

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING USING THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH AND ITS PRACTICAL RELEVANCE

СУЧАСНЕ НАВЧАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ ІЗ ВИКОРИСТАННЯМ КОМУНІКАТИВНОГО ПІДХОДУ ТА ЙОГО ПРАКТИЧНА ДОРЕЧНІСТЬ

This article is about the importance of the communicative approach when teaching foreign languages. It considers the communicative approach for developing English-speaking skills. This approach has provided a major impact on foreign-language teaching in today's linguistically diverse backgrounds. Using the communicative approach a teacher makes the subject more interesting and motivates students in the use of the language in their lives by creating real situations in class. He or she helps students to overcome the language barrier, which is a major impediment to the communication encouraging them to participate in a conversation.

Key words: *communicative approach, foreign language, English-speaking skills, foreign-language teaching, language barrier.*

Стаття присвячена важливості комунікативного підходу під час викладання іноземних мов. Розглянуто комунікативний підхід у розвитку англійськомовних навичок. Цей підхід має значний вплив на викладання іноземної мови в сучасному лінгвістично різноманітному середовищі. Використовуючи комунікативний підхід, викладач робить предмет більш цікавим і мотивує студентів до використання мови у своєму житті, створюючи

реальні ситуації в класі. Викладач допомагає студентам подолати мовний бар'єр, що є головною перешкодою у спілкуванні, заохочуючи їх до участі в розмові.

Ключові слова: *комунікативний підхід, іноземна мова, володіння англійською мовою, викладання іноземної мови, мовний бар'єр.*

Стаття посвячена важливості комунікативного підходу при преподаванні иностранных языков. Рассмотрен коммуникативный подход в развитии англоязычных навыков. Этот подход имеет значительное влияние на преподавание иностранного языка в современной лингвистически разнообразной среде. Используя коммуникативный подход, преподаватель делает предмет более интересным и мотивирует студентов к использованию языка в своей жизни, создавая реальные ситуации в классе. Преподаватель помогает студентам преодолеть языковой барьер, который является главным препятствием в общении, поощряя их к участию в разговоре.

Ключевые слова: *коммуникативный подход, иностранный язык, владение английским языком, преподавание иностранного языка, языковой барьер.*

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Problem statement in general terms. The main teachers' objective when teaching a foreign language is not only to teach students to understand a foreign speech but also to be able to form speech statements, to orient in a foreign-language country, as well as to respond adequately in different language situations. In the current context, anyone who speaks a foreign language must know how to use it for different purposes, in different situations, to be able to read and understand texts of different types, to form dialogues, stories, reports. Even if a person has a limited lexical and grammatical base of a foreign language, he or she must learn to hold a conversation in any situation.

Teachers are no longer required to give knowledge; they must show students how to learn. It is necessary to work together with students; they should be taught to listen to their peers, to carry out interviews and group discussions, to work together on projects, to focus on their peers. If a teacher creates situations where students work in pairs, groups, this makes an activity more comprehensive. It becomes necessary for students to demonstrate their speech autonomy, to help their peers, to make appropriate adjustments to interlocutors' statements.

Analysis of recent studies and publications. According to A. Verbitskiy, such active learning methods involve the use of developing, problematic, researching and searching forms and methods of education, which provide the birth of cognitive

motives and interests, conditions for creativity and learning [9, p. 96].

Scientists made a significant contribution to the development of the communicative approach in foreign-language teaching. For example, in the United Kingdom, experts on applied linguistics questioned the efficacy of the case-study method, which dominated in the country at that time. This came about in part in response to A. Chomsky's concepts about the nature of speech. A. Chomsky demonstrated that widely known structural language theories could not explain all the creative diversity of the real communication process. In addition, British linguists C. Candlin and H. Widdowson found that special attention to the language structure did not contribute to its better assimilation. They believed that except of knowing grammatical structures learners also needed to develop communication skills and understand language functions [1, p. 149].

In the United States, linguistic anthropologist D. Hymes conceptualized the communicative competence. This was in response to a well-established concept of linguistic skills of a perfect native speaker by A. Chomsky. The communicative competence specified what "to know a language" means. In addition to proficiency in language structures, the communicative competence also implied the capacity to use those structural elements in different situation of communication adequately. This point was artfully formulated in

D. Hymes' statements about the usage rules without which grammar rules are useless [4, p. 270]. D. Hymes did not develop a specific definition of the communicative competence. Subsequent authors related that concept with the foreign-language teaching.

Scientific research on this subject took place in Russia. In addition, a concept for the communicative teaching of foreign languages was being worked out. The Russian scientist, the founder of the Methodist school in Lipetsk, Doctor of Education E. Passov advanced his own theory of the communicative foreign-language education. According to this theory, the concept of communication was dealt with from two angles: a theoretical one, that is as a category (a concept), and a practical one (empirical), that is as technology [6, p. 84].

