

MODERN CONCEPTION OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

In this article we question the conventional wisdom based on the assumptions that foreign language acquisition can be successfully provided primarily against the communicative background, thus the learning process is ultimately aimed at forming the communicative competence of students. Rationalizing that at this rate the cognitive aspect of learning that presupposes interrelation of speech and intellection remains either ignored or deficient in support, we advance the hypothesis premised on the notion that efficiency of language acquisition can be provided by the high level of both the communicative and the cognitive competence. This article focuses on the basic principles of the modern strategy of foreign language teaching. The development of the communicative and cognitive competence is specified as a target of learning.

Key words: *communicative and cognitive competence, speech and mental activity, authentic conditions, worldview, linguistic personality, knowledge space, epistemological styles, multiple intelligences.*

Contemporary methodology of teaching EFL is characterized by two main paradigms of humanitarian science – communicative and cognitive. Within the framework of the communicative paradigm language and its analysis is connected mainly with acquisition of speech activity; within the framework of the cognitive paradigm language is related to cognition and processes associated with it. It is becoming evident that to solve a number of methodological problems a synthesis of the mentioned above paradigms is needed. That is why examining the contemporary strategy of teaching EFL we will consider the basic principles of both the communicative and the cognitive approaches, as well as the data of such allied sciences as cognitive psychology, philosophy, sociology, culturology, and didactics.

The core issue of the communicative approach is that the process of language teaching should be organized as a process of real communication in situational environment [8]. Within this approach the main objective of language teaching is the communicative competence. The fundamental idea of the cognitive approach puts forward that the learning process is aimed at receiving (or rather inferring) knowledge, structuring and systematically arranging knowledge units, storing and applying them while getting adapted to reality [6]. The ultimatum of cognitive language teaching is the cognitive competence. Considering the assumption that learning another language enhances a learner's understanding of and insights into the world, the commonsensical idea would be to combine the communicative and cognitive approaches and receive an approach which incorporates both communication and cognition. The impetus and rationale for it come from changing educational realities in the world, that presupposes the shift from an emphasis on teacher-centered to an emphasis on learner-centered classrooms and from transmission-oriented to participatory or constructivist knowledge development. Thus, the main objective of communicative and cognitive teaching a foreign language is the communicative and cognitive competence as a developed ability to perform speech and mental activity while solving real and ideational problems via target language. This activity will be successful on condition of the developed knowledge space, worldview, multiple intelligences and linguistic personality of students. To observe how to reach the high level of development of communicative and cognitive competence we need to consider the basic principles of the communicative and cognitive approach [2].

The first principle demands that *foreign language acquisition should be realized through speech activity*, which is specifically human. Speech activity is looked upon as a purposeful, determined by language and stipulated by situations process of speech reception and production in the human interaction. In its formation speech activity goes through the impelling-motivational, analytical-synthetic and executive stages [3, p. 112].

The second principle concerns the conditions conducive for communicative and cognitive language teaching. These conditions presuppose *stimulation of mental and speech activity of students*. It can be done through modeling problem situations which include intellectual obstacles that students are supposed to overcome. Overcoming these obstacles requires performing such cognitive operations as analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization, inference, etc. which lead to cognitive development of students [9, p. 434].

The third principle implies *creating authentic situations of students' socialization* that ensures and specifies its motivational and natural character. Authentic situations are created due to applying verbal and non-verbal means of communication [5, p. 63].

The fourth principle highlights the importance of *taking into consideration* students *epistemological styles* (empirical, rational and metaphorical). The epistemological styles are the ways via which a person perceives and cognizes the world and acquires knowledge [10, p. 137]. In the learning process these styles may be correlated with the relevant types of educational information (models, charts, algorithms, rules, cognitive metaphors, etc) which are most conducive for knowledge acquisition for each particular student.

The fifth principle deals with *students' linguistic personality development*. We support the idea that through language a person becomes part of social consciousness and only due to this fact his individual consciousness is developed. Since language is a medium of collective consciousness it is possible to speak of a personality as such which is part of social consciousness, has a language capacity and manifests in speech behavior, thus becoming a linguistic personality. Therefore a foreign language learner may be considered a linguistic personality since s/he adjusts their own consciousness to the one which embodies the values of the country where a language originates.

It should be noted that the concept of "linguistic personality" was introduced into scientific circulation by a Russian scholar Yu. Karaulov. He defined it as a combination of capacities and characteristics that stipulate a person's texts production. According to Yu. Karaulov, the model of linguistic personality development comprises semantic, cognitive and pragmatic levels [4, p. 3]. We hypothesize that in different situational sets "linguistic personality" has different spheres of manifestation and thus may have several images, such as a speech personality, a communicative personality and a cognitive personality.

