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Issues on Language Acquisition in EFL

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A B S T R A C T

Learning is an active and dynamic process in which students use a huge amount of different information and new material, as well as different strategies for mastering them. The presented work is aimed at considering the concept of foreign language learning strategies in general, defining the concepts of this term, its classification and designating the problem of using foreign language learning strategies. Separately, the influence of these strategies on the language skills of students and their importance in the process of teaching a foreign language are noted. Attention is also paid to the issue of conscious and unconscious in the application of strategies in the process of learning a foreign language, the influence of previously developed cognitive and metacognitive skills of students, and as a consequence of all of the above, it is studied how the relationship of all these components affects learning outcomes. A list of the most effective strategies for mastering a foreign language is proposed.

A R T I C L E I N F O

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INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition is the process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive and comprehend language, as well as to produce and use words and sentences to communicate.

"Second language acquisition" is a fairly new discipline within applied linguistics. Like many other areas of linguistics, second language acquisition is closely related to psychology, cognitive psychology, and education. To separate the designation of a theoretical discipline from the learning process itself, the terms "second language acquisition research", "second language learning" and "second language learning research" are used for the former. Also in foreign language literature there is the term "assimilation of the subsequent language" [2].

Research in this area was initially interdisciplinary, and interest in the processes of language acquisition has always been traditional, so it is rather difficult to determine the exact time of the emergence of the discipline [3]. Nevertheless, two works can be considered as the main ones in the scientific study of second language acquisition: Peter Corder's essay "The Significance of Errors in Learning" (1967) and Larry Selinker's article "Interlanguage" (1972). In the first decades of the 20th century, second language acquisition was the subject of interest of a large number of linguistic disciplines and is therefore studied today from various points of view. At the same time, the two main approaches are the linguistic theories of the universal grammar of Noam Chomsky and psychological theories: the theory of learning skills and connectivism [4]. The major theorist who put forward most of the hypotheses of the early period is Stephen Krashen (most of his hypotheses were subsequently refuted, but the terminology he proposed had a significant impact on the entire discipline). The term “acquisition” was originally used to emphasize the extraconscious, natural nature of the process of language acquisition (as opposed to conscious learning)

[5], but in recent years this opposition has lost its sharpness, and the terms “learning” (eng. learning) and "acquisition" are often used interchangeably today. Today there is no coherent model of second language acquisition, and this area itself is a space of fierce theoretical discussions.

DISCUSSIONS

The acquisition of a second language can be considered together with the study of the "language of home heritage" ("inherited language", English heritage language), which is another form of linguistic existence, along with full-fledged bilingualism [6]. Theoretically, it is reasonable to consider bilingualism not as a process, but as the end result of the full study of a second language or two languages in parallel, however, in the field of education and psychology, many authors use the term "bilingualism", referring to all forms of multilingualism [7].

As we know, any language is a cultural code that forms the philosophy of human life, its system of values, style of behavior, way of thinking. Therefore, when developing multilingual education, we should set as its goal not just the knowledge of three languages by all students, but, first of all, the integration of the worldview of three cultural codes. Obviously, in order to achieve these goals, it is worth starting preparation from preschool education, since at this age children are most receptive and absorb information much faster than when they are somewhat older.

When entering a university, a future student, already forming as a person, is able to determine goals in life for himself and choose a specialty that suits him the most, where his strengths and creative abilities will manifest, focusing on his inclination to study certain disciplines. This is important for obtaining as a result a qualified specialist useful to society. Choosing the Faculty of Foreign Languages, we realize in advance what we need to go through and what disciplines to master. Over time, due to economic and socio-cultural changes, new requirements are imposed on a person, the requirements for the level of training of professional personnel in the state and foreign languages increase. Life is changing, which means that the amount of information, teaching methods are changing, the technical base and equipment are being improved.

In English classes, live communication is welcomed at the moment, also on a specific given topic, both with the teacher and between students, along with the consolidation of grammatical rules.

A discussion in another language, albeit with errors and shortcomings, helps to overcome the language barrier, “hone” pronunciation, and for this, the teacher’s help and support is important in order to avoid students’ discomfort during live communication.

A useful and interesting task is to make presentations on various topics in both subjects, as this is a creative way of obtaining information: searching for images, interesting information and its selection, comparison and analysis, and, not least, broadening one's horizons. After all, our consciousness is arranged in such a way that it quickly loses interest in monotonous and monotonous work, so such work “refreshes” the learning process. For example, getting to know traditions and customs by creating a presentation will be more interesting and memorable than just searching for textual material.

Replenishment of vocabulary in English takes place in this order: first, new words, expressions, rules, etc. are explained by the teacher, are given for memorization, for performing exercises. And then control work is carried out, as a consolidation of the studied material.

