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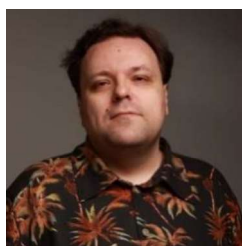
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### **STIMULATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING BY BUILDING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS MAJORING IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**Abstract.** Teaching English to students majoring in international relations (IR) encompasses specialized methodologies designed to provide students with the language skills necessary to communicate effectively in a globalized and diplomatically complex field. As English has become the dominant lingua franca in international discourse, the demand for proficient speakers of IR has increased dramatically, prompting teachers to adapt their teaching strategies to these specific professional requirements. The significance of this topic lies in its relevance to the growing interconnectedness of global affairs, where fluency in English is essential for negotiating, analyzing, and collaborating with international stakeholders. Ukraine nowadays is in great need of highly professional specialists in all spheres of life including international relations. Highly skilled specialists in international relations with high levels of English language proficiency establish Ukraine as a developed democratic country of the World's Community.

It is no secret that the English language has always been taught in Ukraine. This article makes some observations concerning merits as well as defects of methods of teaching English in the past and discusses approaches, syllabuses, models, and techniques proposed for the teaching of foreign languages that are effectively used now. It makes an overview of Comprehension Approach, Natural Approach, Functional-Notional Syllabus and Proficiency-Oriented Approach. It describes and evaluates the Direct Method, the Functional-Notional Approach, the Structural Approach, the Audio-Lingual Method, the Situational Method, the Intensive Language Model, the Functional-Notional Approach and the Comprehension Approach. Finally, it advocates for Communicative language teaching (CLT) approach as one of the best methods to foster communicative competence that helps to achieve the best results with International Relations students. This methodology not only prepares students for real-world interactions, develops critical thinking and fosters adaptability, but also polishes their English



language proficiency, thereby improving their academic performance and professional readiness in a competitive global arena.

**Keywords:** EFL/ESL; teaching English; international relations university students; English language class; methods of teaching English; communicative language teaching approach.

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### **СТИМУЛЮВАННЯ ВИВЧЕННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ШЛЯХОМ РОЗВИТКУ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНЦІЇ СТУДЕНТІВ УНІВЕРСИТЕТІВ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТІ «МІЖНАРОДНІ ВІДНОСИНИ»**

**Анотація.** Викладання англійської мови студентам, які спеціалізуються на міжнародних відносинах (МВ), охоплює спеціалізовані методики, розроблені для того, щоб надати студентам мовні навички, необхідні для ефективного спілкування в глобалізованій та дипломатично-складній сфері. Оскільки англійська мова стала домінуючою Лінгва франка в міжнародному дискурсі, попит на досвідчених фахівців міжнародників з високим рівнем володіння англійською мовою різко зріс, що спонукало викладачів адаптувати свої стратегії викладання до цих конкретних професійних вимог. Значення цієї теми полягає в її актуальності для зростаючої взаємопов'язаності глобальних справ, де вільне володіння англійською мовою є важливим для ведення переговорів, аналізу та співпраці з міжнародними зацікавленими сторонами. Сьогодні Україна має велику потребу в високопрофесійних фахівцях у всіх сферах життя, включаючи міжнародні відносини. Висококваліфіковані фахівці з міжнародних відносин з високим рівнем володіння англійською мовою роблять Україну розвиненою демократичною країною світового співтовариства.

Не секрет, що англійська мова завжди викладалася в Україні. У цій статті зроблено деякі спостереження щодо переваг, а також недоліків методів викладання англійської мови в минулому, а також обговорено підходи, навчальні програми, моделі та методи, запропоновані для викладання іноземних мов, які ефективно використовуються зараз. У ньому наведено огляд підходу, орієнтованого на розуміння, природного підходу, функціонального навчального плану та підходу, орієнтованого на володіння мовою. Описано та оцінено прямий метод, функціональний підхід, структурний підхід, аудіо-лінгвістичний метод, ситуативний метод, інтенсивну



мовну модель, та підхід, орієнтований на розуміння. У статті пропагується комунікативний підхід до викладання мови (CLT) як один із найкращих методів розвитку комунікативної компетентності, який допомагає досягти найкращих результатів у студентів-міжнародників. Ця методологія не лише готує студентів до реальної взаємодії, розвиває критичне мислення та сприяє адаптивності, але й удосконалює їхнє володіння англійською мовою, тим самим покращуючи їхню академічну успішність та професійну готовність на конкурентній світовій арені.

**Ключові слова:** EFL/ESL; викладання англійської мови; студенти міжнародники; курс англійської мови; методика викладання англійської мови; комунікативний підхід.

**Introduction.** Plenty of new approaches, syllabuses, models, and techniques have been proposed for the teaching of foreign languages. Different approaches have fallen in and out of fashion, the result of it being the fact that most of the nations of the World communicate with each other in English. We wish for our country to join this community on equal terms. For this we must communicate with people of the World using the English Language that has long become a Lingua Franca. Our ardent wish is to encourage students to move to learning English with eagerness and desire. We believe that young people are very good at accepting everything new. So, the only solution is to teach them effectively, using communicative methods and techniques, so that they could speak the foreign language at the end of the course.

