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CREATING A MOTIVATIONAL CONTEXT FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING OF STUDENTS AT HUMANITARIAN COLLEGES IN EASTERN EUROPE

ABSTRACT

The article considers certain issues of increasing the effectiveness of teaching foreign languages to students of humanitarian institutions of higher education in Eastern Europe. It was shown that after the approval of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) some radical changes took place in the methods of teaching foreign languages in many Eastern European countries. Taking into account the fact that among the most effective ways to improve the quality of foreign language education the CEFR determines an increase in the level of personal motivation of students to learn foreign languages, Eastern European educators more actively apply didactic solutions that meet as many criteria as possible, leading to deep learning of knowledge. Since motivation is an individual internal matter of the student, it is more logical for the teacher to create an educational context that the students themselves would recognize as motivating, rather than to directly motivate each student individually.

The authors note that the creation of a motivational context, in particular for students of liberal arts colleges, takes place through a constant demand to combine the acquired knowledge (internalization) with what students have previously learned, reflected on and are able to express independently (externalization); emphasis on higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation) and performance of tasks that are more focused on mental activity (minds-on) than on physical activity (hands-on), while remembering that activating exercises are often mistakenly identified with physical activity load on students; students' analysis of their own experience, attitudes, and values. The authors consider in



detail three didactic solutions that are widely used by Eastern European teachers in the process of creating a motivational context for foreign language training of future humanitarians: the creation of conceptual maps, the «flipped classroom» method, and the method of duo-ethnographic dialogues. The authors conclude that the given didactic solutions relate to the field of issues, the study of which is determined by the students themselves as having personal value and being useful for their future career. By performing these exercises, students express their own points of view, present their personal understanding of the essence of the phenomena mentioned in the framework of the lesson, sometimes even revise and change their previous beliefs. Therefore, students' progress in learning a foreign language is not only a consequence of studying, but is due to the motivating educational environment created by their teachers.

Keywords: *humanitarian codes, duoethnographic dialogues, foreign language training, conceptual maps, motivational context, flipped classroom, Eastern Europe.*

СТВОРЕННЯ МОТИВАЦІЙНОГО КОНТЕКСТУ ІНШОМОВНОЇ ПІДГОТОВКИ СТУДЕНТІВ ГУМАНІТАРНИХ КОЛЕДЖІВ СХІДНОЇ ЄВРОПИ

АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті розглядаються окремі питання підвищення ефективності викладання іноземних мов студентам гуманітарних закладів вищої освіти Східної Європи. Показано, що після затвердження Загальних Рекомендацій Європейського Союзу з мовної освіти (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment – CEFR) у багатьох східноєвропейських країнах відбулися кардинальні зміни у методиках викладання іноземних мов. Зважаючи на те, що серед найбільш ефективних шляхів підвищення якості іншомовної освіти CEFR визначає збільшення рівня особистої мотивації студентів до вивчення іноземних мов, східноєвропейські освітяни активніше застосовують дидактичні рішення, які відповідають якомога більшій кількості критеріїв, що ведуть до глибокого засвоєння знань. Оскільки мотивація є індивідуальною внутрішньою справою студента, викладачеві логічніше створювати освітній контекст, який самі ж студенти визнаватимуть мотивуючим, аніж напряду мотивувати кожного студента окремо.

Автори зазначають, що створення мотиваційного контексту, зокрема для студентів гуманітарних коледжів, відбувається шляхом постійного вимагання поєднувати отримувані знання (інтерналізація) із тим, що студенти раніше засвоїли, піддали рефлексії та здатні виразити самостійно (екстерналізація); акцентування на мисленні вищого порядку (аналіз, синтез, оцінювання) та виконанні завдань, більше спрямованих на розумову діяльність (minds-on), ніж на фізичну діяльність (hands-on), одночасно пам'ятаючи, що активуючі вправи часто помилково ототожнюються із фізичним навантаженням на студентів; дослідження студентами власного досвіду, ставлень, цінностей. Авторами детально розглянуті три дидактичні рішення, які широко використовуються східноєвропейськими педагогами в процесі створення мотиваційного контексту іншомовної підготовки майбутніх гуманітаріїв: створення концептуальних карт, метод «перевернутого класу», метод дуоетнографічних діалогів. Автори підсумовують, що наведені дидактичні рішення стосуються поля питань, вивчення яких визначається самими студентами



