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**METHODOLOGICAL  
COMPETENCE  
OF A FOREIGN  
LANGUAGE TEACHER:  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
COMPONENT**

Статья посвящена рассмотрению комплексного подхода к понятию «методическая компетентность учителя иностранного языка». Авторы считают необходимой составляющей методической компетентности учителя владение психологическими знаниями, имеющими непосредственное влияние на овладение учащимися иностранным языком. Представлен обзор научной литературы по вопросу взаимосвязи данных психологических исследований в области общей психологии и психолингвистики с методикой обучения иностранным языкам, возможности их применения в практике обучения, а также подготовки специалиста.

**Ключевые слова:** методическая компетентность, психологический компонент, психолингвистика, язык и речь, механизмы порождения высказывания, механизмы запоминания и забывания.

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**The thematic justification** of this article is based on the necessity of complex approach to training professional competence to provide self-sufficiency, creativity and further professional growth of a specialist. Methodological competence of a future teacher of a foreign language comprises mastering knowledge of at least three scientific spheres - psychology, didactics and linguistics in their relation to the methods of teaching. [Лубянова, 2018; Лубянова, Золотарева, 2020; Золотарёва, Лубянова, 2018].

**Review of literature** is done to each part of the article as its **aim** is to introduce the psychological component of foreign language methodology (FLM) as an integral part of the professional competence of a foreign language teacher in different spheres of psychology. The material of the article comprises results of scientific research in such psychological areas as educational psychology, developmental psychology, psychology of speech and communication, general psychology in their relation to the methods of teaching a foreign language.

**The research is done by means** of science literature and data analysis, as well as experimental teaching and its analysis.

Psychological component is a important part of the complex methodological competence of a future foreign language teacher. It comprises different aspects of psychological knowledge beginning with educational psychology up to the basic notions of the mental activity of a human being.

In this article psychological component is regarded as a selective

complex of fundamental psychological data which are applied to foreign language teaching (FLT) for advanced training.

No process of education can do without scientific data of educational and developmental psychology. Speaking about foreign language methodology, we have to characterise them in brief.

Educational psychology which studies the process of bringing up and teaching children as a mode of *combined physical and mental* activity, is based on *psychological* principles, largely connected with the theoretical foundation of education in general and methods of teaching in particular.

Educational Psychology allows methodologists to determine the so-called *psychological content* of teaching, i.e. what habits and skills should be developed in pupils to master the language.

Educational psychology also helps FLM in selecting *techniques* for effective teaching and learning and answering such questions as:

- under what conditions pupils can learn words, phrases, sentence-patterns more effectively,
- how to ensure pupils' memorizing new words in an easier way,
- what psychological factors should be taken into consideration when imparting a new knowledge to pupils etc.

Developmental psychology is the scientific study of systematic psychological, emotional, and perceptual changes that occur in human beings over the course of their life span. Scientific data introduced by developmental psychology are taken into account in several applied fields, including: educational psychology, child psychopathology etc.

Developmental psychology complements several other basic psychological research areas including social psychology, cognitive psychology, ecological psychology, and comparative psychology.

In the context of foreign language teaching the relation to psychology of speech, psycholinguistics should be considered in more detail.

The breakthrough in the linguistics, done by such scientists as de Sossyur, von Humboldt, L.V. Shcherba and others who introduced «speech» and «language» as aspects of the communication phenomenon, put new foundation to the psychology of speech and caused great shifts in methods of foreign language teaching.

In the sphere of methodology this linguistic approach was enriched by the insight that language is a static aspect of this phenomenon, characterised as a *system* of specially organized means, which are in specific relations with each other; *speech* is its dynamic state. Speech represents the *process* of communication with the aid of the language which is used for the benefit of communication. [Курс общей лингвистики, 1999].

In this context psychology of speech considers "*language*" as a *social* and *historical* phenomenon, and "*speech*" as *individual and psychological*. So psycholinguists (de Sossyur, A. Seshe, L. Hjelmslev, G. Guillaume, L.V. Chip, Espersen, A.I. Smirnitsky, Bruneau, V.A. Zvegintsev, S.D. Cantzelson, I.I. Meshchaninov, etc) came to the conclusion that speech includes language as its intrinsic part, but is also enriched by:

- thoughts;
- feelings and emotions;
- concepts, motives and intentions;
- speaking goals, aimed at the specific non-linguistic effect;
- the complex of interpersonal relations, real and imaginary circumstances, situations, which provide support of non-linguistic signs – gestures, mimicry, movement [Канцельсон, 2002, с. 95]

Being not only a process, but also mental activity, speech undergoes all the phases of activity introduced in the general psychological theory of activity: motivation, planning, realization of plan, control. Modern psychology asserts that “the sense, the point of any action, speaking or sign is generated by a motive, which is always non-verbal [Журавлев, 2017, с. 50].

