



LANGUAGE LEARNING

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TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS: OVERVIEW OF MAIN APPROACHES

Olga Komar

Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, Uman, Ukraine

ORCID: 0000-0001-5724-3554, e-mail: zelenkoolga87@ukr.net

Rapid social changes in different spheres determine new requirements to the graduates of the higher educational establishments. The article presents a whole complex of techniques that is aimed at developing not only language skills, but creativity and general outlook of the students, that help to create an English-speaking environment in which they work, express their thoughts, draw conclusions. The article is devoted to the content analysis of basic approaches to English language teaching. The author compares traditional and innovative approaches, determines their benefits and drawbacks. Within the framework of this research the author distinguished three basic approaches (methods) in teaching a foreign language: communicative, intensive and linguoculturological. The characteristic principles of each of them are presented in the article. The author states that they focus on widening the world view, motivation level increase, creative initiative cultivation and effective communication performance. The conception of the research problem in the educational sphere of the secondary and higher educational establishments has been theoretically generalized. The point of the article is based on the fact that professional training of future foreign language teachers is a process of learning, understanding and specific knowledge, skills and proficiencies of future teachers who perform the functions of future professional activities, fulfill their functions in accordance with their professional duties. The scientific literature analysis results, concerning the approaches viewed, show advantages and disadvantages of each of them, so that they need some modifying and improvement, what will be the prospects for our further research in this direction.

Key words: approach, principle, competence, language teaching, professional training, method, motivation, educational activity, professional training, communicative interaction.

Introduction

At present time in the conditions of the current changes of national educational system in Ukraine, a role of future foreign language teacher is still very



important, as the quality of education of younger generation depends on his personal characteristics. A modern specialist should be ready to combine different approaches in teaching foreign languages (traditional and innovative). Due to European standards, a modern teacher should be prepared for motivated professional activities, introduce new educational technologies, unique pedagogical ideas, techniques and forms of cognitive activity organization, high-quality mastering learning activities during which he develops himself as a skilled specialist. Modernization of the system of secondary and higher education, particularly English language training leads to the necessity of the improvement in the process of future language teachers training to use various approaches in their professional activities. The main aim of the study is the theoretical analysis of basic approaches to teaching foreign languages, characterization of their conceptual principles.

Theoretical analysis of scientific and literary sources on the research topic shows a significant increase of interest to the issues of the approaches used to teaching foreign languages. Some aspects of professional training of future foreign language teachers were studied by J. Richards, D. Wilkins, C. Jonson, J. Littlewood, E. Passov and others. The actual problems of using innovative (intensive) approach have been considered by I. Beck, M. Elliott. K. Stanovich has studied interdisciplinary relations and effective future foreign language teachers' training in pedagogical universities. R. Langs has analyzed the peculiarities of communicative language teaching in the higher educational establishments. In the study such methods of pedagogical research as theoretical analysis of pedagogical and scientific literature, systematization, and generalization are used.

Nowadays, in the pedagogical science there is a transition to new approaches in foreign language teaching. According to the radical changes taking place in the field of higher education, the personality of the future specialist becomes of a core value. Rapid social changes in different spheres determine new requirements to the graduates of the higher educational establishments, significantly focusing on the subjective component of their professional development. Therefore, it is reasonable to study approaches to the formation of a modern model of a personality of a future foreign language teacher in the process of professional education. While working on this article we are to accomplish the following objectives: to examine and compare the main approaches to the teaching of a foreign language, to analyse them and identify their advantages and disadvantages.

On the background of changes in the objectives and content of learning and motivation of learning foreign languages under the auspices of the Council of Europe, the communicative approach was introduced into the practice of foreign language teaching with the aim of «conservation and enhancement of the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of different peoples, for the intensive exchange of scientific and technical information and achievements in the field of culture, ideas, labour, to increase the mobility of people». A key principle of training is «focus on mastering the language as means of communication in real life situations relevant to students», grammar and vocabulary are considered as tools to achieve communicative goals [5, p. 27]. The fact that Ukraine joined the Council of Europe provides the fact that educational standards of Ukraine meet the European standards, there-



fore, the materials of the Council of Europe, which considers two types of competence in a foreign language (general and communicative), are compulsory for the practical implementation in Ukraine. The competence can be determined as the specified requirement to educational training. Let us give some more details on the importance of the communicative competence for our research.