The sixth principle emphasizes the assumption that *learning a foreign language conduces and facilitates students' worldview formation*. Here the idea is highlighted that the processes of foreign language learning and worldview development are interrelated. A particular concern of this article is an individual's cognitive activity through which the conceptual worldview and its main constituent – language representation of the world – are developed.

The cognitive activity is looked upon as a triad consisting of three overlapping stages:

- 1) the acquisition of information;
- 2) the incorporation of the acquired information into the mind of a person;
- 3) the operation of the acquired information in an individual's speech [7, p. 40].

It is presumed that the acquisition of the information presupposes its perception and preliminary understanding, the incorporation of the information means its conceptualization and representation in the mind of a learner, and the operation of the information signifies an individual's activity with full or partial objectification of his personal experience. The third stage is a process of transforming the subjective forms of the represented information into the objective forms, i.e. into speech activity.

The development of worldview presumes the construction in students' minds a model of acculturation – an abstract schema aiming at a person's successful adaptation to an alien culture. The model surmises two manifestations of human cultural interaction: 1) the ethnocentric attitude based on recognition of priority of one's own culture; 2) the ethnorelative attitude based on recognition of equality of both native and alien cultures. Here the idea is highlighted that in the process of English language acquisition students should focus on ethnorelative interaction with an alien culture [11].

The seventh principle *accentuates the requirement of forming and broadening students' knowledge space*. The issue raised here basically relates to cognitive activity in which an individual learns to process, categorize, conceptualize, and generalize the events around him, make inferences, memorize a great deal of information, and express the results of this activity via language. Such a process results in general notions which, being integrated together, form the knowledge space of students. The knowledge space is defined as a corpus of structured knowledge units – frames, scripts, schemata, etc. – which are interrelated and connected to support the functioning of the cognitive system of a person [1, p. 203]. Knowledge units are supposed to be the concepts of different levels of abstraction and complexity. Within the framework of the cognitive paradigm a concept is viewed as an operative meaningful unit of the mind, a quantum of structured knowledge. Concepts are thought to be the results of cognition. It means that by analyzing, comparing and integrating different concepts in the process of cognition a person forms new concepts in his mind. In concepts both the linguistic and cognitive experience of an individual is concentrated and crystallized [6, p. 3]. Thus, concepts may be considered "the constructive mental blocks" of the conceptual representation of the world, or knowledge space of a personality.

The eighth principle maintains the idea that *the process of foreign language acquisition facilitates the development of students' multiple intelligences*. The notion of multiple intelligences was introduced by H. Gardner. He defined it as the ways through which a person perceives and process information in the cognitive activity. H. Gardner distinguishes the linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, bodily-kinesthetic and naturalist intelligences [12, p. 62]. In foreign language learning traditionally the role of the linguistic and the logical-mathematical intelligence is emphasized, though other types of intelligences are nonetheless involved in this process.

Considering the mentioned above we conclude that in the process of foreign language acquisition both the communicative and the cognitive paradigms are combined. The combination of these paradigms results in the communicative and cognitive approach to language teaching. This approach is established on the basic principles which accentuate the necessity to develop not only communicative but also (and primarily) students' cognitive skills and capacities that are reflected in relevant competences.

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СУЧАСНА КОНЦЕПЦІЯ НАВЧАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЯК ІНОЗЕМНОЇ

У статті досліджується сучасна концепція навчання іноземної мови. Зокрема, розглядаються базові принципи комунікативно-когнітивного підходу, спрямованого на формування комунікативно-когнітивної компетенції суб'єктів пізнання.

Ключові слова: комунікативно-когнітивна компетенція, мовленнєво-розумова активність, автентичні умови, картина світу, мовна особистість, знаннєвий простір, епістемологічні стилі, множинний інтелект.

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СОВРЕМЕННАЯ КОНЦЕПЦИЯ ОБУЧЕНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ КАК ИНОСТРАННОМУ

В статье исследуется современная концепция обучения иностранному языку. В частности, рассматриваются основные принципы коммуникативно-когнитивного подхода, направленного на формирование коммуникативно-когнитивной компетенции субъектов познания.

Ключевые слова: коммуникативно-когнитивная компетенция, речемыслительная активность, аутентичные условия, картина мира, языковая личность, знаниевое пространство, эпистемологические стили, множественный интеллект.

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