як такі, що мають для них особисту цінність і можуть бути використані в майбутньому. Виконуючи ці вправи, студент виражає власну точку зору, представляє особисте розуміння сутностей явищ, що згадуються в рамках проблематики заняття, іноді навіть переглядає та змінює свої попередні переконання. Отже успішність студента не є лише наслідком навчання, а відбувається завдяки його перебуванню в мотивуючому навчальному середовищі.

Ключові слова: гуманітарні коледжі, дуоетнографічні діалоги, іншомовна підготовка, концептуальні карти, мотиваційний контекст, перевернутий клас, Східна Європа.

INTRODUCTION

Since the European Standards for Foreign Language Training were clearly established by the recommendations for language education (CEFR), many Eastern European countries have undergone drastic changes in foreign language teaching methods. Innovative didactic solutions used by teachers in the process of foreign language training of students are the key to effective learning of foreign languages in the era of globalization and meet most of the criteria that ensure deep assimilation of knowledge.

Modern effective teaching of foreign languages is considered to be one in which the object of study is the surrounding world, where students interact with other people; students try to combine new knowledge with what they already know from previous experiences and what they will need in the future; the study of arguments and the discovery of regularities by the students themselves, improvement of the skills of independent awareness of the problem is encouraged.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The goal of the article is to prove that since motivation is an individual internal matter of a student, it is more logical for teachers to create an educational context that students themselves recognize as motivating, rather than to directly motivate every student individually.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

The issue of the most effective teaching of foreign languages to students of humanitarian institutions of higher education has always been of interest to teachers and scientists in Eastern Europe (M. Bialek, A. Biedron, T. Buzan, K. Csizer, Z. Dornyei, P. Gruba, B. Horvathova, H. Komorowska, M. Kruk, T. Krzeszowski, G. Lojova, J. Novotna, E. Olejarczuk, M. Pawlak, M. Pisova, T. Suchankova, D. Werbińska and others). Having analyzed their works on the issue one can notice that such interest is primarily related to the fact that a foreign language for professional communication is regarded by these scholars as not a «typical» academic discipline. On the one hand, a foreign language is a powerful resource used by people to create meaning and express meanings in all aspects of life, and on the other hand, in institutional settings it is mostly reduced to content of syllabuses.

Modern European linguistic didactics considers three consecutive waves in the history of foreign language teaching methods: *linguistic, communicative, and globalization*. The use of the term «wave» in this context was proposed by K. Graves, who considers such a metaphor more accurate than «period» or «stage», because all three time segments, albeit in chronological order, are presented as real waves in learning foreign languages, and it cannot be said that the appearance of the next wave means the end of the previous one. We are talking about interpenetration, which causes, rather, a decrease in intensity than a complete disappearance (Graves, 2016).



The model of learning, in which a foreign language is a kind of knowledge divided into fragments for teaching to students, is characteristic of *the linguistic wave* popular in the 1960s. A foreign language is perceived as a set of separate grammatical, morphological and phonological elements governed by rules that students must remember. In this wave, the student's personal educational needs are not given much importance. An effective teacher is the one whose students are able to create grammatically correct dialogues on the chosen topic, containing correctly selected lexicon and flawlessly presented in terms of pronunciation.

