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ANALYSIS OF THE GENERAL DIDACTIC PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF LEARNING ENGLISH AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

O.V. Ivanova

PhD in Pedagogy, Associate Professor,
the Head of the Department of English for Technical and Agrobiological Specialties,
National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv)
email: ok.ko176@gmail.com

АНАЛІЗ ЗАГАЛЬНОДИДАКТИЧНИХ ПРИНЦИПІВ І МЕТОДІВ ВИВЧЕННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ТА ЇХ ЕФЕКТИВНІСТЬ

О.В. Иванова

кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент,
завідувач кафедри англійської мови для технічних та агробіологічних спеціальностей,
Національний університет біоресурсів і природокористування України (м. Київ)

АНАЛИЗ ОБЩЕДИДАКТИЧЕСКИХ ПРИНЦИПОВ И МЕТОДОВ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА И ИХ ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТЬ

О.В. Иванова

кандидат педагогических наук, доцент, заведующая кафедрой английского языка для технических и агrobiологических специальностей,
Национальный университет биоресурсов и природоиспользования Украины (г. Киев)

This study gives an overview of the most important didactic principles and methods in FLT (English). It is shown that methods of foreign language teaching are based on a number of principles – both didactic and specific (linguistic and psychological). To make the learning objectives and competences become more efficient, the modern language teacher should fit the method to the learner by applying the Principled Eclecticism approach.

Keywords: *didactic principles, methods, foreign language teaching*

У дослідженні подається короткий огляд найважливіших дидактичних принципів і методів навчання іноземних мов (англійської). Показано, що методика викладання іноземної мови ґрунтується на ряді принципів, як дидактичних, так специфічних (лінгвістичних і психологічних). Для того, щоб досягти мети навчання й сформувати необхідні компетенції у більш ефективний спосіб, сучасний викладач іноземної мови повинен добирати методи, враховуючи індивідуальний стиль навчання кожного студента, застосовуючи при цьому еkleктичний підхід.

Ключові слова: *дидактичні принципи, методи, навчання іноземної мови*

В исследовании подается краткий обзор важнейших дидактических принципов и методов обучения иностранных языков (английского). Показано, что методика преподавания иностранного языка основывается на ряде принципов, как дидактических, так специфических (лингвистических и психологических). Для того, чтобы достичь целей обучения и сформировать необходимые компетенции более эффективным способом, современный преподаватель иностранного языка должен подбирать методы, учитывая индивидуальный стиль обучения каждого студента, используя при этом еkleктический подход.

Ключевые слова: *дидактические принципы, методы, обучение иностранному языку*

1. Introduction

The success of teaching-learning is defined by a number of factors, one of the most important are the didactic principles and methods employed by the teacher. The problem of the didactic principles and

methods in foreign language teaching (FLT) is a complex one, meaning that promoting a didactic methodology at an educational level depends on the selection, the organization and the pragmatism of the informational content. It is obvious that such principles appeared as a result of a whole reflexive approach through which one especially focused on the dimension of the educational practice. Moreover, the existence and the recognition at an instructive-educative level of some didactic principles emphasize dynamic actions, possible in different circumstances and which have at their basis the most various specific motivations. The methodology of foreign language teaching is based on a number of fundamental principles of didactics that are general norms through which are projected, organized and put the activities of teaching-learning-evaluating into practice to make the objectives/competences become efficient at the level of the educational dimension.

2. Didactic principles

The term “principle” introduces the notion of the leading basis thesis (propositions), regulating the process of teaching and educating the young generation.

The didactic principles relate to an applicative, concrete dimension of the system and process of education. Thus, the didactic principles reflect the specific of the educational activities which become concrete at the level of the formative-informative correlations. In the system of the didactic principles one can find: the principle of the conscious and active participation of students in the education process, the principle of thorough acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities, the principle of accessibility and individuality, the principle of connecting theory with practice, the principle of systematization and continuity, the principle of intuition (of the unity between concrete and abstract, of the unity between sensorial and rational) and the principle of reverse connection (of feedback or retroaction).