The process of globalization affects the learning of foreign languages, which is an integral part of personal and professional development. Knowledge of a foreign language is becoming one of the most sought-after skills and competencies necessary for success in the XXI century. Also, knowledge of a foreign language/languages expands the scope of employment, professional and personal connections, increases self-esteem, competitiveness, mobility, broadens horizons, allows you to access new ideas and research, move up the career ladder, opens up new opportunities for further professional and personal development.

Language learning is a complex cognitive skill that involves stepwise progression from initial exposure and active use of information and the learning process to completely independent use of the language. Learning strategies based on cognitive processes can help improve learning outcomes [8].

Some strategies may be obvious, while others may not. For example, using gestures to convey meaning, writing new words in a separate notebook, or guessing the meaning of new words or what the text will be about.

Research in the field of foreign language learning strategies (FLLS) began in the middle of the last century and is rooted in cognitive psychology. Different authors define FLLS in different ways, and to date there is no consensus on a generally accepted definition of this term. One of the earliest is the definition given by Rubin, he believed that FLLS is the methods and techniques that a person can use to gain knowledge [9]. O'Malley & Chamot defined it as specific thoughts and behaviors that a learner uses to understand, learn or remember new information [8]. Cohen, on the other hand, believed that strategies can be classified as a conscious mental action, and therefore they contain not only the action itself, but also the goal/intention and the learning situation.

He also emphasized that mental activity can be, among other things, subconscious, and an action with a goal or intention and associated with a learning situation will always be only conscious [4]. Griffiths suggested that FLLS are actions chosen by learners (purposefully or automatically) to learn and regulate the learning process. As for domestic authors, Chicherina N.V. calls FLLS a system of actions that allow you to independently improve the skills and knowledge of a foreign language. Kabardov M.K. defines this term as different models used to master a foreign language, and identifies 3 types of strategies. These are linguistic, cognitive and communicative-verbal and believes that strategies are formed under the influence of natural factors and individual characteristics that have developed in a person at the time of training [2].

It should be noted that the opinions of scientists are divided on the issue of classification of strategies. J. Rubin identified 2 categories:

- strategies that directly affect learning; this includes monitoring, memorization, deductive thinking and practice;
- strategies that influence learning indirectly, for example, creating conditions/opportunities for practice [9].

O'Malley & Chamot gave their classification:

- metacognitive strategies; they are aimed at understanding what to study, for example, paying special attention to certain aspects in teaching, planning, monitoring and evaluating training;
- cognitive strategies; this category includes working on new information, such as repeating or grouping words, using visualization techniques, anticipating/guessing the meanings of new words, and connecting ideas.
- social and affective strategies; they imply those strategies that are needed to interact with other learners, for example, cooperation to solve a given problem, to take a survey, or to control excitement when performing any tasks [8].

A comprehensive study of a language is inextricably linked with immersion in the world of spiritual values of the people - the native speaker of this language. Through language contact, the interaction of various national cultures is carried out, the language becomes a form of intercultural exchange. This is how the problem of intercultural development of the personality arises, which becomes a pedagogical problem, which is expressed in the need to find adequate ways to master a foreign language space with its special specifics and within the framework of universal human values.

After analyzing the relationship between language and culture, S.G. Ter-Minasova identified the main functions of a foreign language, corresponding to the three tasks of higher education. The first function of language - cognitive - is directly related to research, or the search for truth. Without language, mental activity is impossible. Language is a concrete thought, therefore, when teaching languages, students learn, first of all, to think. The second - the information function - is carried out in scientific texts that are related to the transfer of new knowledge and professional training of students. And the third function of the language - the function of storing and transmitting national identity, traditions and culture of the people - is associated with the task of mastering cultural knowledge [8].

In other words, the process of learning a foreign language is not only teaching various types of speech activity (listening, speaking, reading and writing), but also expanding horizons in intercultural and interpersonal communication, which is possible only with the possession of linguistic means and the linguistic and socio cultural necessary for communication. knowledge: a foreign language, on the one hand, serves as a source of new knowledge, a way of familiarization with a new world, a new culture, and on the other hand, it acts as a communication tool in the dialogue of cultures and civilizations of the modern world.

Particular interest in the issues of intercultural and international communication is caused by radically changed living conditions - the interaction and mixing of peoples, languages, cultures has reached an unprecedented scale, and as a result, the problem of fostering tolerance for other people's traditions, overcoming the feeling of irritation from unlike other cultures has become acute. In this sense, the dialogue of cultures is an important means of understanding by students - future specialists - the diversity of the spiritual and material world, their recognition and understanding of the values of a different culture. It is obvious that only if one goes beyond one's culture and one's worldview one can understand the specifics of one's own consciousness, assess the degree of difference and similarity of certain cultures. So, for example, A.A. Mirolyubov notes that the subject "foreign language" occupies a special place among academic disciplines, since it "promotes education ... in the context of a dialogue of cultures" [6], contributing to the formation of a more holistic picture of the world, the development of critical thinking and moral orientations.

