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К вопросу о взаимосвязанной реализации практической и воспитательной целей урока иностранного языка

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Аннотация. Статья, основанная на практическом опыте автора по подготовке будущих преподавателей иностранного языка и по повышению квалификации действующих, подчеркивает необходимость правильной интерпретации практической цели урока иностранного языка и предупреждает об опасности недооценки его воспитательной цели. Статья содержит практические рекомендации для начинающих преподавателей относительно возможности взаимосвязанной реализации обозначенных целей урока иностранного языка.

Ключевые слова: воспитательная цель урока иностранного языка, практическая цель урока иностранного языка, профессиональная подготовка преподавателя иностранного языка, уместность

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Original article

How to Set and Achieve the Practical and the Educational Goals of the Foreign Language Classroom Adequately

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Abstract. The article based on the author's experience in teacher-training and teacher development, looks at the importance of setting truly communicative goals in the foreign language classroom and at the danger of neglecting its educational goals. The author gives practical recommendations to commencing teachers on how to prevent typical teaching mistakes related to misinterpretation of teaching goals.

Keywords: educational goal of the foreign language classroom, practical goal of the foreign language classroom, teacher training and teacher development, appropriateness

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INTRODUCTION

Today we all admit that the primary, practical, aim of the foreign language classroom is developing students' communicative skills, their ability to achieve communication as a result of successful interaction in inter-lingual and cross-cultural situational contexts [Шукин, 2007]. But, in fact, very often we just pay lip service to the idea and fail to achieve the pragmatic goal of the foreign language lesson. Moreover, we underestimate the role of supporting, educational goal of the foreign language classroom.

SAYING AND DOING ARE TWO THINGS

Saying and doing are, indeed, two things. To prove the point we can quote a few of the typical exercises and activities that both in-service teachers and teacher-trainees are likely to set in class:

- Explain the meaning of the following words. Consult the dictionary if necessary: foe, upstart, intimidated, ransom, counterpart, aspiration, avid, avocation, to foster, to kindle.
- Fill in the blanks with the words from the previous exercise. Compare your answers with the answer key.
- Make up your own sentences using the words from exercise 1.
- Make up a short text using as many expressions from the text as possible.

The activities presented above go to prove that many in-service teachers and teacher-trainees rather think that the main goal of the foreign language classroom is to expand students' range of language means, they believe that the more words / lexical units or grammar patterns their students know, the better their language proficiency is.

What is wrong about this assumption is that to know a language unit does not only mean to know its spelling, pronunciation, or even combinability. When a student learns a new word, special attention must be paid to its use. Behind every word lies a notion specific to the foreign culture.

It is much more important to use language means adequately and appropriately, taking into account the situational context. Foreign language teaching cannot focus only on linguistic accuracy, i.e. the correct application of grammar rules or accurate pronunciation.

We believe that what accounts for the limited repertoire of the classroom exercises demonstrated by both in-service teachers and teacher-trainees is their learning experience, this is what they are

used to seeing in foreign language textbooks and classrooms, which are not always focused on simulating and encouraging real communication.

Successful interaction largely depends on how appropriately you use language means, how well you take into consideration the setting, the relations between the interlocutors (superiority / inferiority / equality), their motives for interaction. We should view the achievement of communicative goals as the purpose and the result of interlingual and intercultural interaction in the target language community. Real foreign language proficiency suggests that language users meet the linguistic and cultural expectations of foreign partners.

At the basis of any communication, there is a shared knowledge of the world, the situation and the subject of communication. In order to understand what is said, it is necessary to know the sociocultural background of what is said, in particular it is important to know how to use words appropriately.

Therefore, cross-cultural communicative competence is the ability of the language learner to interact effectively and appropriately with people from the culture of their second language. It includes knowledge of the cultural norms and rules of the native speaker and a range of skills, attitudes and values crucial to reaching an understanding between two speakers of different cultures.

Learning sets of words by heart does not help students overcome their language barrier or encourage them to use language means to the point. That is why when training would-be teachers it is important to appeal to their creativity and explain to them in plain language that filling-in blanks or opening brackets is a reasonable exercise for independent work outside the classroom while our limited classroom time should be devoted to developing our students' speaking, listening or reading skills. We should try and make the most of the teaching time available.