N. L. Stein and E.R. Albro believe that the narrative activity of «story-telling» is based on the narrator’s ability to arrange the content and the structure of the episodes... into a coherent unit. [Stein, Albro, 1997, p. 13]

Thus speech is considered in modern methodology as an aspect of communication phenomenon which differs from the language in two cardinal features: in its dynamics, as any process; in the ability to harmonically unite the content of speech with linguistic and non-linguistic means of its expression.

Another cornerstone in modern methodology is the relation between thinking and speech, researched in our country by N.I. Zhinkin and his followers [Жинкин, 1958].

Earlier it was wrongly considered that thinking always occurs only in the verbal form. So translation was the only way of teaching: from thought, expressed by means of a native language to recoding it by means of a foreign language. This impeded the communicative function speaking, which requires direct phrasing of thought in the foreign language.

A fundamental psychological breakthrough runs, that *thinking goes ahead of verbal coding*. Thought appears in the head, being not formulated verbally, and this, regarding to N.I. Zhinkin, is the first stage of generating speech. [Жинкин, 1958] Everyone has experienced such a state when you have some idea, but it takes time to find the necessary words to formulate it. This proves that the use of the native language is not necessary for the process of thinking.

The *selection of the lingual code* or linguistic means is the second, independent stage of generating speech, after which goes self-control.

This insight when applied in methodology, allowed to reconstruct the process of instruction and build it in the new sequence: *visual means – visual based thinking – coding of thought by means of a FL* (avoiding the native language).

Such approach to teaching gives opportunity to completely exclude the native language from the process of FLT and allowed to teach any foreign language to people directly. But use of this approach in our country revealed not its advantages but also disadvantages when practised at secondary schools. The main problem was caused by lack of language immersion

because of few classes a week and impossibility of live communication out of school. The way to solve this problem methodologists of our country see in using native language as a means of control and the most effective way in teaching grammar. It can also be used when the pupils pass to complex problems, which require the introduction of abstract notions, complex situations.

The process of speaking is inseparably connected with listening and reading comprehension, that is *decoding* of information. Such scientists as E.S. Bogdanova, B.F. Sternin, studying the mechanisms of decoding and interpreting information came to the conclusion that «when the reader is interpreting information... he/she matches the accepted signs with the patterns kept in the thesaurus and synthesises it into the text.

Retrieval of the implicit information necessitates definite mental (cognitive) schemes in the language of the recipient's conscience, which B.F. Sternin has called receptive schemes... The continuum of these schemes must be adopted while learning» [Богданова, 2017, с. 31].

One of the means of training speaking with all its integral parts was introduced by psycholinguists in the sphere of verbal behaviour. One of the forms of human behaviour is *speech response* to different communication situations. Therefore, in teaching a foreign language we must bear in mind that pupils should *acquire the language they study as a behaviour*, as something that helps people to communicate with each other in various real situations of intercourse. Hence a foreign language should be taught in reliance on such situations. [J. Carroll, 1963; Звегинцев, 1960, 1962]

Summing up, we can say that in the process of developing speaking skills a foreign language teacher must follow some rules:

- training oral and written *speech* (productive forms) it is necessary to go from thinking to coding the thought by means of a foreign language,
- in training *listening* and *reading* (receptive forms) one should go from the message in a foreign language to its understanding without translation into a native language,
- native language can be used mainly for control, but must be reasonably restricted,

Following these rules will allow to avoid artificial use of a native language in the process of teaching and mastering a foreign language.

All the scientific breakthrough in psycholinguists caused revolution changes in methods of teaching foreign languages.

But no teaching can be effective without answering the question how to teach? How to facilitate stability of knowledge, activate and keep language skills and speaking habits? How to arrange such educational activity as training, doing exercises aimed at developing communicative skills?

The solution of these problems methodology finds in physiology and general psychology.

The basic physiological principle widely used in methodology of all subjects was formulated by the soviet scientist I.P. Pavlov in his theory of conditioned reflexes. It explains and confirms the necessity for the *cultivation of*

*habits* basing on frequent *repetitions and revision* of the material dealt with in teaching of all the subjects, in particular in teaching foreign languages, where those precepts are of special importance [Павлов, 2015].

But learning a foreign language, and communication in particular, is an intellectual process which can't be based only on mechanical repetition. It can be successful only resting on complex activity of mind and memory. So of all the psychological knowledge about the mental activity methodology of foreign language teaching relies on data about the mechanisms of memorising, detention and forgetting.

Memory is one of the most significant speech mechanisms in teaching a foreign language. It has been studied for a very long time and has been described and classified (R. Atkinson, N.A. Zabelina, J.G.Revzina, etc).

