

## **Communicative and Cognitive Approach to Teaching English to University Students**

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Contemporary methodology of teaching EFL is characterized by two main paradigms – communicative and cognitive. Within the framework of the communicative paradigm language and its analysis is connected mainly with acquisition of speech activity; within the framework of the cognitive paradigm language is related to cognition and processes associated with it. To solve a number of methodological problems a synthesis of the mentioned above paradigms is needed. That is why examining the contemporary strategy of teaching EFL we will consider the basic principles of both the communicative and the cognitive approaches.

The core issue of the communicative approach is that the process of language acquisition should be organized as a process of real communication in situational environment [8, p. 48]. Within this approach the main objective of language teaching is the communicative competence. The fundamental idea of the cognitive approach is that the learning process should be aimed at acquiring (or rather inferring) knowledge, structuring and systematically arranging its units, storing and applying them while getting adapted to reality [6, p. 14]. The ultimatum of cognitive language teaching is the cognitive competence. Considering the fact that learning another language enhances the learner's understanding of and insights into the world, the commonsensical idea would be to combine the communicative and cognitive approaches and receive an approach, which incorporates both communication and cognition. The impetus and rationale for it come from changing educational realities in the world, that presupposes the shift from an emphasis on teacher-centered to an

emphasis on learner-centered classrooms and from transmission-oriented to participatory or constructivist knowledge development. Thus, the main objective of communicative and cognitive teaching a foreign language is the communicative and cognitive competence as a developed ability to perform speech and mental activity while solving real and ideational problems via target language. To observe how to reach this objective we will consider the basic principles of the communicative and cognitive approach [2, p. 68].

The first principle means that *foreign language acquisition should be done through speech activity*, which is specifically human. Speech activity is looked upon as a purposeful, determined by language and stipulated by a situation process of reception and production of speech in the human interaction [3, p. 112].

The second principle concerns the conditions conducive for communicative and cognitive teaching. These conditions presuppose *stimulation of mental and speech activity of students*. It can be done through modeling problem situations, which include intellectual obstacles that students are supposed to overcome. Overcoming these obstacles requires performing such cognitive operations as analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization, inference, etc., which lead to cognitive development [9, p. 434].

The third principle implies *creating authentic situations of socialization* that ensures and specifies its motivational and natural character. Authentic situations are made due to applying verbal and non-verbal means of communication [5, p. 63].

The fourth principle specifies the importance of *taking into consideration students' epistemological styles* (empirical, rational and metaphorical). These are basically the ways via which a person cognizes the world and acquires knowledge [11, p. 137]. In the learning process these styles may be correlated with the relevant types of instructional information, such as models, charts, algorithms, rules, cognitive metaphors, etc. which are most conducive for knowledge acquisition for each particular student.

The fifth principle deals with *students' linguistic personality development*. We support the idea that through language a person becomes part of social consciousness and only due to this fact his individual consciousness is developed. Since language is a medium of collective consciousness it is possible to speak of a personality as such which is part of social consciousness, has a language capacity and manifests in speech behavior, thus becoming a linguistic personality. It is defined as a combination of capacities and characteristics that stipulate a person's texts production. The model of linguistic personality development comprises semantic, cognitive and pragmatic levels [4, p. 3].

The sixth principle emphasizes the assumption that *learning a foreign language conduces and facilitates students' worldview formation*. Here the idea is highlighted that the processes of foreign language learning and worldview development are interrelated. A particular concern of this article is an individual's cognitive activity through which the worldview and its main constituent – language representation of the world – are developed. The cognitive activity is looked upon as a triad consisting of three overlapping stages: acquisition of information, its incorporation into the mind and its operation in speech [7, p. 40].

The objective to develop students' worldview presumes constructing in their minds a model of acculturation – an abstract schema aiming at a person's successful adaptation to an alien culture. The model surmises two manifestations: 1) the ethnocentric manifestation based on recognition of priority of one's own culture; 2) the ethnorelative manifestation based on recognition of equality of both native and alien cultures. Here the idea is highlighted that in the process of English language acquisition students should focus on ethnorelative interaction with an alien culture [10, p. 55].

The seventh principle *accentuates the requirement of students' knowledge space development*. Knowledge space is defined as a corpus of structured knowledge units – frames, scripts, schemata, etc. – which are interrelated and connected to support the functioning of the cognitive system of a person [1, p. 203]. Knowledge

units are supposed to be the concepts of different levels of abstraction and complexity. Concepts are thought to be the results of cognition. It means that by analyzing, comparing and integrating different concepts in the process of cognition a person forms new concepts in his mind. In concepts linguistic and cognitive experience of a person is concentrated and crystallized [6, с. 3.]. Thus, concepts may be considered “the constructive mental blocks” of the conceptual representation of the world, or knowledge space of a person.

The eighth principle maintains the idea that *in the process of English language acquisition students’ multiple intelligences are developed and applied*. The notion of multiple intelligences was introduced by H. Gardner. He defined it as the ways through which a person perceives and processes information in the acts of cognition. Among the multiple intelligences H. Gardner distinguishes the linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, bodily-kinesthetic and naturalist intelligences [12, p. 62]. In learning a foreign language we emphasize mainly the role of the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences though other types of intelligences are nonetheless involved in this process.

Considering the mentioned above we arrive at the conclusion that in the process of foreign language acquisition both the communicative and the cognitive paradigms are combined. The combination of these paradigms results in the communicative and cognitive approach to language teaching. This approach is established on the basic principles which accentuate the necessity to develop not only communicative but also cognitive skills and capacities of students that will be reflected in relevant competences.

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