

## МЕТОДИКА

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**LANGUAGE LEARNING ACQUISITION:  
EFFECTIVE METHODS**

*Стаття присвячена вивченню проблеми формування навичок володіння іноземною мовою. У статті теоретично обґрунтовано методологію формування мовленнєвих навичок та визначено особливості засвоєння іноземної мови. У статті запропоновано продуктивні методи та технології успішного оволодіння мовленнєвими навичками. Сформульовано також методичні рекомендації щодо ефективної організації навчального процесу.*

**Ключові слова:** завдання комунікативної спрямованості, формування навичок володіння іноземною мовою, стилі навчання, кооперативне навчання

*Статья посвящена изучению проблемы формирования навыков овладения иностранным языком. В статье теоретически обоснованно методологию формирования речевых навыков, а также значимость особенностей усвоения иностранного языка. В статье предложено продуктивные методы и технологии успешного овладения речевыми навыками. Сформулированы также методические рекомендации по эффективной организации учебного процесса.*

**Ключевые слова:** задания коммуникативной направленности, формирование навыков овладения иностранным языком, стили обучения, кооперативное обучение

*In the constantly developing globalized world the need for the English language proficiency is increasing. Old traditional methods of teaching English cannot satisfy the demand. Focusing on more innovative methods of teaching will help to master students' language skills.*

*The article is devoted to the problem of foreign language learning acquisition. It deals with a brief analysis of the main issues of an ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction. The reasons of ineffectiveness of old methods of teaching foreign languages have been examined in the article. Innovative methods of teaching the English language have been explored. Basic assumptions of experts about the new methods' efficiency of teaching English have been analyzed in the article.*

*The methodology of forming learners' language skills has been theoretically substantiated. The importance of knowing peculiarities of language learning acquisition has been grounded. Productive methods and techniques of successful language learning acquisition have been suggested. The reasons why students might have difficulty in learning English have been grounded. The author tried to develop recommendations on effective organizing of teaching and learning processes. Key suggestions concerning the effective management of the materials, of the students and of the classroom environment have been offered both instructors and learners.*

**Key words:** *communication-oriented tasks, language learning acquisition, learning styles, cooperative learning*

Nowadays, the importance of knowing a foreign language is constantly growing. The year of 2016 has been proclaimed the year of the English language in Ukraine. Accordingly, the teachers' professional requirements increase. The central educational focus is on talents, abilities, and potential opportunities of every student. Using the most effective ways of language teaching is of a primary importance. Much attention in educating students should be paid to the national identity development.

The knowledge of a second language becomes a vital necessity in any field, whether it is because the majority of academic literature is in English or because the job market extends its roots to other countries offering job placements all around the world. The Council of Europe developed educational programs for foreign language learning, and some of them have been adopted worldwide.

The **topicality** of the research is stipulated by the growing necessity of knowing the English language in the modern world. The **objectives** of the article are to identify productive methods for teaching English and to investigate strategies and techniques of effective language learning acquisition.

It has been stated in the Methodological Recommendations on Foreign Languages for the current academic year (2015-2016): "A practical approach to a foreign language education does not only comprise the acquired knowledge, habits and skills in the instructional content but also learning strategies as well as communicative functions with the communication-oriented tasks. The category of learners' attitude to the subject and to the learning process (motivation) will play a significant role. The following approach will teach learners to be responsible for the obtained knowledge and to understand why it is significant for them. The students will be able to use the acquired knowledge in instructional activities" [4].

To implement the above stated recommendations teachers should create an innovative learning environment where learning becomes not an obligation but a personal need.

The innovative learning environment is a pedagogically organized surrounding, which promotes effective learning approaches, integrated means of accumulation and innovational potentials of the educational institution [1].

To arouse students' interest to the learning process foreign language instructors should provide students with new and effective forms and methods of learning. All the students should have a desire for creative and productive work. They should become active and relaxed, interested in the lesson procedure, trying to make progress in a foreign language.

The language acquisition is a long process that is broken into several stages. English language learners acquire the language knowledge gradually. According to Rothenberg and Fisher there are the following *levels of proficiency*: Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced [3, p. 31]. Additionally, the methodologists also mention that "English language learners may be referred to as Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, Early Advanced, and Advanced" [3, p. 6]. Hill and Flynn consider the knowledge of language acquisition stages as one of the most significant things educators should know. They state the knowledge is necessary to evaluate students' ability, and adjust the appropriate curriculum for students. They break "Stages of Second Language Acquisition" into Preproduction, Early Production, Speech Emergence, Intermediate Fluency, and Advanced Fluency. Disregarding the age, ELL students go through these stages and an effective teacher must see it as a "first aid" in ESL pedagogy [2, p. 14].

Foreign language learners are rather often indecisive and afraid of speaking to avoid making mistakes. The instructor's role is to level down that frustration and create the most welcoming environment for the learners to get interested and motivated. Teachers can help students master the skills and lower the frustration level by giving clear guidelines, modeling a task for students or giving advice [3, p. 21]. Teachers should also pay attention to setting objectives and providing feedback for the classroom.

Only by understanding the difference in students' language proficiency instructors can build rigorous, challenging and effective curriculum. They need to know the essential principles of language acquisition instruction.