As for the exercises in making-up sentences of your own, it is rather a waste of time and effort. What we mean to say is that when you want to practise a collocation, like 'enjoy doing something', it is much more efficient to ask students to speak

- about what they enjoy doing
- about what their friend enjoys doing
- about what their family enjoy doing

Question-answer work like that is much more motivating as it relies on the principle of appealing to the students' own life experience when encouraging them to use the target language.

Another important goal of the foreign language classroom is the educational goal, the goal of building students' character, of teaching them certain

moral values. To quote some experienced teachers, "Every day... we entrust our children to you – the teachers. ...You work your special magic with your students. You instruct them, discipline them, guide them, coach them and inspire them to fulfill their potential. You teach social skills as well as social studies, self-esteem as well as spelling, citizenship as well as science, tolerance as well as typing, and enthusiasm for learning as well as content mastery" [Canfield, Hansen, 2002, p. XIX].

Unfortunately, very often the educational goal is either neglected altogether or treated very formally while trying to achieve the educational goal through developing students' intercultural competence, we can prepare them for interaction with people of other cultures; enable them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other distinctive perspectives, values and behaviours; and help them to see that such interaction is an enriching experience [Byram, Gribkova, Starkey, 2002].

With this understanding in view, it is important to emphasize that developing a cross-cultural identity does not and should not presuppose accepting foreign values, morals, or attitudes. A bilingual person is not necessarily a bicultural one. Having an idea of other cultures' view of the world, way of life, traditions and customs, their system of values does not mean sharing those values or keeping up their traditions, or seeing the world through their prism.

Let us quote some rather questionable exercises that teacher-trainees suggest doing in class while studying a topic like "Dealing with Cheating and Plagiarism in class".

- What do you think you should be able to do to be a good cheater?
- When did you last cheat? What do you usually do to prepare to cheat in an exam?
- What are other ways of cheating in a test other than copying from your peers? (Think of other ways of cheating).
- Share your personal experience of cheating.
- Work in pairs, make up a list of cheating techniques and discuss their advantages and disadvantages. Decide which technique is the most effective.
- Write a letter to your foreign friend about your experience in cheating. Ask him/her questions about his cheating experience.
- What precautions do you think one should take to be a successful cheater?
- What traits of character should a good cheater have?

Obvious as it might seem, not all students understand that questions and exercises like that are totally inappropriate in class and have no

educational value. Sometimes you may just read out those instructions and let those who suggested discussing the above-mentioned questions hear the reaction of the majority of students, who do understand what is right and what is wrong, what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in our society. Sometimes you have to explain very clearly what makes a set of questions or activities like that inappropriate. And, of course, you should suggest a different set of questions and activities:

Do you think it is appropriate to cheat in an exam?
 What makes people / students cheat?
 How can we prevent cheating in an exam?
 What would you do if you saw your fellow-student cheat?
 Work out a School (University) Code of Conduct.

No doubt, culture is determined by language and it is by language that people absorb cultural information and their own system of beliefs. Since language carries cultural information, its usage is culturally significant. That is why another motivating topic for discussing moral values is the problem of using slang. The following activities can be set in class.

- Try to prove that slang and inappropriateness go together
- Try to explain why some British schools decide to ban slang
- Try to prove that it's next to impossible to ban slang
- Speak about your attitude to slang (What is your definition of slang?
- Is it appropriate to use slang? Should it be banned / can it be banned? Etc.)
- Split into pairs or groups of three and discuss the following:

Should slang be banned?

One of you will report the results of the discussion to the rest of the class

- Act out a 30-minute radio / TV debate (talk-show) devoted to appropriate use of language. The participants are:

(*Student 1* or the Teacher) – The host(hostess) of the show (your job is to make the show exciting for the listeners (viewers) to enjoy it. The host knows that his listeners (viewers) like the programme most when there is plenty of argument and conflict. He has several provocative questions up his sleeve.

Student 2 – A slang expert, whose point of view is that 'appropriateness' simply means using the right variety of language for the right context – using business jargon in business meetings, formal English in exams or slang in school playground, that language isn't just about communication, there is a strong social,

political and emotional charge to it, that slang can cause a lot of damage, that slang is 'sabotage' of literacy.

The other students play the parts of journalists representing different media (the choice is up to the students). They are ready to ask the slang expert challenging questions.

- Divide into several groups and stage a debate.
 - Put the following motion to vote – (e.g.) **Slang should be banned in school** – and divide into groups according to your point of view.

- Group 1 is in favour of the motion
 - Group 2 is against the motion
 - Group 3 is made up of those who are still in two minds
 - Think of arguments to prove your point of view and to try and bring your opponents over to your side.