In the 1970s and 1980s, under the influence of the development of sociolinguistics and conducted linguistic didactic research, changes occurred in the perception of a foreign language as such. It turned out that the linguistic wave does not prepare students for the correct use of the language, and speaking skills are much more important than grammatical, morphological and phonological rules. The model of communicative competence became an important reference point, which contributed to the emergence of a communicative approach to teaching a foreign language and, as a result, the emergence of a *communicative wave*. A foreign language is defined as communication that depends on the degree of mastery of speaking skills, understanding, reading and writing to achieve different goals in different contexts. An effective teacher is the one who prepares students to use a foreign language for communication, and the class is a training ground for «trial and error» in completing tasks similar to those that students may face in the future. Over time, it became clear that not all assumptions about this wave turned out to be accurate, because the effectiveness of communicative conversation is largely influenced by who students are, why they study a foreign language, whether their personal educational needs are defined and how they are related to the near future. Reflecting on the dilemmas and contradictions of communicative learning, H. Komorowska refers to the disappointment of teachers of foreign languages, which are caused by the banality of topics from everyday life discussed in classes, vain hopes to achieve the fluency of foreign language communication, which students never achieve due to the fear of being ridiculed and condemned for a mistake made, due to which students fall into a «language stupor» (Komorowska, 2003).

The third wave is *the wave of globalization*, which is related to modern social and political changes, which are also not left out of foreign language learning. In this wave, a foreign language is considered a useful resource of a person (specialist), acquired for the purpose of personal understanding of the surrounding world, necessary for studying various content, participating in educational projects, using innovative technologies, etc. The effectiveness of teaching has also been redefined, i.e., today it is important to teach the language for the purposes defined by the students themselves as personal, and the foreign language represents an individual value for the student, with the possibility of its effective use in new life situations, even when details of the studied material are somewhat forgotten. Here, the emphasis is on involving students in a deeper level of learning than the communicative wave, and an effective teacher is the one who is able to create such learning situations, about which the student will say «I like these classes, because I am fully involved in them, even though sometimes it is very difficult» (Werbińska, 2019).

As the main goal of the most researches in the sphere of comparative education is the study and implementation of the progressive pedagogical experience, the following methods have been combined: pedagogical observation, study of student results and documents of educational institutions, study of the best pedagogical practices and innovative didactical solutions, processing of sociological/statistical materials.



RESULTS

In contrast to the communicative wave, modern effective foreign language learning should be deeper, based on higher-order skills, dialogue, independence and critical thinking. This is not about performing a large number of exercises in class, which take a lot of time, although they contribute to a relatively small increase in the amount of knowledge. It is important that learning is exciting and deep, not just exciting. Modern effective foreign language learning is understood as one in which:

- the object of study is the surrounding world in which students interact with other people;
- students try to combine new knowledge with what they already know from previous experience and with what will be important (needed) in the future;
- the study of arguments and the discovery of regularities by the students themselves, improvement of the skills of independent awareness of the problem is encouraged.

In such training, there is no place for the interpretation of information as separate parts of knowledge or mindless memorization of material, which were the norm in the linguistic approach, as well as the experience of unnecessary emotional stress, which was often observed in the communicative approach. This is heuristic learning based on problem-solving, research experience that takes place in discussions, debates, and develops skills important in the modern world (the ability to communicate or solve problems) and forms attitudes (leadership, teamwork). If these conditions are met, students have more opportunities to take a more active interest in the content of their studies, to realize the value of a foreign language for professional communication as a vital discipline.

Didactic decisions, which are a part of effective foreign language learning in the era of globalization, especially in cases of learning ambitious students, should meet as many criteria as possible, leading to deep assimilation of knowledge. Motivation is an individual internal matter of the student, so it is logical for the teacher to create an educational context that the students themselves recognize as motivating, rather than a direction to motivate everyone. The creation of such a motivational context, among other things, takes place by:

- constant demand from students to combine the acquired knowledge (internalization) with what they have previously learned, reflected on and are able to express independently (externalization);
- emphasis on higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation) and performance of tasks aimed more at mental activity (minds-on) than at physical activity (hands-on), while remembering that activating exercises are often mistakenly identified with physical load on students;
- students' research of their own experience, attitudes, and values.

Next, we will present three didactic solutions – *the creation of concept maps, the method of the «flipped classroom», the method of duo-ethnographic dialogues* – which are widely used by Eastern European teachers in the process of foreign language training of future humanitarians. In our opinion, these decisions fit perfectly into the concept of the globalization wave and illustrate in detail the current state of knowledge of teachers about what effective foreign language teaching should look like.

