The Cognitive Aspect of the Purpose of Teaching Foreign Languages

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Abstract: The cognitive aspect of the goal of teaching foreign languages is associated with such categories as knowledge, thinking and understanding processes involved in the process of introducing the student to a foreign language, to the culture of the people - its carrier. When determining the essence of the cognitive aspect of the goal of teaching foreign languages, it is important to proceed from the understanding that the language reflects the interaction between psychological, communicative, functional and cultural factors.

Keywords: cognitive aspect, language education system, communicative principle; principal object of teaching foreign languages.

Introduction

It is known from cognitive science that human thinking is a process of processing (with the help of an important "processor" - the human cognitive system) and generating knowledge. Knowledge functions as an "impersonal phenomenon", as a kind of "field of meanings", to which the human consciousness "participates" through anamnesis.

This process of cognition is a transition from the state of "ignorance" to the state of "knowledge" and involves the "transformation of a thing in itself into a thing for us", i.e., the destruction of the natural givenness of an object - "tearing" it out of its habitual habitat - abstraction from non-essential characteristics of the object under study" - an anthropomorphic interpretation of the perceived" [1-3].

In epistemology and cognitive science, two main types of knowledge are distinguished: declarative and procedural. Declarative knowledge is understood as knowledge ("what-knowledge") acquired by an individual as a result of his social experience (empirical knowledge from the professional sphere came from everyday social and personal life: for example, food, and transport) and in the learning process (academic knowledge from the field of scientific and technical education). This category of knowledge is not necessarily directly related to language and culture, but it is important for the implementation of verbal communication. Procedural knowledge ("how-knowledge") is a certain sequence of actions that should be performed. In other words, procedural knowledge is some general instruction about actions in some situations (for example, instructions for using a household appliance). If the first group of knowledge can be verified as true and false, then the second can be evaluated only based on the success or failure of the algorithm of actions. Regardless of what type of knowledge we are talking about, they can be divided into three groups:

1) individual knowledge, which is the property of an active subject, his speech-thinking and other activities;

2) the total collective knowledge experience, which is formed and functions in a certain linguocultural community according to the laws of mental activity and interactions in super-large systems;

3) collective knowledge is "registered" in the products of various human activities, which reflects only a part of what is included in the first concept of knowledge [4-6].

It follows that human linguistic knowledge does not exist by itself. They, being formed through personal experience-refraction and being under the control of the norms and assessments that have developed in society, function in the context of his diverse experience. Therefore, for a native

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speaker to recognize a word means to include it in the context of previous experience, i.e. "in the internal context of various knowledge and relationships that have been established in the corresponding culture as the basis for mutual understanding in the course of communication and interaction" [7-9].

The internal context is most naturally associated with individual knowledge, with access to the individual picture of the human world. In the process of forming an individual picture of the world, a student studying a foreign language is based, firstly, on the cognitive means of his culture, involved in understanding the means of a foreign culture, and secondly, on new knowledge about a foreign culture, formed in the course of its cognition, and, finally, on new knowledge about one's own culture, created during the knowledge of a foreign culture [10-13]. In turn, as already noted when describing the essence of language education as a result, the knowledge used in encoding and decoding any message is by no means limited to knowledge about the language. Only the totality of knowledge about the world, the social context of the utterance, knowledge about the features of discourse and the laws of its planning and management, and much more allow a person to master the "global semantic project" in the construction and perception of foreign language utterances. The "global semantic project" is associated with the comprehension of the mental, spiritual essence of the native speaker of the studied language, the world in which he lives, and its flight in situations of intercultural communication.

To study and represent knowledge, scientists use various knowledge structures, and frames are among the most common. Frames are deep invariants of certain fragments of knowledge, certain means of organizing experience and tools of cognition. Some frames, according to C. Fillmore, are innate (for example, knowledge of the characteristic features of a human face). Other frames are learned from experience or learning (for example, knowledge of social conventions). A special case is represented by those frames, the existence of which is completely dependent on the language expressions associated with them (for example, units of measurement, calendar, etc.).

