching, first and foremost should contain all

the features of human communication. The function of interaction arouse especially in the last decade, when the teaching process took some contemporary characteristics, setting the pupil at the center of the whole process. Additionally, interaction between the teacher and the pupil has changed for the best in terms of quality.

The overall success in education depends to a large extent on the quality of interaction and the scale of the interaction tie in communication. There is no education without interaction. There is no doubt that interaction begins at an early stage for each individual, firstly in their family, then at school, with friends, in social organizations etc. Education as a category presents a type of communication in which a narrow interaction between participants in the process takes place. (Brataniq, M. 1993:75)

Contact, the direct perception of partners in the educational process provides a fruitful, social communication. (Murati, Xh. 2001:181)

In the scale of qualtitative interaction during the process of learning the teacher has direct influence. However, we should not underestimate nor see as less important the whole class, its' homogenity, the motivation it provides for learning and the teaching units as well. The teacher should never forget that each and every contact with the pupils, either during direct teaching or out of it, be it on the streets or wherever, always has direct impact on the pupils personality. Hence, the philosophical saying that people are made humans by their consciousness, should partake in the teacher-pupil relationship and vice versa.

If we require from our pupils consciousness behavior, we have to work on it, we should even practically act in order to enhance a healthy conscous. In order to accomplish this, their should be respect among the teacher- pupil relationship. It is most natural that the teacher require politeness and respect from the pupils. He should therefore respect pupils' personality

from a young age. The element which seals pupils' behavior (the future citizens) is exactly the approach and behavior of the teacher and his constructive and righteous attitudes. (Berisha, B. 1995:97) The great pedagogue Pestaloci writes: " a lesson at school, which enholds the soul, which the education of the individual should include, and which can not be fully built in the home circumstances, leads to an artificial cut of the individual." (Kraja, M. 2002:305) Whereas afterwards, when he describes his communication with the pupil, he states that "every help, every support in need, every lesson that they took, came directly from me. My hand was in their hands, my eye was in their eye...they were in me, and I was in them." Therefore, the respect for the pupils should begin from the first minutes of the educational process, during the whole classroom instruction, and should even proceed even after it. The pedagogical expertise of teacher-pupil communication has to do with his figure and his authority. Disordered attitudes, cold and in some cases underestimating, affect in creating a distance, a sort of gap between the pupils and the teachers, because the sincere connection that should be created between them in all ages does not exist.

Regarding the authority of the teacher a general opinion is now formed, says prof. M. Kraja, who further adds: " authority does not posses one that makes the subject "gogol" but it is that teacher that works hard, that is distinguished for his horizon and his and bright, sincere communication with pupils."

The teachers' sincerity in their communication with the pupils, their warm tone of voice, the right choice of words and phrases, the given knowledge, the clarity in thoughts, make the pupil follow the teacher and cooperate in the education process. (Kraja, M 2001:268-270). Truth is, education is a form of communication between people to understand eachother, whereas regarding communication in depth it is important to

clarify concepts of interaction and communication. (Brataniq, M. 2001:76).

## **INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION DURING LEARNING**

Communication in the field of teaching is a key process of transmitting the lessons information. The instrument or tool of communication is the spoken and written language. With interaction while learning we understand the mutual activity that is created between partners with the purpose of bringing them together in the educational process and for the realization of knowledge, skills and habits. (Murati, Xh 2001:183).

According to Bonnie Miller to communicate means to be able to express yourself either orally or in written form, to clearly tell needs, but not aggressively in doing so, to be in condition to notice things from a different perspective, whereas all these are main features which are found in family or at work. (Miller, B 2003)

Every communication represents an interactional relationship between two or more individuals, where one influences the other, but this does not necessary mean that every interaction has a common affect, because it can be one-way for e.g. when the teacher is lecturing and the pupils are only listening, or when we create an impression for a person that passes by and does not see us. (Todorova-Cveiq, I 1991:213).

During the establishment of mutual communication with the proclamation of signals and symbols, participants in the process of agreement between eachother set interacting communication. The main criteria of interacting communication is mutual exchange of messages. (Vreg, F 1998:66).

The communication between the teacher and the pupil is defined by the interaction. In the educational process interaction represents the manner of teaching and the

improvement of skills, communication and changes in pupils' behavior under the influence of the teacher as communicator. Interaction is an essential condition for the accomplishment of communication between teacher and pupils. (Mirascieva S 2007:73). Communication in the educational process is achieved with the help of the language of science and nature. An important factor in the achievement of the educational process and teaching as a process of interactional communication is the retrospective information, through which the teacher accepts notice from the pupils for the condition and quality of the educational process and whether or not the pupil has received or not the lessons aim. In communication exchanges are made, whereas information is the most important object of this exchange. Communication begins with an idea, thought, or message that someone wants to convey to other people. we refer to communication only when there is a interactional relationship between the person which sends the information, i.e. the communicator (sender, conveyer) and the acceptor of the information that is sent through the channels that are found between them. In the process of communication interaction is maintained with the help of signs, with their exchange and with unfolding their importance. Interaction, therefore, represents a two-way relationship between two or more individuals, where one of them limits the behavior of the other or others and affects in the form of submission and their expression. Interaction is the main condition for the placement of communication between the teacher and the pupil. The level of communication achieved between them depends a lot on the emotional state of the pupil, respectively their emotional maturity. We know for a fact that children that live in an uninterested emotional environment are not motivated to talk. Children that feel left out, distant etc. does not have motivation to communicate with others, prefers to be locked-up in himself and to communicate in silence. A pupil that comes from such a family with much difficulties will set a social interaction with

society, in this case with the teacher and with other classmates. On the contrary, a child that lives in a warm family atmosphere, that feels loved, accepted, close etc. with greater intensity sets social interaction with society. Hence, the progress of social interaction and communication are in a dialectic relation with one another.