Rothenberg and Fisher describe four principles: comprehensible input, contextualized instruction, low-anxiety environment and meaningful engagement.

*Comprehensible input* deals with learner-friendly language environment, where the instructor makes sure that students understand directions, speech, new information and texts.

*Contextualized instruction* is understanding that context is a part of what makes the language comprehensible, whether the language and context are academically challenging.

*Low-anxiety environment* focuses on ways of making students safe and welcomed, ways to provide them with enough opportunities to interact with students in small groups and make students take risks and change students' attitude towards making mistakes.

*Meaningful engagement* of all students looks for ways to use language authentically and help students take ownership of their learning [3, p. 32].

Moreover, it is important to know that different students have various learning styles. What are *learning styles*? There are different definitions and classifications of the term. In a general sense, these are preferences for ways to learn. Ellis described a learning style as the more or less consistent way in which a person perceives, conceptualizes, organizes and recalls information [6].

All people differ in personal approaches to acquiring language habits and skills. Some methodologists believe that learning is accomplished more quickly and retained in students' memories longer if it is presented in the way that is the most acceptable one for every individual learner.

There are plenty of opinions on *learning styles*. Here are some of the classification systems that researchers have developed.

*The Four Modalities* originate from the work of Dr. Bandler and Grinder in the Field of Neuro-Linguistic Programming [5].

Students may prefer a *visual* (seeing), *auditory* (hearing), *kinaesthetic* (moving) or *tactile* (touching) way of learning.

Those who prefer a *visual learning style* look at the teacher's face intently, like looking at wall displays, books etc., often recognize words by sight, use lists to organize their thoughts, recall information by remembering how it was set out on a page.

Those who prefer an *auditory learning style* want the teacher to provide verbal instructions like dialogues, discussions and plays solve problems by talking about them use rhythm and sound as memory aids.

Those who prefer a *kinesthetic learning style* learn best when they are involved or active find it difficult to sit still for long periods use movement as a memory aid.

Those who prefer a *tactile way of learning* use writing and drawing as memory aids learn well in hands-on activities like projects and demonstrations.

*Field-independent vs. Field-dependent: Field-independent students:* They can easily separate important things from a complex or confusing background. They tend to rely on themselves and their own thought-system when solving problems. They are not so skilled in interpersonal relationships. *Field-dependent students:* They find it more difficult to see the parts in a complex whole. They rely on others' ideas when solving problems and are good at interpersonal relationships.

McCarthy described students as *innovative learners, analytic learners, common sense learners or dynamic learner.*

*Innovative learners:* look for personal meaning while learning; draw on their values while learning; enjoy social interaction; are cooperative; want to make the world a better place.

*Analytic learners:* want to develop intellectually while learning; draw on facts while learning; are patient and reflective; want to know "important things" and to add to the world's knowledge.

*Common sense learners:* want to find solutions; value things if they are useful; are kinaesthetic; are practical and straightforward; want to make things happen.

*Dynamic learners:* look for hidden possibilities; synthesize information from different sources; are enthusiastic and adventurous [7].

Here are some *practical recommendations* concerning teaching methods and activities that suit different learning styles best:

#### *The Four Modalities*

*Visual:* Use many visuals in the classroom. For example, wall displays posters, realia, flash cards, graphic organizers etc.

*Auditory:* Use audio tapes and videos, storytelling, songs, jazz chants, memorization and drills. Allow learners to work in pairs and small groups regularly.

*Kinesthetic:* Use physical activities, competitions, board games, role plays etc. Intersperse activities which require students to sit quietly with activities that allow them to move around and be active.

*Tactile:* Use board and card games, demonstrations, projects, role plays etc. Use while-listening and reading activities. For example,

ask students to fill in a table while listening to a talk, or to label a diagram while reading.

*Field-independent vs. field-dependent:* *Field-independent:* Let students work on some activities on their own. *Field-dependent:* Let students work on some activities in pairs and small groups.

*Mc Carthy's four learning styles:* *Innovative learners:* Use cooperative learning activities and activities in which students must make value judgements. Ask students to discuss their opinions and beliefs. *Analytic learners:* Teach students the facts. *Common sense learners:* Use problem-solving activities. *Dynamic learners:* Ask students about their feelings. Use a variety of challenging activities [7].

Sue Davidoff and Owen van den Berg suggested four steps: plan, teach / act, observe and reflect. Here are some guidelines for each step:

1. Students learn better and more quickly if the teaching methods used match their preferred learning styles.

2. As learning improves, so too does self esteem. This has a further positive effect on learning.

3. Students who have become bored with learning may become interested once again. The student-teacher relationship can improve because the student is more successful and is more interested in learning [4].

If teachers vary the activities used in class, learners with different learning styles will be interested, active and they will take an active part in the classroom activities.

Knowledge of the stages of language will help educators realize what materials or approaches they need to take to make students learn effectively and feel welcomed [2].

Teachers should often use the strategy of cooperative learning, role-plays, brainstorming to involve every student in the process of acquiring and mastering the language skills. Another important element is the development of social / interpersonal skills. Students need to learn the social skills necessary to work effectively with others.

Besides, students always do their utmost if instructors have a positive attitude and high expectations of the students.

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