2.1. The principle of the conscious and active participation of students in the education process

According to this principle, the educated ones must have conscious attitudes and participate effectively in the didactic activity. In other words, the content approach must come into a comprehensive dimension, so that one can do an interactive and efficient activity. A conscious participation of students within the process of education supposes, on the one hand, the capacity to understand the informational content clearly and deeply, and on the other hand, the capacity to make conceptual-theoretical correlations.

2.2. The principle of thorough acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities

This principle reminds of the idea that the educated ones must not be offered all the information at once, but gradually on different levels of increasing complexity. In this way, one can avoid the discouragement and the boredom the moment the knowledge is presented. Thus, the educators must be preoccupied with the process of acquiring and consolidating the taught information.

2.3. The principle of accessibility and individuality

This principle supposes that the organization of the didactic activities “should be made taking into account the peculiarities of age and the individual ones characteristic to students, of their real intellectual and physical possibilities: age, sex, level of anterior training, physical and intellectual potential, motivational level, their attitude towards discipline” [1, p. 54]. It is obvious from this perspective that the organization of the didactic activity depends on a series of factors, which from an epistemic point of view can be corroborated with the type of individualization of the learning activities and the socio-educational actors. As a result, the priority given to the accessibility becomes exemplary towards the adopted and assumed strategies at an educational level.

2.4. The principle of connecting theory with practice

This principle reminds of the idea that everything that is acquired from a theoretical point of view can be put into value at a practical level. This fact supposes that the (intrinsic) motivation should be stronger. Also, one should have the two forms in mind through which the assurance of the connection between theory

and practice becomes possible as long as there are cognitive transfers taking place: the specific transfer (the putting into value of the information specific to a subject within the same subject) and the non-specific transfer (the putting into value of the information of a subject into another subject). Consequently, on the one hand, the principle of connecting theory with practice supposes, some adequate understanding of the concepts, and theories and on the other hand, a wide applicability in the practical field.

2.5. The principle of systematization and continuity

This principle claims that it is necessary for the units of informational content to be structured into an educational logic. Therefore, through some cognitive plans, one can ensure a systematic acquisition of information. Moreover, the strategies assume at an instructive level and the acceptance of some new educational paradigms can ensure an efficient continuity of the education process. In conclusion, a coherent, logical hierarchy of the informational content emphasizes the pragmatism of the systematization and continuity at a socio-educational level.

2.6. The principle of intuition

This principle has been theorized by Comenius in “Didactica Magna” and by Pestalozzi in some of his works. According to this principle, “the student’s teaching has to be focused on an intuitive basis, concretely sensorial, that is the direct perception or intermediated by substitutes of reality” [2, p. 168]. Thus, through this principle, one supports the process of abstractization and one focuses mainly on an imagistic verbalization.

2.7. The principle of reverse connection (of feedback or retroaction)

The didactic activity, seen as a systemic/systematic and continuous process, must benefit from a feedback through which one can emphasize the understanding, the assimilation, the efficiency and the utility of the informational content. This principle consists in the fact that the learning activity supposes sequential evaluations and reevaluations through successive coming backs to the informational content. In other words, the assurance of the reverse connection (feedback in English: feed=to nourish, back=rear) means to regulate and confirm immediately a certain type of behaviour. To sum up, the principle of the reverse connection proves its usefulness in the learning activity especially.

3. Didactic principles in FLT

Language learning and teaching is a complex package of issues. There is no one-size-fits-all prescription to guarantee everyone’s success at the same rate. Teaching English as a foreign language is based on fundamental principles of didactics. Except for the basic didactic principles methodology of teaching English uses specific principles that are applied in teaching a foreign language. Let’s consider them.