The creation of *concept maps* is an effective method of foreign language learning, as maps allow a more detailed examination of the subject area and include relationships



between concepts. The method is opposed to those based on memorization, in the same way that deep learning is opposed to surface learning. In practice, a concept map takes the form of a diagram with labeled verbal connections or associations built around a «key» theme. They are used by teachers in the following educational situations:

- lesson planning (determining what students know about this topic);
- assessment of students' knowledge before and after studying the topic;
- organization of group work (uniting students into teams in which they share knowledge and help each other);
- encouragement of self-assessment (organization of work in pairs, during which students show and explain their maps to a partner, which helps both to realize the problem in different ways or to reevaluate their understanding);
- recognition of incorrect concepts (analysis of student proposals for describing a certain problem and identification of possible errors by the teacher);
- recognition of individual abilities (comparison of maps created by different students in terms of originality, accuracy of expression, amount of information, ways of combining different types of information, etc.) (Buzan, 2011).

Thus, in the process of learning a foreign language, concept maps perform two important functions – they are simultaneously a teaching and assessment tool. The first function is especially important for the development of students' ability to reason, share knowledge, and create new knowledge. The second function provides a new form of assessment that examines the structural features of the student-generated map in terms of the number of categories generated, the number of links within categories, or the number of words in the links generated. Moreover, the use of the map as an assessment function also allows for the assessment of the conceptual features of the map itself, and therefore the student's progress in higher order thinking and in-depth learning, as well as in increasing motivation to learn a foreign language. Thus, the teacher receives the necessary data for further work on students' understanding (whether they understand the concepts in this category), their ability to create knowledge (whether they created new concepts to connect categories), the structures of connections proposed by them (whether the connections between categories are expressed with correct words), ways of connecting the concept with the central problem (how accurately the content proposed by the students refers to the «central» issue) (Kucner, 2019).

The main feature of the «*flipped classroom*» method is the rejection of the traditional class organization scheme, which usually consists of three main elements: presentation of new material to students, performance of reproductive language exercises guided by them, independent creative production of language forms. In a «flipped classroom», the roles of a teacher and a student are reversed. The time that was traditionally spent on presenting new material is transferred to an extracurricular environment, usually to the Internet, where students are obliged to independently familiarize themselves with the educational material with which they plan to work in the classroom. Usually, this familiarization takes place through repeated re-reading of relevant texts and/or watching of relevant videos of teacher presentations, independent attempts to understand the problem, often with a check in the form of closed questions providing feedback. Thanks to the «preparatory» work done by the students, the teacher has additional time for interactive work with students directly in the classroom, which is extremely important in the conditions of a limited number of hours allocated to the academic discipline. In addition, it



significantly increases the quality of knowledge acquisition by students, diversifies the forms of organization of their interaction in the classroom, provides an opportunity to learn from each other and/or solve problems related to the discussed topic in a different context than the one that arose during their individual work (Gruba et al., 2016). Working in a «flipped classroom» creates a learning environment that simulates a «real society» in which students solve «real problems». Here it is important to demonstrate not so much the knowledge itself, but the ability to use it during the classroom discussion, the ability to ask the right questions in order to dispel doubts that may have arisen during the previous independent «passing» of the material. Thus, students develop higher-order skills that contribute to the acquisition of new competencies.

Although there is no indisputable evidence that the «flipped classroom» method guarantees better foreign language learning results than traditional teaching, it is undoubtedly useful for practicing communication skills. Pre-class time is used for consolidating vocabulary and language structures, and most of the classroom time is devoted to practicing communicative situations. This gives the teacher a positive effect not only in terms of increasing the number of communicative exercises, but also in terms of improving their quality, because exercises with a lower priority (repetition of words and structures in known contexts, reconstruction of the text, etc.) are performed by the students themselves, and the classroom time (under the control of the teacher) is used by them to perform tasks that rely on previously acquired knowledge, but have a deeper, explanatory nature, based on cooperation (Kern, 2014).