In addition, the value potential of a foreign language is determined by other possibilities of this academic discipline, the tasks of which lie both in the practical plane and in the development of the logic of thinking and the flexibility of the linguistic expression of thought, along with political, moral and aesthetic components. These opportunities, with a proper approach in language teaching, can actively contribute to the formation of high moral qualities of the personality of a future specialist, his understanding of his place in social life, his humane attitude towards people and towards himself.

Therefore, the main task of a foreign language teacher is to help students master the cultural values that are the characteristic features of a particular nation, for example, speech accuracy and everyday aesthetics, speech etiquette of different peoples, to show the commonality of values of different cultures, despite natural differences in mentality and economic conditions of life.

Given the importance of learning foreign languages as a means of communication between people representing different countries and peoples, it is impossible not to note the growing popularity of the English language. The increase in the share of English as a means of intercultural communication in the general list of studied foreign languages is explained by the process of globalization, the expansion of the international financial, trade and labor market, the development of tourism, science and education.

Currently, professionally-oriented teaching of a foreign language, unfortunately, does not meet the requirements of modern society and the global educational space. In this regard, the most urgent task of planning and organizing the educational process in the study of a foreign language is to emphasize those aspects of language, culture and speech activity that help to form a multicultural personality with a sufficient level of intercultural competence for the potential conduct of a normal intercultural dialogue in the future. In the context of global changes that require versatile cultural training of a specialist, another important task of linguistic education in a higher educational institution is the development of a student's personality by means of a foreign language in accordance with the interests and needs of a renewing society.

It should be noted that the traditional method of teaching a foreign language is not effective, since the university still works by inertia within the technocratic paradigm, which involves the consolidation of knowledge at the level of skills, and not at the level of value orientations and personal qualities. As A. Kushnir accurately notes, the vast majority of methodological developments are aimed at memorizing, memorizing, forming and training a skill, at assimilating certain knowledge that is never acquired [5]. In other words, traditional methods of teaching a foreign language are criticized for weak feedback. Also, the individual characteristics of students are not sufficiently taken into account - their value orientations, life and professional goals.

At the present stage of development of pedagogical thought, it is necessary to develop mechanisms for identifying the value potential of the subject "Foreign Language", for example, in the process of getting to know the artifacts of another culture or when reading foreign texts. It is very important that the best examples of its culture and art, as well as cultural symbols in the broad sense, which at the level of archetypes are embedded in architecture, painting, theater, and musical works, be placed at the forefront of the educational process when studying the language of a particular people, which will contribute to the formation of the spiritual spectrum of personality. At the same time, it is extremely important to note that only the teacher who has mastered this tool and understands its value potential will be able to carry out the “axiological education” of future specialists.

The process of developing the value orientations of students by means of a foreign language will be more successful if two basic psychological and pedagogical conditions are met: if teaching a foreign language is based on the principle of personal orientation and if the development of value orientations occurs with an emphasis on the cognitive and sensory-emotional sphere. The manifestation of feelings and emotions is an essential component of the developmental capabilities of a foreign language.

CONCLUSION

So, foreign language abilities are a set of abilities that primarily ensure mastery of language mechanisms (phonetics, grammar, vocabulary) and types of speech activity (reading, writing, speaking, listening). Language abilities are a specific psycho physiological mechanism that is formed on the basis of neuro physiological prerequisites. The development of language abilities occurs on the basis of the accumulation of speech experience, as a result of activity and under the influence of social influences [8].

Taking into account the specifics of the subject "foreign language", that is, its interdisciplinary, multi-purpose, activity-based nature, one cannot but admit that its possibilities for the formation of value orientations are truly limitless: it is the acquisition of knowledge about the world, about other cultures and peoples, the development of communication skills, feelings and emotions, the ability to express one’s opinion in a foreign language, the development of a creative attitude to any kind of activity, the formation of a holistic picture of the world, the development of critical thinking and worldview, aesthetic development, familiarization with another culture, a better awareness of one’s culture, learning the skills of adequate behavior, the ability to represent their culture by means of a foreign language, the development of a sense of patriotism.

In other words, the process of teaching a foreign language can and should include the named educational priorities in their close relationship, which will contribute to the development of the value orientations of a specialist, and therefore form him as a “man of the world”.

At the same time, the assimilation of the values of foreign culture leads to positive results in the formation of value orientations of students, if the formed value is present in the spiritual experience, does not contradict the moral foundations of culture, and can serve as a spiritual revival of the Motherland. It is important to emphasize that the assimilation of moral values by students is of an individual nature, and values acquire personal meaning for students if they are projected onto future professional activities.

From the foregoing, we can conclude that the value potential of a foreign language as an academic discipline in order to form the value orientations of a future specialist is truly inexhaustible and has a complex educational character, and at the same time, the final result largely depends on the talent of the teacher, as well as the direction and quality of his own value orientations.

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