– the principle of conscious approach (implies comprehension of linguistic phenomena by the learner through the medium of vernacular and the arrangement in sentence patterns graded in difficulties with the emphasis on some essential points; ensures purposeful perception and comprehension of the material, its creative absorption, and retrieval of information from the learner with a certain degree of automacy);

– differentiated and integrated instruction (suggests that all types of speech activity should be regarded as interrelated parts of communicative process and taken into account while forming the learner’s communicative competence);

– activity (presupposes a constant accumulation of knowledge and active participation of learners in the process of instruction);

– visuality (creates favourable conditions for sensual perceptions and brings another reality in instructive and educative process; develops the learners’ habits of speech and enhances the emotional influence of visual perception);

– accessibility and durability (presupposes adequate rate of presentation, qualitative assimilation, rate of advancement in forming speech habits and skills; concerned with a constant growth of language and

speech units, words, word-combinations, idioms, clichés which are to be stored and retained in the pupils' memory so that the learners could use them in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing);

- individualization (takes into account individual peculiarities of the learner, his background knowledge, what he knows, his spheres of interest, etc., i.e. cognitive styles);

- the principle of communicative approach (presumes involvement in oral and written communication throughout the whole course of learning English);

- the principle of an integrated approach (students do not assimilate sounds, grammar units, lexical items as discrete components of the language, but they acquire them in sentence-patterns, pattern-dialogues related to certain situations and use their skills in the four language activities as interdependent parts of their language experience).

The modern approach to FLT also takes into account a wide range of linguistic and psychological principles such as giving priority to sounds, selection and gradation, imitation, grad patterns, motivation, reinforcement, correct responses, etc.

4. FLT methods and approaches

The word “method” primarily means way or manner of doing something. It is a word of international currency, borrowed into all European languages through the Latin “Methodus” from the Greek “Methodos”. In FLT, a method is a model of instruction based on definite theoretical provisions, principle, techniques and aims of instruction.

There are four general orientations among modern FLT methods and approaches:

4.1. Structural/linguistics (based on beliefs about the structure of language and descriptive or contrastive linguistics; involves isolation of grammatical and syntactic elements of L2 taught either deductively or inductively in a predetermined sequence; involves much meta-linguistic content or "learning about the language" in order to learn the language).

4.2. Cognitive (based on theories of learning applied specifically to second language learning. Focus is on the learning strategies that are compatible with the learners own style. L2 content is selected according to concepts and techniques that facilitate generalizations about the language, memorization and “competence” leading to “performance”).

4.3. Affective/interpersonal (focuses on the psychological and affective pre-dispositions of the learner that enhance or inhibit learning; emphasizes interaction among and between teacher and students and the atmosphere of the learning situation as well as students' motivation for learning; based on concepts adapted from counseling and social psychology).

4.4. Functional/communicative (based on theories of language acquisition, often referred to as the “natural” approach, and on the use of language for communication. Encompasses multiple aspects of the communicative act, with language structures selected according to their utility in achieving a communicative purpose. Instruction is concerned with the input students receive, comprehension of the “message” of language and student involvement at the students' level of competence.

One can ask whether there is the best teaching method for learning a foreign language. Linguists have demonstrated that there is not one single best method for everyone in all contexts, and that no one teaching method is inherently superior to the others. Also, it is not always possible to apply the same methodology to all learners, who have different objectives, environments and learning needs. The modern language teacher shouldn't follow one rigid method, but apply the Principled Eclecticism approach – fitting the method to the learner, not vice versa. This means choosing the techniques and activities that are appropriate for each particular task, context and learner, with a focus on motivation and helping learners become independent and inspired to learn more[3]. The modern teacher should use a variety of

methodologies and approaches, choosing techniques from each method that they consider effective and applying them according to the learning context and objectives.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, methods of foreign language teaching are based on a number of principles both didactic and specific (linguistic and psychological). The didactic principles generate a conceptual-pragmatic understanding and they are characterized by objectivity, systemicity, generality, dynamism and pragmatism. Methodology of teaching English also uses specific principles to make the learning objectives and competences become more efficient. The modern language teacher should fit the method to the learner by applying the Principled Eclecticism approach.

The principles and methods discussed in the article in no way claim finality: they are subject to change in the light of new facts exposed by linguists and language users.

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