



УДК 372.881.1

РАЗВИТИЕ АВТОНОМНОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ: РОЛЬ ОБУЧАЮЩЕГО И ОБУЧАЮЩЕГОСЯ

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DEVELOPMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AUTONOMOUS LEARNING: THE ROLES OF TEACHER AND LEARNER

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Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются некоторые аспекты автономии обучающего и обучающегося в обучении иностранным языкам. Одним из важнейших принципов автономии обучающегося является перемещение центра внимания от преподавания к обучению и, следовательно, акцентирование внимания не на преподавателе, а студенте. Это означает, что темп занятия может быть изменен, а участники образовательного процесса будут самостоятельно регулировать работу с учебным материалом, а также, при необходимости, видоизменять его. Таким образом, занятия должны проходить в сотрудничестве с обучающимися при выборе материала и методик обучения.

Ключевые слова: автономия преподавателя/студента; индивидуализация; самостоятельное обучение; дифференциация группы.

Abstract. This article deals with some aspects of teacher and learner autonomy in teaching foreign languages. One of the most important principles of learner's autonomy is the shift of the focal point of attention from teaching to learning and, therefore, the emphasis not on the teacher but on the student. This means that the pace of the lesson can be varied, and the participants of the educational process will independently regulate the work with educational material, and, if necessary, modify it. Thus, classes should be conducted in cooperation with students in selecting teaching material and methods.

Keywords: teacher/learner autonomy; individualization; self-study; group differentiation.

Introduction

The concept of student autonomy is not new, but it is often resorted to in regard to teaching foreign languages. Formerly, the terms "individualization" and "learner independence" were more preferable in teaching foreign languages, referring directly to the practice or place of study [1].

Currently, more attention is paid to the independent work of students in the process of learning, in particular, in learning foreign languages. In the present context, it is not enough to have knowledge relevant to a certain sphere of human activity. Students must be able to independently enrich their knowledge, engage in self-education [2]. The Concept of Modernization of Russian Education indicates that the society needs modernly educated, moral, entrepreneurial people who can independently make responsible decisions in the situation of choice, predicting their implications [3].

The process of Russia's entry into the European educational area was the reason for the revision of the national educational standards with the aim of adapting them to the common European requirements. Renovation of the Russian educational system is closely connected with rethinking of the boundaries of freedom and independence, that is, with increasing student responsibility for the results of the process of knowledge acquisition.

In the foreign tradition, the term autonomy is understood as independence of the student from the teacher and provides for the student's ability to participate in the formulation of goals and objectives of learning, assess their knowledge and skills, and learn foreign languages independently.

One of the most important principles of learners' autonomy is the shift of the focus of attention from teaching to learning and accentuation not on the teacher, but on the student. This may

seem a difficult task for both beginners and experienced teachers, who have always been at the center of attention and under control of the classroom.

Moving the emphasis from teaching to learning does not mean that the need for a teacher is brought into question. This means that the pace of the class can be changed, that those involved in the learning process will independently organize the work on the material of the textbook and the fact that the teacher can modify the content of the lesson. Classes in this case take place in cooperation with students, both in the choice of learning materials and methodology.

Such changes may seem too radical, but they are implemented all over the world. Students are given the opportunity to choose a topic and material for study and responsibility for the results of self-directed learning. The role of the teacher is purely mediatory. The assessment of homework assignments consists of the opinion of classmates and self-assessment.

Autonomous students are not only passive recipients of information; they are creators of their stock of knowledge, which are assessed by the community of students, i.e. their class. They have the opportunity and desire to learn independently and achieve success when they take responsibility for their education. It is their private matter - whether to study or not [4]. Leni Dam defines student autonomy as willingness to take responsibility for self-directed learning to meet their needs and goals. Autonomous student understands why he/she studies certain subjects and topics, takes responsibility for the outcomes, takes the initiative in planning and implementing educational activities and is ready and willing to evaluate his/her work [5]. Active participation of students and their responsibility for self-selected learning process is very important in teaching foreign languages. Students should be prepared to act independently in interaction with others as socially responsible individuals [6].

Learner autonomy presupposes his/her meaningful involvement in all aspects of the learning process. Learners become autonomous when they take responsibility for their own learning, that is - planning, performance and evaluation. The degree of autonomy increases with a serious attitude toward learning [7]. One of the most important factors affecting the formation of autonomy is self-assessment. Students should develop their own criteria for assessing the quality of their work, become independent of the teacher as the only person who assesses their strengths and weaknesses. This helps students make informed decisions about the next steps in the learning process and decreases dependence on the teacher. Despite the fact that the teacher is more experienced and competent, students should not wait for instructions on further steps in learning, since their main goal is to increase their level of knowledge and competence.

In the traditional approach to teaching teachers determine the course of a lesson and, thus, it's a direct teaching method. Autonomous learning, at first glance, may look chaotic. However, a teacher can partially give up control and share his/her own experience with students [8].

The prevailing view of educational psychologists regarding learning is that the acquisition of knowledge is intrinsic to the individual and requires exclusively individual effort. Accordingly, teachers perceive a class as a certain number of individual students, who sometimes gather in groups to practice their knowledge, and also that individual learning is more effective, while learning in class is more economical. From the point of view of social interaction, group work is the main form of learning activity, and individual learning is a way of concentrating on acquired knowledge and training for future collaborative work [9].

Encouragement of autonomy in learning is carried out by allowing students to make their own choices and make decisions about their learning in a thoughtful manner [10]. This means that students have the right to choose what and how they learn with encouragement / motivation from the teacher, who provides them with tools and means to make informed decisions about their learning, both in choosing the right material and learning strategy. The provision of independence should be gradual, given the age and scope of responsibility to which they are accustomed.

The teacher's role is to help students by immersing them in the linguistic and cultural environment and giving them the opportunity to practice a foreign language in a different way in the classroom. It is also necessary to take into account the problem of differentiation. Differentiation of

the group should take place in order to apply different approaches to learning, to develop practical lessons, in accordance with the needs of students and their individual qualities. In differentiated groups, one should consider the fact that students have different abilities, skills and background. All this influences the way they will learn [11].

An important role in implementation of autonomy in the classroom is to teach a variety of learning strategies and help students find suitable methods. Students should be provided with the means necessary to become more self-sufficient and independent.

In autonomous learning, a teacher does not play the role of information provider or source of knowledge, his/her role is more likely to be mediatory. Teachers control activities in the classroom and help students plan their education, both in the long-term and short-term. Teachers should establish close cooperation with the students and be convinced that all students know what is expected of them.

Conclusions

Teachers play the role of tutors. They must provide information to students and teach them to choose the best learning strategies. Students should be able to make an informed choice, that is, have a sound understanding of the strategy and enough time for experiments to find the one that is appropriate for a particular case. However, care should be taken not to impose the strategies that the teacher prefers on students [12]. Students and teachers in an autonomous learning environment interact constructively and learn from each other. Teachers help students learn about alternative strategies and learning styles [13].

Teachers facilitating student autonomy not only offer a variety of learning strategies, but also provide students with ample opportunities to test them under different circumstances. It is necessary to create an atmosphere in class that encourages such experiments and allows students to feel comfortable, share their findings with the teacher and classmates. Interaction of all participants of the educational process has a direct impact on the process of learning.

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