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Development of students creative abilities on the basis of innovative foreign language teaching technologies

The article describes the opportunities to develop students creative abilities by foreign language means on the basis of communicative and metaproject educational technologies in the course of working at metaprojects. Each metaproject creates the conditions for students creative abilities development.

Keywords: *creative abilities, personality creative qualities, metaproject educational technology, metaproject activity, creative experience.*

The beginning of the XXIst century was marked with significant re-thinking of the essence and critical specific features of the educational paradigms – both in the Russian and international educational context.

Educational theory and practice are focused on the ideas of the model pluralism and the inter-model cooperation, combining all best achievements of psychological and educational sciences and harmonizing various scientific approaches. Such trends are typical for all levels of linguistic background: negation of the «grammar-to-language» learning set, acknowledgement of the language not only as the teaching objective but also as the teaching aid, recognition of its value for the development of creative abilities and general-cultural competence of a person.

Foreign language teaching within the educational framework of the Russian Federation is considered in terms of a specific socially valuable practice, the core of which constitutes a creative capture of the mankind cultural heritage. Productive, creative approach to teaching foreign languages provides for perception of a dialogue between cultures, realization of differences caused by historically established cultural background, development of the ability for adequate perception and understanding of the person belonging to a different culture and interaction with him in a successful and creative way.

Linguodidactics is concerned with the functions related to learning the foreign language aimed at the development of cognitive and creative qualities of a person:

– creative development of educational and organisational skills on the basis of introducing various regimes of educational activity and adaptation thereof to individual peculiarities of cognitive activity: language case study, dialogue with computer, audio records, various types of text processing, improvement of memorizing technique, etc.;

– development of educational and intellectual skills of a cognitive and creative nature: mastering the methods of abstraction from specific wordings to the rules and vice versa, developing logical capability within studying the grammar structures, developing capability to differentiate the language phenomena (by number, tense, modality, etc.) , building-up the methods of comparison, systematization, revealing of similarities and differences, etc.;

- productive development of educational and information skills: peculiar features of the foreign language reading, finding and setting the response to the stated question, using the footnotes to the text, looking for information in grammar reference-books and dictionaries, applying new information technologies, etc.;
- improvement of educational and communicative skills on the basis of creative interaction elements, specified by the subject nature: perception and understanding of speech produced by the tutor, classmates, information provided by mass media; understanding the peculiarities of a conversation partner's verbal behaviour, his testing and evaluating judgements, comments, instructions, building the adequate mode of communication.

Focus of the foreign language teaching on the development of creative abilities of a person provides for the necessity of applying the innovative educational technologies – communicative, dialogue-disputable, project (meta-project) teaching.

Following the experts' opinion (M.E. Bershadskiy, M.V. Klarin, P.I. Tret'yakov, A.V. Khutorskoy and others), the common background of various innovative teaching models having research orientation is the integrative /in our investigation – meta-project/, research educational activity, i.e. special activity aimed at the development of learning experience – research activity, heuristic, project, communicative, dialogue, disputable, play activities. The majority of the research teaching models are based on the students' productive activity and are mainly characterised by "process orientation" (M.V. Klarin), which is expressed in teaching to think, to acquire the research activity procedures [1, 4]. Herewith, transition of the processual element of teaching to the informative one is performed through a number of actions: focused searching procedures training, developing the reflective behaviour culture, introducing the culture of disputes holding, developing the emotional and personal aspects, disputable, playing and project activities, etc.

Two innovative technologies are considered in details below – the communicative teaching technology and meta-project educational technology.

The communicative foreign language teaching technology is built on the following principles.

1. Personality-oriented communication, allowing to focus on personal interests of a learner beyond the foreign language learning, the level of his foreign language proficiency, speech competence, psychological features of a learner, on his status in the student community. Thus, for example, while learning the topic "A man and his family" more advanced students can be given the task to express their opinion on the following issues: Impact of social changes on family life in modern society; Challenges for young families in our country; Young people in the west are not quick about making a family. Why?

The less advanced students can be offered the following questions for discussion: Modern family; problems and functions; A classic family; The most frequent problems discussed in mass media.

2. The principle of group interaction, which includes the following comm modes: "a tutor – a student"; "a student – a student", a student – students". Gradual involvement of all students into verbal communication is provided within this scheme.

Thus, arranging the students language practice on the topic "Man and nature" the first questions on environmental protection and present day ecological situation are introduced through a scheme "a tutor – student 1 – student 2" and etc., then other students "are included" into the dialogue and the tutor joins the conversation only in case of difficulty, he involves passive students into discussion.