Teaching methods represent patterns of teaching actions designed to achieve certain learning outcomes. Different teaching methods make particular assumptions about the nature of language, learning processes, the roles of teachers and learners, and the kinds of learning activities and instructional materials. Terms like "approach," "method," "model," and "syllabus" have been used to describe some current methodologies, for example, Comprehension Approach, Natural Approach, Functional-Notional Syllabus, Total Physical Response, and Proficiency-Oriented Approach. Teaching techniques and learning activities are the specific means by which methods are implemented into actual classroom practice. A number of considerations need to be kept in mind in deciding the appropriateness of certain teaching strategies for accomplishing specific learning goals. Linguistic accuracy is an important issue in international relations that needs to be addressed along with methodological questions. The development of grammatical and phonological accuracy needs to be approached in terms of other language subskills as well as learner characteristics.

Teaching methodology, according to Richards, encompasses "the activities, tasks, and learning experiences used by the teacher within the teaching and learn-



ing process" [11, p.35]. It is not necessarily a set of fixed principles or teaching procedures but a dynamic, creative process reflecting assumptions about language (How do we describe or talk about language?), proficiency (What does it mean to know a language?), and learning (How should we teach language?).

**The overview of teaching methods and approaches.** According to the commonly accepted classification there exist the following methods of teaching English: Grammar-Translation Method; Direct Method; Reading Method; Structural Approach; Audio-Lingual Method; Situational Method; Functional-Notional Approach.

**The Grammar-Translation Method**, inherited from the teaching of Latin, focused on learning the rules of grammar and vocabulary from bilingual lists of words. Students engaged in translating passages from the target language to the native language, and vice versa. The substantial disadvantage of this method is obvious. Listening and speaking abilities were not developed. With the exception of reading sentences and passages aloud on certain occasions, most of the class time was devoted to reading and translation activities.

This method being the simplest, used to be very popular in the past, which resulted in a rather poor language acquisition.

**The Direct Method**, on the other hand, stressed listening and speaking. Language learning activities emphasized the direct association of words and phrases with objects and actions, without the use of the students' native language. Oral communication skills were developed in a carefully graded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.

Grammar was taught inductively, and new linguistic content was first introduced orally. Despite the emphasis on oral communication this method had some disadvantages. The ability to interact with written text was not developed as in the *Reading Method*, which advocated a reading knowledge of a foreign language, to be achieved through the gradual introduction of vocabulary and grammatical structures in simplified reading selections.

**The Structural Approach**, known variously as the oral approach, organized the presentation of language in terms of basic linguistic patterns (subject-verb-object, question forms, simple and complex sentences). It advocated the development of language skills in a particular sequence: (1) listening, (2) speaking, (3) reading, and (4) writing. Language was identified with speech, and written language was seen as an extension of the oral modality.

**The Audio-Lingual Method**, an extension of the structural approach, was also concerned about language patterns and the primacy of speech. Principles based on behavioural psychology led to extensive use of techniques such as dialogue memorization, choral repetition, and pattern drills.



*The Situational Method* linked the structural patterns of language to the situations or context of occurrence. Language activities were to be seen as part of a whole complex of events involving participants, objects, and actual situations. Language learning was seen as habit formation involving linguistic input, repetition, and practice.

*The Functional-Notional Approach*, serves more like a syllabus or curriculum model for sequencing language functions in relation to situations, grammatical features, vocabulary, and classroom activities. The approach links language pragmatic functions (thanking, directing, apologizing, suggesting) with grammatical notions.

Some of the more recent approaches to reflect a communicative orientation, which in my opinion is most effective in creating communicative competence, include: Dartmouth Rassas's Intensive Language Model; Comprehension Approach; Total Physical Response (TPR); Natural Approach; Silent Way, etc.

*The Intensive Language Model* retains many of the tenets of the audio-lingual approach from the 1950s. The approach places considerable attention on the use of pattern drill practice. The intensive course requirements instituted by Rassas involve a three-hour class period per day for five days a week during a 10-week period. The first hour of class is spent with the master teacher, who presents and explains the language content; the second hour is devoted to intensive drill practice with an apprentice teacher, and the third hour involves additional practice in the language laboratory with a person monitoring the students' performance [10 p.368].

*The Comprehension Approach* is based on the premise that students must first develop the ability to comprehend and process language before they can speak it. This approach stresses activating the individual's internal mental processes as the basic component in second language learning. In order to develop listening comprehension skills, teachers should (1) present the material in ways that can be understood by the students, (2) verify that students have understood what has been presented, and (3) prepare students to infer meaning from context. Speaking is delayed to the point where students choose to speak, as in the case of the pre-production period that children pass through when acquiring their native language.

Two of the best methods, associated with the comprehension approach are *Total Physical Response (TPR) and the Natural Approach*.