Provisions of previously unresolved parts of the general problem. Teachers who care about their students' future operate with the communicative approach aimed at developing communicative skills. The essential aim is to teach a student to speak a foreign language properly and fluently. That is why it is necessary to go beyond traditional teaching methods and to use such types of activities as projects, interactive games, theatricalizing, discussion, that is to develop all linguistic skills of oral and written speech. It is necessary for students to learn words, phrases, linguistic units and then figure out what is their grammatical subject, especially at the initial stage. A teacher explains rules, meanings of new words with the help of familiar vocabulary, grammatical constructions and phrases; through facial expressions and gestures, pictures and other visual aids. Now classrooms are equipped well enough to use the internet, TV-programs, newspapers, and magazines. All this stimulates a keen interest in the history, culture, and traditions of an area where the language is spoken.

The teacher's task is to use a simulation of real-life situations for students to come with the maximum motivation for speaking. At communicative approach-based lessons, students basically discuss the topics, which are familiar to them in their native language. It gives an opportunity to focus on the skill to use the language spontaneously that is to focus on the development of communicative skills. Students are advanced to the level of the subject of learning activities as well as the subject of the intercultural communication that is they become a key element of language instruction as a system. So that means that exactly a student, perspectives of his or her personal and language growth become a starting-point with constructing and reflecting upon the content of the foreign language learning process [3, p. 13].

Spoken interaction absorbs most of the time at lessons, though reading and writing are also taken into account. In this, a teacher speaks less than students do; he or she guides their activity. A teacher assigns a task, then takes a back seat just to monitor and evaluate.

The purpose of article. Herein lies the communicative approach, that is, in the assimilation of the learning process to the communication process. More specifically the communicative approach is based on the fact that the learning process is somewhat a simplified model of the communication process. This will be considered in more detail below.

Statement of the basic material. This approach to learning emerged in the 1970s and 1980s of the last century as a result of many independent studies and development, both in Europe and the United States [8, p. 126]. On the one hand, it was because the demand for foreign languages rose higher with the creation of the European Economic Community, especially in Europe. As a result of increasing demand had to change the approach to foreign languages teaching. Such traditional methods like grammar-translation type of teaching implied that students began to learn a foreign language years before they would need to use it in a real life. However, those guidelines were not good for adult learners who were intensely busy as well as for schoolchildren whose learning abilities were not yet advanced enough. It became clear that those categories of learners needed the approach with a higher level of returns.

Dealing with communication as technology or the education strategy, the following characteristics should be highlighted [6, p. 84]:

- motivation of every action and every activity of a learner;
- purposefulness of every action and every activity of a learner;
- personal meaning throughout the work of a learner;
- voice and thought activity, that is a permanent involvement in the process of meeting the challenges of communication;
- a permanent connectivity of the instructive and communicative thinking;
- the attitude based on a personal interest, which entails the expression of a personal attitude to issues and subject of a discussion;
- the connection of communication with various forms of activities: cognitive and training, social, work, sports, artistic, household;
- the interaction of communicating parties, that is coordination, mutual assistance, support, cooperation, trusting relationship;
- sociability on three fronts: emotional, semantic and personal;
- situatedness indicating that communication of learners with a teacher, or learners among themselves in the process of mastering speech material, can always be characterized as a set of relationships, which has grown out of the contextual position of the ones having direct contact with each other;
- functionality meaning that the process of mastering speech material always takes place, if there

are speech functions, which have the priority over the form of speech units;

- heuristics as the organization of material and the process of its learning excluding arbitrary memorizing and reproduction of it;

- validity as the objective characteristic, and informativeness as subjective characteristic of the training material;

- problematical character as a way of organizing and presentation of training materials;

- expressiveness in the use of verbal and nonverbal means of communication.

Only compliance with all listed parameters and their optimal utilization give the right to consider the educational process as communicative. This is the type and quality of a model, which is the basis of that notion.

According to modern foreign researches, the major distinctive characteristics of communicative learning are [2, p. 180]:

- the content is primary in a statement (not a structure, or a form);

- dialogues (if they are used) are based on communicative functions and usually are not memorized;

- new vocabulary is introduced only in the context;

- learning a language means learning to communicate;

- the instructional objective is effective communication in a foreign language;

- drilling may be used but only occasionally;

- pronunciation should be easily understood (but not necessarily as of a native speaker);

- any means, which benefit learners and appropriate to their age and needs, etc., can be used when explaining grammar;

- attempts to engage in a real dialogue are welcome from the start of education;

- prudent use of a native language by learners is permitted as and where possible;

- interpretation into the native language is applied where it is needed, or may be beneficial;

- if desired, reading and writing can be started studying from the very first lesson;

- the system of a language under study is better mastered through desire for a comprehensive communication;

- the main aim of education is the formation of a communicative competency (capacity to use linguistic system of a language effectively and to the point);

- the consistency of introducing material is defined by any means, which provide interest in it in terms of content, use or topic;

- a teacher supports and motivates a learner to use a foreign language whatever way he or she can;

- foreign-language statements emerge from a learner, often through trial and error;

- the main aim of education is the fluency of speech and a pertinent use of lexical units;

- grammatical correctness is defined only in the context, not in the abstract;

- learners are required to communicate with real people in groups or pairs, or by written communication (learners decide about this themselves, without a teacher's guidance);

- the true motivation will appear when a learner has an interest in a foreign-language message.