3. Situational principle. The background of this principle includes the selection of topics and issues for discussion, which are more understandable and intelligible for consideration in English. At the same time a certain space should be provided for involving new foreign words, so that the communicative language course development proves to be efficient. The set of situations both less difficult and more complicated is developed. For example, on the topic "Upbringing of children" the cases can be the following: "Bright memories of my childhood", "Right environment for kids emotional development", "Causes of childish pranks", "Like father, like son", "Generation gap", "Problems of awkward age", "Too many cooks spoil the broth".

4. Communicative teaching principle implies communication at every foreign language practical class. Each selected exercise presupposes real communication. The specialists believe that speech training exercises constitute the basis for gradual and at the same time rapid vocabulary expansion and grammar upgrading [3]. Our practice includes a set of exercises with thematic units: A Man and his Family; Children upbringing; A person's character, temper, feelings and emotions; Man and Nature.

5. Functionality principle. As it's known, speech activity includes three elements – lexical, grammar, phonetic and it is necessary to organize such teaching process which will equip the students with new speech units (vocabulary and grammar forms acquisition within consistent speech activity). For example, the following language models: Then why not send it to her husband? I'm not to be trifled with. It has been sent to you out of sheer malice.

6. Novelty principle, which aims the tutor applying the communicative teaching technology at selection and constant involvement of new speech events, change of the subject matter, topics for discussion, conversation partner, etc. Along with the above mentioned the authors of the technology recommend to use both the novelty (informational content) of the material and the novelty of a lesson planning model (its forms, methods, teaching techniques), as well as the novelty of its equipment. Memorizing in such cases becomes the speech activity product.

As far as the information novelty is defined by the curriculum itself and the practice activities, the novelty of the language classes organisation should be considered.

The English language classes are arranged through various educational forms: role play, business, imitation, situational games, conferences, round table discussions, etc. Instrumentation should be in compliance with the context of the game. The following topics of educational games could be given: "Teaching staff session", "People

we choose", "Students wedding", "New educational perspectives and their impact on human development".

Communication space can be organised in various ways in the course of communication. This can include – a classroom where the lesson is conducted according to the game context and the students perform the roles of a tutor and the learners; it can also be an aircraft bringing the "visitors" to London; or even the coffee bar where "the company staff" celebrates March, 8-th. etc.

Within the last years the project teaching technology has been considered as the method "destroying the school routine" (M. Epshteyn); the "attempt to release the tutor from responsibilities of the know-all oracle" (I. Chechel'); the "instrument of modulating something in one's own practice", the "technology aimed at the development of conceptual framework of the world" (I.V. Abakumova). The project teaching functions are especially important for the development of creative capacities of a person.

It should be noted that project methods as such have a long lasting history – about a century, but, as the specialist say, their potential is far from exhausting. In terms of innovations, the attention should be given to the developed by us metaproject educational technology (K.Yu. Kolesina). The basis of this technology constitutes the educational model of metacognition (M. Lipman, USA), which provides for the development of the learners' ability to philosophize, looking for the links between the cause and the effect, applying various ways and reasoning techniques within seeking for the answers to the questions they are interested in.

Currently the wording with prefix «meta-» is rather frequently used within the educational content design: metasubject content, metacognitive objectives, metaknowledge, etc. – as a significant means of assuring its integrity and holism. Thus, the metaproject educational technology is the most adequate way for the students to acquire metaknowledge.

We consider the metaproject foreign language teaching technology as a joint interactive personality- and socially orientated cognitive activity based on the interaction of students and a tutor, as well as with sources of information in the native and foreign languages. The metaproject students activity is considered as a consistent, creative, communicative and reflexive processes focused both on creative development of a metaproject in a foreign language and concurrent improvement of lexical, spelling, grammar, phonetic and other foreign language skills, familiarising with its linguo-cross-cultural peculiarities [2].

A real metaproject implemented by the students during their practical classes and then introduced to the senior pupils of the English gymnasium during teaching practice can be taken as an example.

The topic of the project is: «English is our native language, but we are citizens of different countries».

The project problematic area is based on the current opinions that the language is the culture beam of the country, in which communication, writing, literature, poetry in this language were historically established. But English is spoken in many coun-

tries, in which it is the "official language" – at the same time we are aware of the fact that culture, customs and traditions in these countries vary significantly. What are the common and distinctive features of life and culture of these countries and what is the importance of the language in this respect?

The participants of project work are offered a number of English speaking countries: Great Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and others.

