

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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CULTUROLOGICAL IDEA OF THE CONCEPTION OF COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

A.S. Dunaeva, M.N. Vetchinova

Kursk State University (Kursk, Russia).

E-mail: ya.d-anna2013@yandex.ru; marx2003@list.ru

Abstract. The analysis of the conception of “communicative approach in foreign language education” of J.I. Passov is given in the article. The aspects and components of this process are also introduced. It is shown that the basis of the conception is the idea of integrating cultural studies into foreign language education. This integration influences the formation of an individual culture and of a tolerant attitude towards representatives of other cultures, the ability to participate in intercultural communication.

Keywords: culture; foreign language education; person’s culture; foreign language.

Following the humanistic ideas of contemporary education, modern school is aimed at the formation of a personality, which realizes that he / she is a representative of a particular ethnos and is ready to interact with other peoples and cultures. To succeed in intercultural communication, it is necessary to stimulate the interest in learning culture of different countries, contribute to respectful and productive interaction between nations and confessions. Creating the atmosphere of mutual trust, maintaining interest in history of other cultures, realizing the enriching cross-cultural dialogue promotes better understanding between nations, revealing their spiritual originality.

Broadening of global interaction, occurrence and rise of global problems, which can be solved only in the context of international co-operation, requires the formation of a high level of inner culture. It turned to the increase of the role of the disciplines, which are directed at the development of communicative skills and abilities, and contribute to the successful socialization. The subject “Foreign Language” is among these disciplines.

As long as language culture is considered an integral and essential part of the human culture, questions concerning the upbringing and educational potential of a foreign language is being argued by modern educators. They consider a language to be the main means of communication and understanding the cultural heritage of the countries and peoples. The main concept of modern foreign language education is the orientation toward cross-cultural aspect of language acquisition.

The change of values towards culturological imperative objectively suggests a new role of a foreign language, as well as a rethinking of contents, methods and forms and the whole structure of the educational process, which leads to the considerable enrichment of the phenomenon "foreign language teaching". Increasingly, it has been suggested that the terms "foreign language teaching" or "foreign language pedagogy" do not reflect the comprehension of the process. However, in the late 1800s Russian investigator of the European methods of teaching foreign languages G.P. Nadler drew attention to the words of Charles Maher (1810-1858), a German pedagogist, philologist, philosopher, the follower of Wilhelm Humboldt, who suggested that "the term "teaching foreign languages" is not only inaccurate, but also harmful" [1: 44].

According to K. Mager, "it is impossible to reach the nativelylike proficiency in language at school, one can only master it to some extent" [Ibid: 45]. He was sure that the school has one goal - general education (*humane Bildung*): in his opinion, this education is aimed at bringing a man out of a rough state (*Naturzustand*) and driving him to a cultural state (*Culturzustand*), i.e. making cultured. Consequently, foreign language teaching, in his opinion, should necessarily contain the elements of general education. The German pedagogist argued that "to acquire a language does not mean to learn the language, its grammatical forms and vocabulary; to acquire a language is to study the human spirit, how it is revealed in the spiritual life of civilized nations and in the writings of the greatest geniuses". Thus, at the end of the 19th century it was suggested that the term "foreign language teaching" does not reflect the peculiarities and comprehension of the process, as "*teaching* a language" is emphasized. However, the language teaching process has an enormous upbringing potential, since we learn not only a language system, but also the culture of another nation. This very important aspect is not reflected in the term.

In the 90s of the 20th century, along with the dominant grammar-translation concept in foreign language teaching, which was typical for the period of 30-80s of the 20th century, there were two new types of discourse: communicative and culturological. In the light of the rapidly developing socio-cultural approach in foreign language teaching (V.V. Safonova) and the development of intercultural communication theory (V.P. Furmanova) a paradigm shift in foreign language education took place, which referred to the objectives and content of foreign language education and included the search of new approaches to teaching culture of a foreign country.

Research by I.L. Bim, M.Z. Biboletova, J.M. Vereshchagina, N.D. Golskhova, V.G. Kostomarov, J.I. Passos, V.V. Safonova, S.G. Ter-Minasova, I.I. Haleeva, A.V. Schepilova, V.P. Furmanova are devoted to the problems of integrating cultural studies into the foreign language teaching process. Research which is aimed at practical development of methods of foreign language teaching, taking into account its cultural component, has

been conducted by V.V. Oschepkova, A.N. Bogomolova, T.P. Popova, P.V. Sysoev and others. Despite the fact that there are some differences between the research approaches, the conclusion about the necessity and importance of language learning and, in particular, foreign language learning, as it is a component of culture, is generally recognized.