When the debate is over you can put the motion to vote again.

The debate will be chaired by one of the students. The chair-person's job is to make sure that everyone can share their point of view.

As the reader may have noticed, we have tried to emphasize the importance of the notion of appropriateness, appropriate use of language means, appropriate choice of teaching materials and learning activities. Appropriateness means the extent to which a use of language matches the linguistic and sociolinguistic expectations and practices of native speakers of the language. When producing an utterance, a speaker needs to know that it is grammatical, and also that it is suitable (or appropriate) for a particular situation [Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 2002].

Appropriateness as a skill is often seen as something that learners will 'absorb' naturally with the acquisition of the foreign language, which is not always the case. This is why we cannot agree that appropriateness can be taught and learned at the final stages of language acquisition, when one has mastered grammar and vocabulary. We should explain the relevance of the notion of appropriateness from the very start.

Learners instinctively tend to resort to the standards of their own culture when they socialize. However, cultural standards and connotations are not universal and rather unlikely to be shared by members of different language communities. The appropriate ways of using language of the two linguistic communities may be in conflict. In such cases, one can speak of sociolinguistic interference. Sociolinguistic interference can affect our students reading or listening comprehension. Trying to interpret the author's message it is crucial to remain

unbiased, on the one hand, and not to accept the message uncritically, on the other.

Let us look at how the practical and the educational goals can go together. For example, when we teach the language of mass media, one of the common exercises is reporting the latest news, and we encourage students to rely on authentic sources, which is the right thing to do. But if we just let our reproduce a piece of news as close to the original as possible, we'll be definitely developing their language skills, but we may run the risk of missing our educational goals.

We know only too well that foreign media are not always unbiased, to put it mildly, particularly when covering news about Russia, and we should warn our students about it. Otherwise, we'll hear our students reproduce foreign interpretation of things uncritically, we'll hear them speak about 'Russian aggression, the occupation of Eastern Europe by Russia, the annexation of Crimea', etc. What we need to do here is ask our students the following questions.

1. What is the author's purpose in writing the article?
2. Who is the intended audience of the article?
3. What problem does the author of the article address?
4. Identify the sentence illustrating the author's message.
5. Is the article biased? Is the bias obvious?
6. What background knowledge do you need to have to be able to understand the text?
7. How is British / American / foreign culture (beliefs, values, practices) reflected in the article?

And, obviously, teachers should ask themselves the following question:

What would my learners need to learn about culturally and linguistically to be able to understand and interpret the text adequately?

Setting and achieving educational goals, the teacher can develop his students' cross-cultural communicative competence, help learners identify the socio-cultural norms of the society of their target language in order to breach the gap between the two cultures.

Students should be able to

- identify a variety of linguistic features of written English political discourse;
- distinguish between objective information and fake news;
- analyze persuasive techniques as well as recognize politically correct language.

Interpretation of the message sent by a member of a different culture involves a variety of skills, starting with a thorough understanding of the original

text. For an adequate interpretation you should be aware of several things: the author's purpose in writing the article, his / her point of view and possible bias [Фролова, Дмитриева, 2022].

And when teaching students to report news, we should encourage them to think critically, and train them to use a variety of reporting verbs, like *to claim*, *to allege*, *to insist*, *to suggest*, and many others. And if we do it properly, our students will be able to recognize persuasive techniques which aim to manipulate public opinion, will be able to see the difference between fake news and objective news coverage. If they are able to recognize bias, they will report the latest news using such verbs as *claim* or *allege* (Western media claim that... /western media allege that...), or using introductory phrases like *according to the author of the article*, etc, thus distancing themselves from the author. The point is that interpretation is a two-facet activity: apart from a profound understanding of the original text, it means creating a new text based on the compression of the text you have read [Ibd.].

Learning about the world of the foreign language native speakers is necessary in order

to understand the specific rules of language use, shades of meaning, political, cultural and historical connotations. Understanding the political climate, the social situation in the country is vital, because without this information one cannot fully understand facts related to the everyday life of the foreign community.

SUMMARY

The foreign language classroom should aim to achieve not only its pragmatic goal of developing language and communicative skills, but should set educational goals as well.

What is important both linguistically and culturally is to teach students to use language appropriately.

Appropriateness includes the knowledge of registers used in different sociolinguistic contexts, the taboos of the other culture, the politically correct terms for different notions and the way specific attitudes or values are expressed and imposed through language.

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