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RADIAL THINKING IN STUDYING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

У статті представлено короткий опис загального підходу до радіального мислення як до одного з методів, який покращує якість вивчення іноземних мов.

Ключові слова: радіальне мислення, інформація, техніка, ключові слова, навички.

В статье представлено краткое описание общего подхода к радиальному мышлению как к одному из методов, который улучшают качество изучения иностранных языков

Ключевые слова: радиальное мышление, информация, техника, ключевые слова, навыки.

The article presents a brief description of general approach to Radiant Thinking as one of the specific techniques that improves the quality of studying foreign languages

Key words: radiant thinking, information, technique, key words, skills.

Introduction. New information technologies require new approaches and methods in studying foreign languages. There should be a close link between the tasks performed in English class and their real-life, professional uses of English outside class.

The Bolon process brought a lot of new terms into the field of education , for example, such as “competences”, ”long-life learning”, etc. [11]. They made Ukrainian educators reconsider the teaching/studying processes in the direction of improving training specialists. Teachers around the world are called to teach English in job-related or career related settings. This approach is the most motivating and effective because of distinctly purposeful professional orientation to English.

Setting the problem. It is impossible to teach students efficiently without paying attention how they learn, it concerns especially students studying ESP (English for Specific Purposes), that is, technical English in higher technical institutions. The role of teachers in teaching / studying process is great, but teachers will face the same problems in teaching English, if they don't manage to help their students to master learning techniques and strategies, if the teacher-guided learning processes don't turn into student - guided process of studying foreign languages.

Teachers should help their students to master new learning strategies of studying foreign languages, that will give them the opportunities to work independently, to choose their own way of studying a foreign language, to achieve the desired level of proficiency, to develop their skills further after graduation from the university.

Research. There are different kinds of research conducted in the field of studying foreign languages. They are devoted to different general and specific problems. But what is common among them is the shift to the learning –centered approach, advocated, for example, by Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters [10]. It is a significant breakthrough in understanding the problems involved in language learning.

But from the point of view of the authors of the article , the greatest contribution into the field of language learning was made on the basis of the interdisciplinary theories. One of them is Radiant Thinking—a revolutionary method of accessing intelligence, developed over years by Tony Buzan , the President of the Brain Foundation, the most expiring author and TV lecturer in the brain who wrote lots of books [3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8], relevant to absolutely everyone, as the technique offers new ways of using and improving memory, concentration and creativity in planning and structuring thought on all levels, that is, this is everything that is very important in studying foreign languages , memorizing foreign words, developing skills of reading, speaking, writing.etc.

The aim of the article is to present a brief description of general approach to Radiant Thinking as one of the specific techniques that improves the quality of studying foreign languages and getting communicative skills what increases the general intelligence of students, and trains them for long life learning.

Description. A key goal for all individuals, education communities, business, for those who study foreign languages is to accelerate their ability to learn, remember and record information. Radial Thinking is a kind of comprehensive guide to it.

A mind map's radiating structure, reflecting the natural architecture of the brain

allows rapid expansion and exploration of an idea in note form, resulting in a clear and concise picture or map of all relevant interlinked points for inclusion in further written matter, presentations, reports, speaking a foreign language. Thus, an idea can be quickly and profoundly explored while simultaneously maintaining clear focus on the central theme. By incorporating the use of shapes, colours, dimensions as visual stimulants, the technique allows to make the best use of all considerable mental resources. This technique is for those who wishes to use the brain to its full potential.

It should be stated, that some elements , described in Buzan's theory are not anything absolutely new in teaching practice from. Foreign language teachers have been using mind maps, brainstorming, etc. very effectively for decades in their teaching practice. The famous Shatalov's educational system, that became famous in the previous century, came close to Tony Buzan's theory, though he used other terms.

Theoretical aspects of Tony Buzan's technique were not revolutionary ones either. Researchers of different branches were studying the work of brain, thinking processes , memorizing,, etc.. Tony Buzan's theory has much in common with schemata theory (Bartlett's Schema Theory, Minsky's Frame Theory, Richard Anderson's Theory [1]) and a lot of other theories , which were connected with coding and decoding information. It is impossible to overestimate the role of Shannon's mathematical theory of signals for coding, receiving , decoding, saving information[13].

But Tony Buzan created a unique technique, he combined clear theoretical foundation with practical recommendations. He explained the fundamental operations of the human brain in terms of its thinking processes and explained how to unleash and harness its untapped power, he also presented a powerful graphic technique which harnesses the full range of cortical skills in a single, powerful manner: word, image, number, logic, rhythm, color, spatial awareness.

Tony Buzan and his co-author Barry Buzan stated [4, p. 50] that repeated use of inefficient note-making/taking systems has a number of consequences for our brain:

- losing the power of concentration;
- acquiring the time-consuming habit of making notes;
- experiencing loss of confidence in the mental abilities;
- losing the love of learning;
- suffering from boredom and frustration;

It was concluded that "the harder we work, the less we progress, because we are

unwittingly working against ourselves.”Dr Howe presented his results of research on note-making/taking, which were supported by many academic studies [9; 4, p. 51]. He aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of different types of noting. It was judged by how well students were able to talk from their notes. They also were to use notes for review purposes o provide accurate recall and considered responses in examinations where the notes were no longer available.