Researchers in education and methodologists have focused on questions related not only to teaching a foreign language, but also to studying such a complex and multidimensional problem as the ratio of language and culture. During this period, a program-concept of communicative foreign language education has been developed (2000). J.I. Passov, a Russian linguist, a specialist in the methodology of foreign language teaching has introduced into scientific circulation the term “foreign language education”. His idea was to abandon the term “teaching foreign languages”, following a German scientist of the 19th century K. Mager who suggested that “first, we do not teach a language (grammar, vocabulary and phonetics), not only a language but something different. Second, a language cannot be taught: one can learn a language, acquire or master it” [2: 40].

He is convinced that the purpose of foreign language education is not only training (acquiring communicative skills), but also educational (education of a spiritual person). In this context, he proposed to use the term “foreign language education” instead of the term “foreign language teaching”. J.I. Passov considers a foreign language (due to its unique educational potential) not as a subject, but as an educational discipline with an enormous potential, which can make a significant contribution to the development of a personality. As the main goal of foreign language education is the formation of a spiritual man, J.I. Passov believes that a spiritual person is not the one who knows something and is able to do it. In his opinion, it is the person whose activity is governed by stable guidelines such as the culture of creative and constructive activity, the culture of reasonable consumption, the culture of humanistic communication, the culture of perception, the culture of worldview, the culture of aesthetic assimilation of reality. He points out the fact that a personality is notable for creativity and ability for enrichment of culture, it integrates artistic freedom and responsibility. Therefore, he considers a system of education to be a public institution of personality development as the subject of culture. J.I. Passov considers that knowledge, abilities and skills should not be the content of education, but culture should it be, and the main educational paradigm should not be knowledge-centered, but culture-centered. He identifies “education” with the “laboratory of high fashion” [3: 12].

J.I. Passov considers foreign language education in four aspects:

1. A sphere of human activity.
2. Activity (process).
3. Product.
4. Specialty.

J.I. Passov shows the key concept of aim as a methodological category with the help of five pairs of notions:

- value and culture;
- spirituality and morality;
- development and creation;
- freedom and responsibility;
- communication and self-determination.

Since the purposes and contents of education are interpenetrable, the scientist believes that the five pairs of notions make the notional basis of the content of foreign language education. Thus, according to the concept of J.I. Passov, the purpose of foreign language education is not only acquiring proper knowledge, abilities and skills, but also building an individual: the development of his spiritual strength, abilities, the rise of his needs, the upbringing of a morally-responsible, socially-adapted man. The core concept of communicative foreign language education is the idea that the process of foreign language education should be carried out in the inseparable unity of learning a language and cultural life of the people. Due to it, social-cultural development of a personality takes place. It is the basic idea of the conception of J.I. Passov. He believes that foreign language education is the main means of acquiring culture; therefore, foreign language education is the transfer of foreign language culture. The attention is paid to the fact that the term "foreign language culture" is not synonymous with the term "foreign culture". Foreign culture is the culture of a foreign country, which together with a language constitutes the object of the cognitive aspect of foreign language culture. "Foreign language culture is a part of humanity culture which can be acquired by a student in the process of communicative foreign language education in the following aspects: cognitive (culturological), developing (psychological), upbringing (educational) and teaching (social) aspects" [4: 27].

1. *Cognitive aspect*. The process of learning runs through the whole process of education. In this concept everything starts with the cognitive aspect, and to be exact everything is based on cultural facts. Spiritual development of learners takes place on the basis of new culture but in permanent connection with native culture. Acquiring culture is the understanding of the system of values of the people. Information about the country, its social system, the description of the life of ordinary people, art and literature demonstrates the system of values of the people, it helps to understand foreign culture through the comparison with the culture of a learner. The upbringing of such important qualities as patriotism and internationalism happens through the comparison of peoples and countries in different historical conditions. An integral component of this aspect is language and culture, where culture is the main.

2. *The developing aspect* is turned to the development of the traits which play an important role in the process of learning and upbringing, and

therefore, in the formation of individuality. To achieve this aim it is necessary to involve all mental processes into education. Psyche is not just a vessel that is filled with information, it is the process of interaction with the environment, due to which it is formed and developed. The objects of the development should be the abilities, as they can be developed from the existing inclinations of individuals, and this development takes place only in action. Personal development is the manifestation and the realization of abilities. Abilities developed in educational activity will lay the foundation for self-education of a person and his subsequent experience and activity.