Communication is also possible without interaction, in cases when an individual only informs the other individual, whereas this individual gives feedback or other signs that he has accepted the information. The whole pedagogical process in reality is a type of interaction with the help of signs. (Danilović M1996:120-150). Relationships between people cannot exist without interaction. In order for communication to occur minimum interaction is necessary. Even silence between people is known as a type of communication also. The scale of interaction with the people around us (society) will affect the development of children's communication skills, who will contribute in intensive social interaction. (Brataniç, M 1993:94 ). Interaction at school between the teacher and the pupil differs from that between pupil-pupil. In the first case, we are dealing with the interaction between a grown-up (the teacher) and the juvenile (pupil), whereas in the second case interaction has a different direction, it develops between two little individuals, without rules and norms, which significantly differs in quality, flow, reaction, success and efficiency. The first form of communication can also be termed vertical interaction (teacher-pupil interaction), unlike the other communication that develops in the horizontal plane (pupil-pupil). The meaning of interaction as a form of rapport between two partners i.e. between the teacher and the pupil makes possible to comprehend the close inner relationship of learning in the process of teaching. Interaction between the teacher and the pupil and vice versa reflects in the creation of the climate of trust, it is not submission but rather support and encouragement, which enholds the specific core and basic

source of the creation of positive climate, respect, acceptance between individuals as an equal subject, adjustment towards the method of work in the personality of the teacher respectively the pupil, towards the climate that is created in class etc. (Murati, Xh 2002:184).

## **THE LEVELS OF INTERACTION IN THE TEACHER-PUPIL COMMUNICATION DURING TEACHING**

Interaction between the teacher and pupil in the educational process develops through communication. Though, for the success of their common activity the interaction link is very important, respectively the scale of interactional link with which they communicate.

- The teacher communicates with the pupils verbally and non-verbally. Once the teacher appears at the door of the class, the teacher in some way is involved in interaction and communication with the pupils and with this action, and with this manner in he affects the pupils to react in some way. If he creates a communication relation with non-verbal signs, according to his presence, then we are dealing with interaction upon the physical link, i.e. interaction of physical dependence.

- From the moment the teacher enters class and poses the question: "what did you have to do for homework?" verbal communication with the pupils begins. Depending on the form of how pupils have understood and experienced the posed question, is how the reply will be. If they understand the teachers proclamation as a request, then they will offer it information (respond to it). If the teacher sets a communication with pupils in the form of questioning and pupils reply, then we are referring to a scale of action-reaction type of interacting. In order to establish a higher scale of interactional link in communication, the teacher should be competent in achieving success.

- The highest degree of interaction communication is empathic communication. In this scale at least one of the individuals that is communicating with the other should communicate with the other in an empathic manner. In the educational process the teacher is the one who while knowing the pupils in an empathic manner harmonizes the manner of communication with them. Empathic communication, except for its educational action and transverse we also have the exchange of roles, which means a mutual link with the position of the individual with whom we are communicating in order to harmonize attitudes and thoughts of the other. This means that by communicating with others, they can listen to the other in an empathic manner and look at things from the others perspective. In this degree of communication dialogues are maintained. Dialogues in human communication cannot exist if mutual empathic communication does not exist. Therefore, there are four degrees (scales) of interaction links in communication:

- the physical link;
- the action-reaction link;
- the empathic link; and
- dialogue.

At times when teachers and pupils communicate regarding the lessons contents, but without mutual experiences and when they communicate only in a distant manner from their being, in both cases we are dealing with communication, but their interaction relation is of lower level. (Bratanic, M 1993:97). Effective interaction between the teacher and pupil develops through the questions that teachers pose during the lesson and pupils questions. Questions are posed in a rhythmic form, as stimulus impulses and uninterrupted between the teacher and the pupil. The role of the acceptor (pupil) is to be relaxed, but concentrated, whereas the sender (teacher) should be concentrated in posing certain questions. (Murati, Xh 2002:185). If in the level of action-reaction communication the

teacher is successful in the educational actions, then in the level of empathic communication we can expect successful educational action. However, guarantee for successful education will be the dialogue that is maintained, which presents an important element of mutuality in human relationships. Empathy in pupils should be created permanently during the educational process. With that a human socio-emotional climate in class is maintained, positive characteristic features in pupils personality develop, like sincerity, objectivity, discipline, accuracy, wisdom, honesty, humanity etc. (Radevska, N1991:79-80).