*The Natural Approach* recognizes comprehension as the basic skill that promotes language acquisition. Three stages of language acquisition are proposed in the Natural Approach, along with its various techniques.

These different methodologies for language teaching have met with varying degrees of success and failure. What is amazing is that there are some examples



of successful language learners for different and even contradictory methods and the question of which overall method is superior remains to be answered. The emphasis on the learner as an active agent in the acquisition process is associated with the development of communicative competence.

**Conceptualisation and description of language proficiency.** An important step in the study of second language learning is the conceptualisation and description of language proficiency, which can be looked at as our goal and thus be defined in terms of objectives or standards of teaching English.

Learning a foreign language involves a broad range of linguistic competencies, skills, and abilities. Terms like *linguistic, communicative, interactional, and sociolinguistic competence* have been used to describe the multitude of abilities or skills that constitute the mastery of a language. The concept of language proficiency has been depicted in relation to the components of language itself, face-to-face communication, and comprehension of written texts. Notions of communicative abilities can involve various systems of knowledge and skills, including grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence.

Most important questions connected with the notion of communicative competence are: 1. What does it mean to know a language? 2. How is communicative competence characterized?

The notion of *language "competence"* introduced by Chomsky has been used to characterize a speaker's underlying knowledge of the system of a language, including the rules for generating grammatical sentences [2, 87]. *Linguistic competence* has been viewed as the native speaker's internalized grammar, consisting of a complex system of rules and operating at different levels – syntactic, lexical, phonological, semantic – to determine the organization of grammatical structures. This type of competence cannot be observed directly and is likened to an idealized speaker-hearer who does not display any overt errors associated with memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention, and hesitation phenomena such as repetition, false starts, pauses, or omissions.

**Teaching communicative competence.** The term *communicative competence* has been used to depict a range of ability wider than the one associated with a grammatical knowledge of language [6.p.270]. This broader notion of competence involves such aspects as the social and functional rules of language use along with the skills needed to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific sociocultural situations (7p.27] Paulston for example, has distinguished between *linguistic competence* and *communicative competence* to underscore the essential difference between (1) knowledge of language rules and structures and (2) the knowledge that enables a person to communicate effectively in face-to-face interactions [9 p.354].



The notion of *communicative competence* has been characterized in a number of ways. The depiction of linguistic abilities according to a structural view segments language elements into discrete, independently measurable components. Hernandez-Chavez, Burt, and Dulay, for example, characterize language in terms of a three-dimensional matrix consisting of 64 possible separate abilities. One of the dimensions consists of the aspects of language associated with vocabulary, grammatical structures, pronunciation, and semantics. The second dimension includes the oral and written modalities of language. The third dimension brings in sociolinguistic performance with respect to usage area [5p.45]. Oiler, on the other hand, argues for the existence of a global language factor that accounts for most of the performance differences in a wide variety of language proficiency measures [8p.418]. This single-concept expression of proficiency, described as "expectancy grammar," is strongly related to cognitive variables and academic achievement, and it appears to exist across all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing components).

Cummins has proposed a twofold approach to characterizing language proficiency. Initially, he distinguished between basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) [3, p.179; 4 p.37].

It is important to note that *communicative competence* here is used to refer to both knowledge and skill in using language. Actual communication involves the realization of various underlying systems of knowledge [1p.83].

**Conclusion.** Knowing a language and being able to use it as a native speaker encompasses many linguistic competencies, verbal skills, and systems of knowledge. For the language teacher, an understanding of the concept of proficiency is an important consideration for establishing program goals, designing learning tasks, and assessing student linguistic development.

In our work we are trying to adhere to the main principles of communicative techniques. The meaning of the concept or word is rendered not through translation of it into the native language, but through giving it the appropriate explanation in the language of study. This technique has originally been known as *Berlitz method* of teaching a foreign language. We are quite positive that one who is trying to acquire a foreign language by means of translation neither gets hold of its spirit nor becomes accustomed to think in it. The way to a foreign language should resemble an imitation of the natural process by which a child learns his mother tongue with the advantage that the language material has been methodically and systematically arranged for him by an experienced teacher. Our purpose lies in seeking ways of implementation of this principle with university students, for we are absolutely convinced of its advantages over the old traditional wearisome work with grammar and translation exercises.



One of the difficulties that we face in our job is a *psychological barrier* which very often arises due to the natural fear of a foreign speech as well as defects of our system of teaching (the students are afraid to make a mistake and as a result they are afraid to speak).

Language is the means of communication and the goal is to create *the atmosphere of friendly communication*.

Another very important aspect in the language acquisition is *practicing the language*. In this respect, it is indispensable to establish good relationship with the universities of the world so that our students had an opportunity to go abroad, and practice their linguistic proficiency. Language, being an inseparable part of culture and history of the country, gives great opportunities for development of friendship, mutual understanding and sympathetic and kind relations between people.

We hope that close studies of innovative ways of teaching methodology will provide new perspectives in stimulating language acquisition.

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