3. *Educational aspect.* According to the concept of communicative foreign language education, upbringing is associated with culture and is understood as a process of formation, enrichment and perfection of the spiritual world of man through the creative inheritance (appropriation) of culture. The cultural content of the materials has a great educational potential. A teacher should make the best use of this potential. Being an interpreter of a foreign culture a teacher should do the utmost to contribute to the formation of the system of values, which corresponds to a spiritual person. The upbringing aspect of foreign language education is aimed at spiritual development of learners on the basis of the dialogue between a foreign culture and a native one.

4. *Teaching aspect.* Language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, writing and communicative skills constitute the content of educational aspect. A learner has to master them, as they are the main means of communication. "The formation of language skills and the development of language abilities is understood as the process of the development an integral speech mechanism and the formation of the speech mechanism is a process of personal development" [4: 44]. Learning aspect has a social direction, as the results of it are turned to satisfaction of social needs of a person, one of which is to communicate in society.

As you can see, the idea of culture runs through all four procedural aspects, each of which is a part of a holistic educational process. J.I. Passov indicates that they are equal: "cognition, development, upbringing and learning are equally interdependent and synthesized and integrate into what we call education" [Ibid: 28].

J.I. Passov believes that the influence of foreign culture on a person is not a one-sided process, because a person is not an object of this influence but a subject of it. A person interacts with the facts of culture, communicate with them, and as in any process of communication, such interaction is dialogical [5: 6].

He believes that in the process of mastering the language a student learns not just cross-cultural facts about the life of a foreign country, but he perceives the culture of the people. Learning a language a person acquires a tolerant, humanistic attitude to a foreign country and its people. Besides, developing language skills and abilities, a person learns how to communicative

in different life situations. The motivation for further language learning is formed. Getting knowledge about the system of a foreign language a person enriches his native language [2: 20].

Having analyzed the conception of communicative foreign language education, we can distinguish some basic features of it. A foreign language is regarded as:

- a phenomenon of culture, because language is the instrument of creation, development, storage and translation of culture, it fixes a certain world view, reflecting the spiritual qualities of the people and their culture;

- an element of culture, because it takes the first place among the national and specific components of culture, it stores cultural values in vocabulary, grammar, idioms, folklore, artistic and scientific literature, in different forms of oral and written speech;

- “cultural crossroads”, because each foreign word reflects foreign world and foreign culture; thanks to it, interaction and interference of languages and cultures enlarges;

- a means of transmitting culture, as it is a method of transmitting information and cultural heritage of other peoples, means of understanding human culture, viewed in the aspect of social experience.

It may also be summarized that foreign language education is a unity of some components where a foreign language is a means of

- *thinking*, by means of which a person not only communicates, but also analyses and understands the world and the processes occurring in it, directs his reasoning and builds a world of his consciousness;

- *education* of a person with a humanistic world view that integrates the development of such qualities as intelligence, education, culture, tolerance, understanding of himself as a citizen of the world, empathy, recognition of the sovereign rights of all peoples;

- *development* of a personality, which is achieved by constant complication of cogitative tasks which are to be solved by means of a foreign language;

- *communication*, which provides cross-cultural interaction. In the process of communication cultural experience is absorbed and summarized. It contributes to the socialization of a person.

Summing up, we can say that foreign language education is a holistic organized pedagogical process of education, upbringing and development of learners by means of the subject “foreign language”. By way of culturological content of the process of foreign language learning a student gets acquainted with a foreign culture and mentality, due to which cultural enrichment of a personality takes place. Acquisition of foreign culture contributes to the transformation of knowledge of the life of foreign people, their history and values into moral-aesthetic beliefs, principles of spiritual life, skills and abilities of creative activity. Learning foreign languages also contributes to

successful intercultural interaction, ability and readiness to further self-educate using a foreign language in different areas of knowledge.

J.I. Passov, relying on the cultural idea of learning a foreign language, gave a scientific substantiation of the concept of “communicative foreign language education”. He showed the impact of foreign language learning on the formation and development of inner culture of a person. Due to the scientific contribution of J.I. Passov a new term “foreign language education” was introduced, which reflected a substantial component of education by means of a foreign language and the relationship between language and culture.

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