The empathic approach of the pupil is a condition for success in the act of communication and along this for the development of pedagogical aims in the educational process. Pupils behaviors (in most cases expressed with many verbal and non verbal signs), common messages in interpersonal communication with the teacher, often are not enough for understanding the personality of pupils in whole, for adopting the methods of teaching and informative contents and also values in the structure of the message. A great dilemma is whether or not correct evaluation of pupils results can be managed without empathy. Therefore, the ability for empathy is an important mechanism of comprehension with which communication aims develop. (Miletiq, M) The notion empathy as a term, that derives from the field of ethics, for the first time was put to use by the German philosopher Teodor Lipps, at the beginning of the XX century. The German name "Einfuhluug" in the Albanian language means "close, relative." Therefore, in order to be more comprehensible, the word empathy means the emotional state of an individual that relates with their experiences. In psychology and in the process of education, thinking and behavior towards the other person appears as an emotional state. Meanwhile, according to Zimberi, A. Empathy is " a psychological process, a feeling through which humans form contacts of communication." (Zimberi, A. 2007:187).

Empathy is a process of “putting yourself in the skin of the other (in the others shoes); this presents a process of exceeding oneself, an attempt to understand and for feeling what the other understands or feels. Empathy facilitates communication-communication is destroyed when false supposes or conclusions are drawn for the others state. Communication between the teacher and the pupil implies the sophisticate level of empathy. (ICDP, Conference of UNICEF: 4) The researcher T. Çokrevski clarifies communication interaction as an empathy process that marks stimulation of inner states in other people (Çokrevski,T 2000:178).

Empathy represents the most sincere part of human communication. The ability to see reality through the eyes of the other is empathy and represents the most important ability which the good leader should posses. Empathy is the basis for successful communication, whereas communication is the basis of education.

The empathic personality is capable to register the feelings of others, which plays an important role for all types of relations. Empathy can be treated as entering into the skin of the other, and injecting our own personality into that of the other, in order to be able to undertstand the world better through the eyes of the other. However, this always represents something other than what we can say with words. The mutual empathic communication represents a high degree of mutual proclamation which enholds the mutual impact. This form of communication is known as dialogue. To be ready for a dialogue means to communicate in an empathic manner i.e. to be capable to listen to the other.

- Dialogue arises from the desire to listen to the other, for mutual recognition and for spiritual enrichment.
- Dialogue is the ideal human communication, which will enable the realization and creation of communication with which success is achieved in the educational process.(Brataniq, M 2002:121-217). Of course through

dialogue we can conclude whole knowledge regarding the personality with whom we communicate. Meaningful dialogue is maintained only when I agree with the others thoughts and feelings, eventhough during this process I aim to learn from him, and also offer something to him.

- The aim of communication dialogue is empathy and bilateral understanding, including here the respect of the others personality, because he is a human being and deserves to be treated with respect, care and honesty.
- Dialogue cannot be established without the developed ability for empathy which is a precondition and aim of communication dialogue. Through communication the individual is educated and trained to freely communicate. Dialogue and knowledge are made aims, whereas the need for dialogue is an individual charecteristic which is cultivated. (Stanimiroviq, B 1998:156).

As an interaction-communication activity, the educational process integrates the pupil and teacher activity with defined aims and tasks. For the success of the educational process, except for professional competencies, attitudes are also important and what is expected from the teacher and the pupil, either consciously or subconsciously. The issue of teacher capacities for creating intensive interaction and successful communication, but also his competence for making pupils more capable is a relevant matter.

## **CONCLUSION**

From what was mentioned previously, we can therefor conclude that communication is an old phenomena in science, in the school environment it represents the main factor and essential importance for the main components in teaching (pupil and

teacher), which with their position as subject in the educational process make it more attractive, more dynamic, effective and fruitful. For this reason the school should definitely be an institution where views are expressed, with different ways of learning, but also a comfortable environment and meaningful communication between the subjects in it (teacher- pupil).

The educational process, regardless of which level of education is being considered and in what type of form it is accomplished, it firstly develops in the field of complex and dynamic structure of teaching and communication that exist in general between the teacher and the pupils and between teachers and pupils in particular. How the communication between the teacher and the pupil at school will develop, depends on the teachers character, the tools that he uses, how close are teachers and pupils attitudes, their sympathy and antipathy, from the empathic ability which presents a sure path towards dialogue etc. With the achievement of dialogue between the teacher and the pupil we may say that we have achieved qualitative communication and we have undertaken the first step for stimulating and developing positive behavior in pupils. Beside from this, with the achievement of dialogue as the highest level of interaction in communication, we have achieved to enhance in pupils honesty, trust, tolerance, understanding etc. whereas, in this manner we will surely benefit a lot in the educational process.

This issue should be considered professionally both in theory and pedagogical practice. Therefore, the process of interaction communication in the process of education of is found in the focus of interests, research and application of pedagogical theory and practice, making more actual the visions, ideas, attitudes and thoughts which have in their focus the process of education. For the needs of the process of education, communication is displayed as an implicit need, because no type of activity in teaching and learning can take place without the process of interaction and communication.

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