They include the linguistic competence: a) grammatical (knowledge of grammar rules and vocabulary units to create meaningful utterances); b) sociolinguistic competence (the ability to select and use the appropriate language forms and means depending on the situation of communication); c) discourse competence (the ability to build an integrated, connected and logical utterances of different styles in speech and writing); and d) socio-cultural competence (cultural knowledge of native speakers, their habits, traditions, norms of behaviour, etiquette, and the ability to understand and use them in communication) [3, p. 58]. Therefore, the communicative approach in teaching foreign languages is a priority and meets the requirements of today and is considered as a means to achieve the final learning goal, stated as follows: learning languages as a means of communication and initiation to the culture of the countries of native speakers and their psychology.

In terms of our research we distinguished three main approaches to learning: communicative, intensive, and linguoculturological that contribute to the professional training of future foreign language teacher – education of active personality, aimed at the development of attitudes, motivation, creative initiative, as well as the achievement of effective communication. The communicative approach is directed on a possibility of communication. The communicative approach appeared in the early 70-s of the XX-th century and was widespread in Europe and the United States. It became the basis of a study conducted by R. Langs, american professor and psychiatrist who proposed a theory of emotional life and psychoanalysis that focused on human adaptations to the events. R. Langs draws his attention to two features of the communicative approach: the first is that this approach is a new way to understand the emotionally-colored communication, the second is that the main function of the mind, responsible for processing emotions, is a fast adaptation to the events to which the person reacts emotionally [1, p. 19]. Among four main activities that comprise any language training such as reading, writing, speaking and listening, the last one is of great importance. At present, Oxford and Cambridge textbooks are very popular in Ukraine, as they are based on a communicative approach combined with some traditional elements of teaching. The main goal of this approach is to teach the student to speak the language fluently, and then think using the acquired language. The communicative approach suggests a transition from the development of all language skills to comprehension of laws of language exercises aimed at the reproduction. For explaining a new vocabulary the teacher uses a great variety of techniques: revert to already known words and expressions, video and audio materials, situations from everyday life, dialogues, games, creative tasks. Students' group discussions are very common due to this approach, as they share their ideas on a topic or situation.

The whole complex of techniques is aimed at developing not only language skills, but creativity and general outlook of the student, that help to create an



English-speaking environment in which they work, express their thoughts, draw conclusions. Language is very closely connected with the cultural characteristics of the country. Communication as one of the main activities of young people is a central element of communicative approach. Well-organized communication positively affects the assimilation of knowledge and has a powerful educational impact [4, p. 65]. During the process of group training and communicating, the group community impacts on the personality of each student and the basic creative potential exceeds the potential of the individual student. Anyway, students exchange their opinions and results of achievements that increase their motivation for further language studying. Special methods of organization of educational activities aimed at the development of creative activity and initiative of students, autonomy of judgment, the knowledge of culture, traditions and norms of the country whose language is studied, promote the intercultural dialogue [6, p. 14].

Taking into consideration all the information that have been mentioned before, we may note that the communicative approach in foreign language teaching has many positive aspects, but we should also mention the significant drawbacks of this approach, such as: insufficient attention paid to reading and writing activities; although enough time is given to vocabulary and speaking, grammar remains aside.

The last decades are characterized by the wide information content, acceleration of scientific and technological progress, lack of time, constant stress, overloading etc. So it is predictably that people are looking for ways of mastering the means and methods of self-control, trying to learn how to run their mental resources and time in an appropriate way, and teachers are trying to find the way to give their students as much information as possible in the shortest period of time. Intensification of training is the transfer of greater amounts of information to students at a constant duration of training without compromising the quality requirements of knowledge [4, p. 61].