It follows that the language competence of a person interacts with other types of knowledge and skills. This fact should be taken into account when teaching foreign languages, during which it is justified and inevitable to go beyond the limits of proper communicative knowledge and skills. The appeal to frames as to the supralinguistic level, to the extra-linguistic situation, always occurs when comprehending sign expressions. It is no coincidence that C. Fillmore associates linguistically determined characteristics of the knowledge structure with frames: "We can use the term frame when we mean the specific lexical and grammatical support that a given language has for naming and describing categories and relationships found in schemas" [14- 16].

Therefore, speaking about the cognitive aspect of the goal of teaching foreign languages, one should keep in mind the need and importance of forming basic cognitive structures in the minds of students that provide them with the perception and understanding of the language and the world of a different socio-cultural community. "The essence of teaching intercultural communication is to build secondary structures in the cognitive system of the recipient (learner) — knowledge that would correlate with knowledge about the world of the speaker (representative of a different socio-cultural community)" [17-21].

This knowledge forms fragments of the language picture of the world, i.e. "linguistic consciousness, directly connected with the associative-verbal network of the language", and fragments of the conceptual picture. The process of formation of basic cognitive structures is accompanied by a complication of the connections established in the mind of the student between the elements of the linguocultures he assimilates.

Due to this, its development is carried out, since mastering foreign languages and cultures leads to a change in the nature of the student's cognitive activity, whose language development has a modifying effect on his cognitive development, on the formation of linguistic consciousness. Penetration into a foreign world, a foreign culture is a complex and multifaceted process, which is accompanied by the period of formation of the student's inner experience of sociocultural images. This can be explained by the fact that understanding includes not only the processing and interpretation of perceived data but also the activation and use of internal, cognitive information, i.e. information about cognitive presuppositions [22-25].

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Thus, the process of a person's perception of a foreign language statement or a foreign fact of action, and other information available to him (about specific events, situations and context, as well as cognitive presuppositions) are the basis for the formation of a mental representation of discourse in his memory. In this case, he may have expectations of what will be said or presented before he hears or sees it in reality, and this can make it easier for him to understand when he receives relevant external information. "At each stage, there is no fixed order between the perceived data and their interpretation: interpretations can be first constructed and only later compared with the perceived data" [26-28]. Therefore, the cognitive aspect of the goal of teaching foreign languages is associated with the development of students' ability to flexibly use various types of information, and the ability to effectively construct mental representations even if the interpreted information is incomplete. The main thing is that understanding is not a passive construction of a representation of a certain linguistic image, but a part of an interactive process in which a person who perceives this or that sociolinguocultural phenomenon actively interprets it.

At the same time, the strategic analysis of the perceived or generated text depends not only on the textual characteristics but also on the characteristics of the student, his goals and knowledge of the world. This means that the reader is trying to reconstruct not only the intended (intended) meaning of the text, expressed by the author in various ways in the text or in the context, but also the meaning that is most relevant from the point of view of his interests and goals. And here a special role is played by such factors as figurative perception, physical interaction, mental images and the role of realities in culture. J. Lakoff writes: "All these considerations confirm the point of view according to which our conceptual system depends on our physical and cultural experience and is directly related to them." And further: "...our conceptual system is based on physical, social and other types of experience and is understood through them..." [24-27].

The foregoing gives grounds to assert that initially ideas about a foreign language reality are born under the influence of the culture of the native language and are comprehended by those who study a non-native language only as a result of staging their own life experience. Own experience, generalized impression, and developed associations create the basis for a characteristic opinion, behaviour or attitude. The way of perception, which is formed in a collision with the images of the native culture, is used as a category of cognition of reality, that is, as a cognitive category. Structure and semantics are one part of a complex phenomenon - the text. The other part lies in the consciousness and memory of a person. Only when both of these parts interact does the process of complete perception and understanding of a foreign language text by a non-native speaker take place. Understanding is a complex process. It includes not only the verbal text but also what accompanies it and what conditions and stimulates it, that is background knowledge. At the same time, cognitive motives, the student's cognitive activity have the greatest impact on the quality of mastering someone else's linguistic culture and act as the main incentive for the development of individual picture of the world, which is based on knowledge about the world, knowledge from various fields, knowledge inherent in a particular culture and/or having universal character. Studies show that among the cognitive motives that encourage students to learn a non-native language and culture, the need for information about the cultural specifics of the country of the language being studied stands out [28-31].