The results were the following, from worst to best:

1. Complete transcript notes given.
2. Complete transcript notes personally made.
3. Sentence summary notes given.
4. Sentence summary notes personally made.
5. Key word notes given.
6. Key word notes personally made.

Howe’s study proved that the most effective are the shortest structures of note making (key words that get appropriate mental associations), that is, efficiency and active personal involvement are of crucial importance in successful noting. Note making/taking utilises only a fraction of brain’s enormous potential. Radiant Thinking is a clearer, more natural and more efficient way of using the brain.

The word “radiant” means “relating to a ray or radius”, that is moving in the direction, or from a given centre. The other meaning is “shining” brightly, similar to the “burst of thought” [11, p. 519]. Tony Buzan compares brain’s thinking with a gigantic “Association Branching Machine” [4, p. 56], a super bio-computer with lines of thought radiating from a virtually infinite number of data nodes,, and this structure reflects the neuronal networks that make up the physical architecture of the brain. There is radiation from the central element, but every word or image become a subcentre of associations in the infinite chain of branching patterns away or towards the common centre. This Association Branching Machine has five major functions: receiving, holding, analysing , outputting and controlling.[4, p. 35].

Two more very important notions in Radiant Thinking are hierarchies and categories. In order to apply this vast mental power, it is necessary to structure the thoughts using hierarchy and categorisation. A classic study carried out by Bower, Clark, Lesgold and Wimzenz [2] in 1969 demonstrated the importance of hierarchies as an aid to memory. Those students who were shown words in hierarchies did far better than those who were shown random lists of the same words.

The starting and final points in Radiant Thinking are connected with brain cells (though the word “final “ may be used only for the particular situation and for the present moment, the potential of a brain is unlimited, the situation may be developed, modelled further - what is very important for life long learning).

Every time there is a thought, the biochemical/electromagnetic resistance along the pathway carrying that thought reduces [4, p.29]. A forest analogy is very useful in this case. Like trying to clear a path through a forest. The first time it is a struggle because you have to fight the way through the undergrowth. The second time you travel that way is easier. The more times you travel that path, the less resistance there is until you have a wide and smooth track which requires no clearing. The more tracks and pathways you can create and use, the clearer, faster and more efficient the thinking becomes.

One more idea should be mentioned in connection with Radiant Thinking. This is “wholeness.” All researchers of brain, thinking processes stress the tendency of a brain to look for patterns and completion. For example when people read,” One , two... , they have to fight the impulse to add “three”. Using the previous experience the brain tends to create the whole “picture”, ‘event”, etc. just having only one element. Rendering some information, people sometimes tell even more than it was read in the text. It concerns the key words, images, any sign for organising and developing ideas. Key words, pictures, simple signs are more effective and easy for memorizing information than sentences, etc. The main problem is in the quality of created associations that are recalled by these key words , pictures, signs.

In studying foreign languages this Radiant Thinking technique helps in memorizing words, memorizing and developing ideas or any information It helps to retrieve easily the needed information for rendering the content of the texts, it helps to organize ideas and develop them in different situations, also to develop unlimited (in time) speaking, that is, to realize the communicative approach in studying foreign languages.

If to take a long list of words for memorizing, such as” banana, tomato, potato cherry, peaches , apricot, strawberry etc.”, the first step for better memorizing words should be synthesising the words into the categories that are much less in number than the number of words – “fruits”, “vegetables”, “berries”. External expression of Radiant Thinking is a Mind Map (something like a tree with thick branches and a stem.). The words “fruits”, “vegetables”, “berries” become the central words from

which definite group of words radiates: vegetables –potato, tomato, etc.

Every word from the group may become, in its turn, a central one to the other words or radiating ideas, for example: tomato-food, health, etc. Every word from this group may become the central word too: food – juice, salads, etc. The opposite process of categorization is possible: “fruits”, “vegetables”, “berries” may be combined into the category ”plants”. The word “animals” belongs to the same hierarchical level containing the word ”plants”. This technique is very useful for studying topical vocabulary in foreign language, developing it and developing different ideas. They may be related in any unexpected way. Associations are individual, that’s why developing ideas is different, this leads to developing creativity.

In conclusion, the authors of the article consider it to be very useful to sum up Tony Buzan’s practical recommendations for using Radiant Thinking:

- Start in the centre with an image of the topic, using at least 3 colours.
- Use images, symbols, codes and dimensions.
- Select key words and print using upper or lower case letters.
- Each word/image must be alone and sitting on its own line.
- The lines must be connected, starting from the central image. The central lines are thicker, organic and flowing, becoming thinner as they radiate out from the centre.
- Make the lines the same length as the word/image.
- Use colours – your own code – imagery representing meaning to you.
- Develop your own personal style.
- Use emphasis and show associations.
- Be clear by using radiant hierarchy, numerical order or outlines to embrace your branches.

Conclusion. Teachers should help their students to master new learning strategies of studying foreign languages. It will give them the opportunities to choose their own way of studying a foreign language, to achieve the desired level of proficiency, to work independently. It will also help them to develop their skills further.

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