The enhancement of learning can be reached by improving the content of educational material and teaching methods, as they are reflected in the principles of the intensive learning approach: 1. The principle of collective interaction. 2. The principle of personality – oriented communication. 3. The role-playing principle of the organization of the educational process. 4. The principle of concentration in the educational material and the educational process. 5. The principle of the multi-functional nature that reflects the specific system of exercises according to the intensive methods of teaching. 6. The problem-based principle in education. 7. The principle of individualization of learning (consideration of personal characteristics in order to develop individual tasks and the choice of forms of communication.) 8. The principle of novelty (the use of the latest scientific data in the field of pedagogy and psychology to develop forms and methods of training). 9. The principle of progressiveness. 10. The principle of variety (diversity of forms and means of teaching, using of audiovisual, technical and informational methods of learning).

Linguoculturological approach appeared because of the language concept as a phenomenon of culture. In the twentieth century it becomes very important to examine a language as a product of culture and as its important component. The rise of this idea and the development of cultural linguistics as a scientific field of knowledge



about the interaction of language and culture are depended on several factors. First of all, it's the rapid development of the Humanities and the large amount of information in pedagogy, psychology, cultural studies, sociology, political science, etc., that made a necessity to identify the main aspects of communication, behaviour, consciousness of people, as well as in the system of values and language.

Globalization has led to the necessity of taking into account the various aspects of ideology in different cultures. Language is the tool that interprets the collective experience encoded in the words, phraseological units, texts etc. The problem of interaction of language and culture is one of the central problems in linguistics. In the second part of the twentieth century at the crossroads of history, sociology, psychology, linguistics, art history appeared linguistic and cultural studies – the science that deals with the study of historical and contemporary linguistic facts in the light of spiritual culture [3, p. 73].

The first attempts to solve the problem of interaction of language and culture were made by V. Humboldt. The basic idea of its concept is that material and spiritual culture embodied in the language, which is the link between a human being and the surrounding world. The assumption that the inner form of language is the expression of people's culture is important for this. The human mastering a new language means not only its cultural growth but also the development of ways of expressing thoughts and feelings. That's why we agree with the following statement: language is not only a part of culture, but in many ways it's a part that forms a system, so when changes occur in the language under the influence of modern requirements, the language changes itself and its culture [2, p. 39]. And conversely, any change in the culture of the people reflected in the language changes (appear and fade into the background, or wipe out some of the words and expressions, changing intonation etc.). Taking into consideration the fact that language is a cultural phenomenon, we came to the conclusion that the English language is a phenomenon of English culture, and therefore, by learning English, we do not only join the culture in the ordinary sense, but also get the opportunity to develop previously mastered ways of expressing our feelings, thoughts, characteristics of English culture, since each language in this sense has its own uniqueness.

For people, who want to join the culture of the language they are learning, it is necessary to explain the cultural background that is behind every unit of language and which allows to correlate the surface structure of the language with their deep essence. Therefore, based on this approach in teaching a foreign language, the teacher pays much attention to proverbs, sayings, phraseologisms, focusing on the different values that put the representatives of different cultures in the same words.

The characteristic principles of linguoculturological approach are: 1) mastery of all aspects of a foreign language in terms of cultural background; 2) authenticity is achieved by the fact that learning happens on real texts, literary works, audio and video materials; 3) complexity, that means it examines all the interrelated aspects of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing; 4) the principle of novelty, that is in the process of explaining students the latest aspects of language, especially the use of various lexical and grammatical structures; 5) the principle of traditionalism, achieved by studying customs, norms of behaviour and etiquette of the country, the



language of which we are studying. The obvious advantages of linguoculturological approach is the expansion of students' cultural horizons; familiarization with the traditions and etiquette of the country, the language of which they are learning; the interrelated study of all aspects of a foreign language; striving for a dialogue of cultures, breeding tolerance and respect to other nations; classes are creative, informative and problematic. However, this approach has also disadvantages. Among them there are: there is not always an opportunity to apply the material in linguoculturological context; the teacher must have a cultural base for the training and the preparation for each class requires a great deal of time.

Conclusions.

So, we have examined three approaches to teaching foreign languages: communicative, intensive, and linguoculturological. The analysis of the literature on these approaches helped us to define their advantages and disadvantages; as a result, we came to the conclusion that in order to achieve the goal of professional training of future foreign language teachers we can't use just one of these methods (approaches). The most effective, we believe, is a selective and combined application of their separate elements, depending on the situation. Each of the approaches mentioned above has some drawbacks and needs some modifying and improvement, what will be the prospects for our further research in this direction.

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