Cognition of a different culture is carried out in the process of perceiving an alien national-specific picture of the world, interpreting it with the help of images of one's national consciousness. The national-cultural-specific fragments of an unfamiliar culture encountered on this path could be perceived as strange, alien, or unusual. In this sense, as shown in the dissertation research by M. A. Bogatyreva (1998), it is unacceptable when, in the educational process in a foreign language, the foreign cultural reality is approached with ready-made standards and tailored according to one's perception. Such an approach almost always leads to a socio-cultural bias, and alienation, leading to a defensive reaction - a retreat to one's national values, or a devaluation of "one's own" and a naive admiration for everything foreign. Teaching foreign languages is designed to reduce such negative aspects of intercultural communication. Therefore, the interpretation of the way of life, attitude and originality of another nation should take place against the background of those life events in which schoolchildren take part. It is this approach that will develop the student's

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worldview and prepare him to realize himself as a bearer of national values, to understand the interconnections and interdependence of his people and the people of the country of the language being studied in solving global problems.

As noted above, the cognitive aspect of the goal of teaching foreign languages is also associated with the formation of a broad understanding among students about the achievements of national cultures (own and foreign) in the development of universal culture and the role of the native language and culture in the mirror of a foreign culture. At the same time, a special role is played by the position that, by studying a foreign language, students receive a practical school of dialectics, because the work of comparing the native language and the foreign language being studied makes it possible to free oneself "from the captivity of the native language" [30-32]. By studying a foreign language, the student learns in depth the ways of forming thoughts and thereby better learns his native language. As L. V. Shcherba rightly noted, a foreign language, acting as a standard for comparison with the language being studied, enables the student to realize that there are other ways of expressing thoughts than in the native language, other connections between form and meaning. This statement, with a certain amount of amendment, is also related to the mastery of a foreign culture by students. By becoming familiar with a foreign language, the student learns:

– world culture, national cultures and social subcultures of the peoples of the countries of the studied language and their reflection in the way and style of life of people;
– the spiritual heritage of countries and peoples, their historical and cultural memory;
– ways to achieve intercultural understanding.

In his mind, a synthesis of knowledge is carried out both about the specifics of his native culture and foreign culture, and about the commonality of knowledge about cultures and communication. However, to achieve this, the student must also master verbal, educational, including research, strategies for comprehending someone else's linguistic culture in comparison with their own (procedural knowledge).

Therefore, the cognitive aspect of the goal of teaching foreign languages also means the formation of students' skills and abilities to use (creatively, economically and purposefully) rational methods of mastering foreign languages and cultures. From this point of view, this aspect is a developmental aspect of education, and its content is associated primarily with the formation of students' language/speech abilities, and mental processes that underlie the successful mastery of foreign language communicative activity. In other words, we are talking about the development of the student's existential competence as one of the components of general competence. This competence includes individual characteristics of a person, his character traits, belief system (for example, representation of himself and others), introversion and extroversion, i.e. all the properties and qualities that distinguish a person in the process of social interaction. Existential competence is sensitive to the spheres of an intercultural communication because the readiness and desire of a person to enter into this communication, and their attitude towards his foreign partner in communication ultimately determine the quality and results of mutual understanding and interaction.

Existential competence is a dynamic concept. Its components exist only in motion, in development, and this development is carried out only in the process of this or that practical and theoretical activity. At the same time, on the one hand, this competence is the result of communicative activity, and on the other hand, it determines the success of its implementation. In domestic linguodidactics and methods of teaching foreign languages, it is proved that existential competence, or rather, its components - individual psychological characteristics of a person that favours the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities in the field of a foreign language and their use in practical speech activity, is actually the so-called linguistic competence/speech abilities. It has been experimentally proved that the common components of language abilities are well-developed mechanical memory, a high level of development of thinking, and the degree of development of speech skills developed on the basis of the native language.

In the process of performing a certain type of speech activity, it is necessary to have sustained attention. In the domestic methodology, attempts were made to establish the role and place of each

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component in the structure of abilities for foreign language speech activity; i.e., distinguish among them the leading and auxiliary ones.