The first stage "Introduction to project activity" helps the students to make their cognitive interests actual. These interests are connected with the preferences of this or that country, evaluation of the awareness degree of students, availability of sources and perhaps with presentative, non-conscious glamour of far-away countries. Creative thinking processes in this case are also intuitive and are connected with the hope for creative self-actualization within the future project activity.

The second stage "The project problematisation" requires many more creative efforts. It is necessary not only to outline objectives and tasks of the metaproject activity, but also to identify the survey outputs, stages of the project, not only in Russian, but also in English. At this stage of the project each participant has a fairly clear understanding of lack of his own knowledge in the field of project activity, that makes actual necessity to search for this knowledge, sources thereof, and in a number of cases a tutor may need to involve "coaching" and support motivation by other means.

The third stage "Project dip" specifies and develops a particular scheme of the metaproject activity for each project output on the basis of introducing the personality orientated and pragmatist approaches. The creative context reveals a particular importance of "assumption" of the appropriate project output, development of the project data card, a particular informative mainstreaming of "cultures dialogue".

Students' selection of this or that country plays a special role for all three preliminary stages of the project. The selection of Great Britain and the USA has not caused much thinking and disputes, these outputs of survey found their supporters at once (more familiar with culture, living conditions, traditions of these countries), Australia and New Zealand have drawn the attention by their exotics and poor awareness. Canada has become of interest for the project participants because of its close geographical location to Russia, some students were interested in additional information about this country. Thus, the linguo-cross-cultural aspects of the metaproject activity were actualized, that, in its turn, encourage the need for all types of the foreign language skills.

The most important objective of a tutor – the project supervisor at the above mentioned stages – is to ensure modeling in English the situation "dialogue between cultures" and outlining the survey activity aimed at investigation and comparison of the way of life, culture, living conditions in the English-speaking countries. That involves mainstreaming of both foreign language dialogue and monologue skills, dialogue speech practice is also improved.

In terms of a creative context these stages are of great importance, providing training and coaching of students in outlining the issue, objectives and tasks of a survey, hy-

pothesizing, identifying the project outputs and stages. As far as the project dip requires the written record of the metaproject agenda, the learner should put down in writing the aims, objectives, stages of his project activity, define the deadline for each stage implementation. The learners operate with such patterns of productive thinking as comparison, definition of the main, essential point, classification, systematization, etc.

The fourth stage "Project informatization" is characterised by strengthening the linguo-cross-cultural and cultural aspects of the project activity, stipulated by active search and enculturation, living conditions, way of life of the population of the selected country. The ability to orientate oneself in socio-cultural aspects of the population life activity is developed, socio-cultural power of observation, cultural focus, tolerance are developed too. Information search widens the range of abilities to concentrate on certain linguo-cross-cultural knowledge, compare thereof, fill in the charts and tables to summarize linguo-cross-cultural and cultural materials.

Within the project activity the learners acquire the skills of interpretation of linguistic and cultural facts in the surveyed sources of information (cross-cultural magazines, Internet web-sites, reference books, popular and fiction literature, etc.). They learn to select the most essential and background information, revealsimilar and distinctive features in various political and economic spheres of life of the given country, in education, public health services and etc., even if the lexical level is not enough – the elements of creative "second-guessing" are actualized.

Constant translations from Russian into English and vice versa facilitate active acquisition of the linguistic aspect of speech: spelling skills are improved, especially in terms of a new language material, lexical and grammar base is updated, phonetic aspect of speech is polished.

Informatization of the project activity in English provides for improvement of the lexical aspect of speech, besides not only due to the development of a potential vocabulary, but also due to new opportunities to use it in a broad and creative interpretation, acquisition of productive means of word formation.

The fifth and the sixth stages of project activity – "Summing-up the results of the project activity" and "Project defense" play a significant role not only for solidifying previously acquired linguistic, cross-cultural, cultural knowledge, phonetic aspect of speech, improvement of pronunciation skills. Self-assessment skills of the correct pronunciation, lexical and grammar composition of speech, mastering the conversational cliches of speech etiquette are developed.

However, mastering the numerous techniques of productive and creative activities providing for the development of personality creativity: curiosity, vision, creativity, inventiveness, tendency to experiment, the ability to see inconsistency, specify issues and hypotheses, carry out the independent research, lateral thinking, the ability to generate ideas have not less if not greater importance within the metaproject activity.

Implementation of innovative (communicative and metaproject) educational technologies within the teaching process and extra curriculum activity provide for

creating conditions for enrichment of students' intellect, their involvement into creative thinking activity, mastering the metacognitive expertise inspiring conscious management of one's own intellectual activity, as well as creative expertise – creative activity expertise and search for non-standard ways for solution.

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