Taking on the role of a consultant, the teacher asks students non-trivial questions and «prevents» superficial learning of the material. However, we note that if the independent internalization of educational material is of low quality, classroom activities will also not be motivating for students. On the other hand, if this model is accepted by students, assimilation and maintenance of knowledge will be more profound, because knowledge will be combined with new information, and thus reconstructed and reliably preserved (Olszewska, 2018). According to scientists, the «flipped classroom» method works best when teaching specific content (for example, in classes using CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning) than for encouraging students to communicate. The success of the class also depends significantly on the thoroughness of the preparation of previously developed materials for independent work of students (texts, video lectures, tests, questions confirming understanding of the topic). The method makes a great contribution to the development of the so-called «problem pedagogy», and also contributes to the externalization of self-studied learning content including all the associated advantages (Wrona, 2017).

The use of the method of *duoethnographic dialogues* in the study of foreign languages was proposed by J. Norris, R. Sawyer, D. Lund. The essence of the method is that two students, working in tandem, reflect, critically evaluate and even question various mentioned stories, events, interesting facts from their own biography, memories of which are inspired by the declared topic of the class. At the same time, it is important that the participants in the dialogue differ significantly in terms of worldview, life interests, cultural background, place of residence, etc. Duoethnographic dialogues are based on the use of qualitative methods of sociological research and consist of a combination of stories (important for improving speaking skills when learning foreign languages) and biographies (important in view of modern trends of personalized teaching in foreign language didactics). They can cover almost all aspects of students' lives (Norris et al., 2012).



For example, if the topic of the lesson is «British Universities», then before presenting your own story or showing a film on the given topic, the teacher asks students to discuss Great Britain in pairs, preferably with reference to their own biographies. Such conversations may refer to personal impressions of the country that arose as a result of tourist or educational trips, reading books, newspapers, magazines, watching feature (documentary) films, associations, interesting facts that students learned about from their own experience or from other people. Students can go further, reflecting on the questions, why the topic of the discussion is British universities, whether they consider it useful to study educational traditions of other countries, whether it is at all possible to qualitatively get acquainted with the features of the British higher education system remotely (talking about it), whether it is necessary to have a personal experience of being in the system, etc. Duo-ethnographic dialogues are usually recorded on mobile cameras (recorders), which greatly simplifies further transcription. Watching (listening to) recordings the student gets an idea of his own beliefs and his partner's point of view regarding the discussed topic, compares the amount of available knowledge (how many and which British universities are known to him and his partner), thinks about the likely origin of the expressed views (for example, in the student's family, they believe that Britain is worth visiting only for shopping, entertainment or sporting events, and not for museums, theatres, cathedrals, educational institutions), makes predictive assumptions (e.g. identifies gaps in general knowledge that should be filled in the future).

From the perspective of the modern understanding of the effectiveness of teaching foreign languages, the method of duo-ethnographic dialogues performs several didactic functions, the most important of which are *cognitive, integrative, empowering, transformational, creative, and motivational* (Werbińska, 2018).

The cognitive function is the most obvious, as it presupposes obtaining new knowledge offered by the partner during the conversation. An important aspect is consideration of the discussed problem from another point of view (partner's perspective) Supporting judgments with facts from biographical experience contributes to a deeper and broader understanding of what life events influence decision-making. In other words, by discussing the topic of the lesson with reference to their own experiences, students can shed light on many new aspects of life, including what kind of people they want to become in the future.

The integrative function is expressed in the development of a sense of belonging to society. Since duoethnographic dialogues take place in conversations, telling about one's own experience establishes a certain relationship with another student who is also learning a foreign language. Such trusting conversations often help to reduce feelings of isolation, loneliness, alienation and give the student the courage to speak critically about themselves. Sometimes young people, especially during the period of formation of their own identity, come to the wrong conclusion that mistakes and shortcomings are inherent only to them. Others, on the other hand, see their strengths as average and typical until they compare their own experiences with those of others.

The integrative function contributes to the *empowerment function*. This means that students who have discussed a certain problem with a partner and, based on their own experience, have formed new knowledge, express their own opinion much easier. The ability to formulate judgments based on one's own experience indicates a real immersion in the discussed problem. Students talk about real life situations in which they faced a similar problem. Thus, the presence of subjective knowledge expands objective knowledge, simultaneously serving as its evidence. It also encourages thinking about why this particular



issue is being discussed in class, who has the deepest knowledge about it, and how it can be tested and/or measured. Empowerment of the student at the expense of subjective knowledge forces them to start thinking critically and, in the presence of a partner, rethink their biography.