The idea was expressed that the main component of the structure of the language ability is a certain degree of development of mental operations: analysis - synthesis, speech conjecture. The volume of working memory and probabilistic forecasting were named as indicators of mental processes directly related to speech activity. At the same time, the most significant, especially at the initial stage of teaching foreign languages, is the overall balance of individual psychological characteristics that affect the success of mastering foreign languages and the implementation of foreign language speech activity, which is the indicator of the amount of RAM. However, the practice of teaching foreign languages indicates that the success of teaching and education using the subject is determined by how consistently both leading and auxiliary components of abilities are taken into account.

In the methodology of teaching foreign languages, there are several independent studies devoted to finding the best ways to develop the language abilities of students, and on this basis - to improve the quality of practical knowledge of the language being studied.

Even though most of these studies were carried out about the conditions of teaching foreign languages at a university, their main results can be extrapolated to school conditions. These results include, in particular, the position that the more properties and characteristics of a student's personality are taken into account in the educational process, the more successfully the process of mastering communicative competence proceeds. Taking into account the individual psychological characteristics of students involves not only the "adaptation" of the educational process to their capabilities. It is also about the optimal change and development of these characteristics, about the purposeful formation of the individual characteristics of each student under the influence of specially organized training.

Effective mastering by students of a new language and culture for them is determined by the degree of development of their skills:

1) organize their learning activities (for example, work individually, in pairs, or in groups; check, evaluate and correct their work or the work of a fellow student, etc.);

2) to activate intellectual processes (for example, to recognize this or that phenomenon of the language, to compare this phenomenon with the similar one in the native language, etc.);

3) prepare for the learning process and actively participate in it (for example, take notes, draw up a plan, use a dictionary, etc.);

4) organize communicative activities (for example, plan your statement, formulate your thoughts using a limited set of language tools, use gestures and facial expressions in oral communication, etc.).

The formation and improvement of these skills must be carried out in close connection with the development of communicative skills, with work on various aspects of the language. The student must realize and develop an individual style of learning activity (for example, individual methods and techniques for mastering lexical or grammatical phenomena, cultural phenomena), acquire knowledge that makes it easier for him, for example, to understand texts (subject knowledge from other areas) or adequately perceive, structural features of a particular grammatical phenomenon (knowledge of the grammatical rule). All this in general should allow schoolchildren to master certain strategies for working with the language, which can be conditionally divided into two groups.

The first group includes strategies aimed directly at working with linguistic material. These strategies allow the student to:

a) correctly select the necessary linguistic phenomena (using, for example, anticipation, proposing and testing hypotheses, revealing the meanings of words in context, etc.);

b) optimize the processes of assimilation of language material (for example, highlighting keywords, underlining/highlighting any words, sentences, etc. in the text, searching for language patterns, using speech samples, etc.);

c) improve the work of memory (finding/selecting appropriate contexts for the use of a particular linguistic phenomenon, the use of visualization, repetition, recombination, etc.).

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The second group includes the so-called metacognitive strategies. They are the ability of students to plan their learning activities, to monitor and evaluate the success of their results. Of particular importance are the student's reflective abilities, which we wrote about above. It only remains to add the following. In general, if we talk about the cognitive aspect of teaching foreign languages, then it should be borne in mind that the reflexive abilities associated with the experience of knowing a foreign ethnolinguistic culture play an important role and have special potential. If the process of cognition is of the so-called centrifugal nature, since the student, acquiring linguocultural experience and joining new facts, phenomena and processes, breaks out of the "captivity" of his monoculture, the reflection of the acquired experience has a centripetal component: the acquired new experience is comprehended from the point of view of its significance, novelty, relevance, etc. for the personality of the student.

Conclusion

As shown above, we are talking about the development of the student's worldview and their preparation for the perception of the history of mankind and the country of the language being studied, his country and his people, to realize himself as a carrier of national values, to understand the relationship and interdependence between himself and all the people of the planet in solving global problems. Thus, the cognitive aspect of the goal closely links the teaching of foreign languages as a means of intercultural communication with its intensive use as a tool for learning, developing and mastering the language. Such an understanding is based on the methodologically broadest meaning of language as an integral part of cognition, as a result of the operation of two factors: internal (that is, the activity of the individual student's mind) and external (that is, in culture).

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