In practice, in training on grammar, for example, the communicative approach means the following sequence of actions [8, p. 130]:

- first learners read a text;

- then the examples on this grammatical rule are highlighted in the text to be analyzed by learners;

- these examples are further used as a basis for activities, which are aimed at working out the structure and its form as well as the semantic meaning, which we can transmit with the help of this structure;

- and finally, learners should find similar examples in the text and extract the relevant grammatical rule.

The communicative learning of a language is rather an approach than a method. The communicative approach for a foreign-language learning can be described with the help of certain principles and objectives of the language learning, the ways of learning by learners, types of assignments and activities used in learning, and the roles of a teacher and a learner in the process of study. According to this approach, the basic principles of learning are the following [7, p. 171]:

- the communicative principle: learning occurs with the help of activities, which stimulate the real communication;

- the principle of communicative tasks: learning occurs with the help of activities where the language is used to fulfill interesting and meaningful tasks;

- the principle of relevance and meaning: learning occurs with the help of the language, which a learner uses meaningfully. Learning activities are selected based on how active they involve a learner in the authentic and meaningful communication (as opposed to simply mechanical usage of language patterns).

Commenting on the thought that the communicative approach to learning is rather an approach than a method, a number of conclusions can be drawn [5, p. 82]:

- the word “approach” offers a teacher great opportunities in the foreign-language teaching. That is, through this interpretation a teacher is entitled to teach a foreign language the way, which best suits to the specific training situation;

- it also means that teachers can loosely interpret the rules of teaching depending on the tasks, which are placed upon them;

- teachers can use a broad range of assignments and activities when teaching a foreign language;

- and most importantly, it should help us avoid the situation when learners who are competent in grammar find themselves incompetent in communication.

The last paragraph means that there are learners who are good with the grammatical material, know all rules, can easily build grammatical constructions but they have a problem when it comes to the real communication. Accordingly, it is all about trying to make all our learners communicatively competent. It does not mean that they should be grammatically incompetent. Of course, grammar is crucial. However, the link between the form, the meaning and the function of the grammatical construction under study is equally important. That is why it is very important for learners after having been familiarized with a certain grammatical construction, learned to transform and combine it, done a sufficient amount of activities with the given implementation mechanism, also to learn to use this construction in the real communication situations easily and fluently. And this is where all the importance of the communicative approach reflects.

Arguing about whether the communicative approach to the foreign-language learning is an approach or a method can be pursued, but it is a theoretical matter. What matters to us, English language teachers, is the practical aspect of this concept. The communicative approach to the foreign-language learning makes it possible to create in a class the situation of a genuine communication, to give learners' speech meaning, to teach them to use in their speech the authentic remarks inherent in native speakers. This task is feasible even in the early stages of the foreign-language learning when grammar and vocabulary proficiency is still limited. An experienced teacher can create such a context for the interaction in a class where even small phrases will be meaningful and comply with the real communication situations.

Another benefit of the communicative approach is that it does not contain strict requirements for teachers considering the balance between literacy and fluency of speech. The communicative approach allows us to appropriately place the emphasis between these aspects and make the learning well-balanced. Sometimes we really can pay more attention to the grammatical rules and structures to the detriment of their communicative value. For example, while learning the rule on the order of adjectives in English. Teachers often give learners a task to build a phrase with a large number of adjectives ("really big old green antique car"). Of course, it sounds unnatural. In most cases, we use two or three adjectives in our speech. The topic on the direction of movement in English can also be used as an example. We suggest learners find out the direction of movement and to take the route, which often is of a merry-go-round type. In fact, we may need a maximum of three clues to find the way to the needed object. In this case, the excessive focus on the accuracy of the formulation to these structures is fully justified. We do this to give our learners ample opportunity to master the figures of speech, which they will subsequently use in the

real life. Grammatical accuracy will be more important if a teacher wants to achieve clarity in learners' speech, to correct their speech, and to measure the success of the training.

Conclusions. Freer language practice gives learners more options; it may be more uncertain and blurred; it implies less involvement from the teacher's side. The learner-centered education implies a student-based approach. The emphasis shifts towards learners. They are given more initiative and freedom at the lessons. However, it does not mean that the foreign-language lessons are conducted spontaneously. They are clearly structured by a teacher who plays a very important role in the process of learning. He or she conducts enormous preparatory work, organizes communication, and gives communicatively meaningful tasks. The work on the speech accuracy provides a framework for the speech fluency. The communicative approach implies educating students in vocabulary, grammatical structures, and functions, as well as the communicative strategies so that they can cope with the challenges in the process of communication successfully.

Through this universality, flexibility, and practicality the communicative approach stays in the center of attention of the scientists all over the world, continues to evolve, and will be the subject for the study, improvement, and development in the practice of the foreign-language teaching.

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