Perhaps the most important in terms of impact on the future of students is *the transformative function*. Creating situations in which interlocutors can freely reflect, formulate original judgments, rethink their experiences, analyze their own beliefs and values, have a long-lasting effect on their mind. Such situations can lead to an increase in the openness of the student in the process of solving complex issues, stimulate consideration of problems from different points of view, cause curiosity and desire to learn about oneself through frank conversations with others.

The use of the method of duoethnographic dialogue also performs a creative function, which is actively promoted in modern education from the point of view of the development of reflective abilities of students. Discussing an issue face-to-face with another person is not the same as putting your thoughts on paper in a traditional essay. It is a real-time interactive, in which a question-and-answer communication format is adopted from the very beginning of the conversation. Unlike a traditional essay, there is no clearly defined methodology for conducting a duo-ethnographic dialogue. Instead, there is uncertainty, emergentness and cognitive chaos, which teach the student to quickly notice the nuances of the discussed issues, in particular, in connection with the mentioned personal experience. The life of the interlocutor is perceived as an object of research, and the described events are used as data for comparison and reconstruction, which lead to a creative and, as a result, deeper understanding of the issue (Werbińska, 2019).

The motivational function of the duo-ethnographic dialogue is undeniable. Dialogic speech involves two different positions: the one who speaks and the one who listens. The first prompts the interlocutor to a certain action (requests, orders, persuasions, suggestions, hints, etc.), and the second listens, understands, realizes, performs (or does not perform) the required action. When a student learns to speak a foreign language, they practice performing both of these functions from the very beginning – they learn not only to listen, perform or react in other ways, but also to independently exert linguistic influence on other people (persuade, argue, motivate). It is clear that the participant in the dialogue towards whom the linguistic influence is directed does not always agree and obey. He (she) can respond to a verbal prompt in various ways: for example, not only agree or disagree, but also express his own reasoning, ask a counter question, or explain why the requested action is impossible. Such an answer can start a more detailed dialogue, that is, a sequence of linguistic statements of two (or more) people, when the partners alternately take the positions of the speaker and the listener, who largely respect each other as an independent subject of the communication situation and try to understand the interlocutor's reasoning. To develop the ability to persuade, a student must learn to constructively participate in a motivational dialogue with other people: formulate and defend his own position, understand and accept other people's positions, be aware of a problem, offer solutions, make compromises, etc. All this additionally motivates the student to study a foreign language more thoroughly because the more perfect his foreign language skills are, the more convincing his argumentation looks in the situation of foreign language communication.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Summarizing, we note that the didactic decisions given above refer to the field of issues, the study of which is determined by the students themselves as having personal



value for themselves and being useful for the future. Performing these exercises students express their own point of view, present their personal understanding of the essence of the phenomena mentioned in the framework of the lesson, sometimes even revise and change their previous beliefs.

Designing the structure of a conceptual map, thinking about establishing connections, or reasoning about the differences between one's own understanding of a problem and the view of the same problem from the teacher's point of view in a «flipped classroom», or during a duoethnographic dialogue with a person who offers a different understanding of the issues under discussion, the student figuratively enters a dimension in which their previously acquired knowledge is reconstructed. It is then that in-depth learning takes place, which is caused by the clear articulation of disagreements (interaction with new knowledge), the emergence of doubts about existing judgments (aspect of temporality), the agreement of new meanings (the search for regularities), as well as confidence in the validity of the restructuring of knowledge (acquiring a new consciousness). All this meets the criteria of the modern understanding of the effectiveness of foreign language learning. In this case, the student's success is not a direct consequence of the study, but is due to their being in a motivating learning environment.

The possibilities and the most effective ways of implementing the best Eastern Europe practices of creating motivational context for foreign language training of students into the educational process of Ukrainian humanitarian colleges may be regarded as the prospects of our further research in this direction.

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