V.M. Alpatov, next to M.I Zhinkin, believes that the process of memorising can be presented as definit machanisms. V.M. Alpatov points out at least three memorising mechanisms in the mind of a speaker: «for keeping lexical material (lexical mechanism), word combination (syntactical mechanism) and morphological mechanism. Here he distinguishes fundamental opposition between Grammar and Lexis. The difference is related to the fact that lexis is kept in the language memory ready for use, while grammar units, basing on the grammar rules, are being built at the moment of speaking» [Алпатов, 2016, с. 28].

T.V. Chernigovskaya comes to the similar conclusions: «We may speak about “layers”, which make the language: this is Lexis - complex lists of lexical units, word forms etc.; computational procedures in grammar (morphology, syntax, semantics and phonology), mechanisms of segmentation of the speech continuum, coming from outside, and pragmatics» [Черниговская и соавт., 2009, с. 5]

These and some other classifications are most important in methodology. Memorising can be distinguished as:

a) the *channel of obtaining the information*: visual, auditory, oral motor memory;

b) *the period of its action*: the short-term and the long-term/permanent memory;

c) *mechanisms of keeping in memory*: memorizing, retention and forgetting [Гаврюшенко, 2016, с. 94].

All the data are relied upon in the process of education both in instructing, introducing the new material and training skills.

The process of acquiring information undergoes several steps.

A) Usually it starts with the teacher's introduction of the new material - oral and visual approach, after which the information is kept in the short-term memory for several minutes and is forgotten if not kept in the permanent memory by means of training [Величковский, 2016, с. 21].

B) Speaking is only possible if *linguistic means are stored in the long-term memory* (“in the reserve, to the future”). So after the introductory part goes obligatory training and exercising which is aimed at transferring the mate-

rial to the *long-term memory* and forming a *model* of the use of the linguistic means.

С) In speaking the process goes backwards: the necessary linguistic means pass into the short-term memory, which enables communication [Величковский, 2016, с. 22].

The process of keeping in memory can be observed as a mechanism which undergoes three stages: memorizing, retention and forgetting.

In FLT it's urgent to know that *memorizing* is subdivided into voluntary and involuntary.

*Voluntary* memorizing is used when students get the task to memorize anything specially. This is the longest way in teaching speaking as activity, but is good for control of errors. *Involuntary* memorizing works when a similar purpose is absent and remembering is achieved in the process of the activity, which has another task. [Аткинсон, 1980].

The communicative-oriented teaching is focused not on the form, but on the content. Therefore with FLT special importance has involuntary memorizing, since it provides situational content for training skills, though it is not a simple way to memorize.

Practical teaching has proved effectiveness of some technologies governing the involuntary memorizing:

1. Basing teaching on different forms of perception: vision, listening, motor activity.
2. Integration of the memorised material into the active mental activity, such as grouping the vocabulary, grammar phenomena etc.
3. Using logical aids and schemes.
4. Rhythmical arrangement of material.
5. Comparison of the new material with the previously mastered one or with the native language facilitates sound and effective memorizing.

*Retention* of lingual material is directly connected with averting forgetting. Psychology opened some laws governing the process of forgetting. So it was found out that *forgetting* flows especially intensively after rote learning and then it slows down.

For MFLT it follows that the oral exercises (supported by listening, speech-motor perception) must be carried out right after the introduction of material in the class and exercises in reading and writing must be assigned for the home work (visual support and support by motor activity of hand).

**The results** of the theoretical research were evaluated in the practical course of training school children and students getting higher education. The effectiveness being confirmed, we included this information in the course of lectures on Methods of teaching the foreign language for the future teachers.

### **Conclusion**

Professional methodological competence can't be developed without reliance on its psychological component which embraces knowledge about mental activity, traces the processes of keeping in mind and forgetting, introduces speaking as a phenomenon which involves language as a tool, intro-

duces vocal mechanisms and stages of speaking as a mental activity etc. Even the modern aim in teaching foreign language as a school subject is justified by the psycholinguistic discrimination of the language and speech phenomenon.

Methodology has been modernised and enriched thanks to the psychological researches so now its inseparable part of methodological competence of a foreign language teacher.

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### **Methodological Competence of a Foreign Language Teacher: Psychological Component**

The article is dedicated to the examination of integral approach to the methodological competence concept of the teacher of the foreign language. The authors consider it a necessary component of the methodological competence – the possession by teacher of the psychological knowledge, which has direct influence on the mastery by the students of the foreign

language. In the article it is represented the survey of scientific literature regarding the interrelation of psychological data in the field of general psychology and psycholinguistics with the process of teaching foreign languages, possibility of their application in the practice of instruction, and also training of specialist.

The important condition of moulding the psychological component of the professional competence of the teacher is the support of the educational and developmental psychology, however, for the teacher of the foreign language it is especially important to manage scientific information about the psychological features of creation and perception of speech, the processes of communication and vocal behaviour, and the knowledge of the processes of memorization, keeping in mind and forgetting the material, special features of the formation of lingual habits and vocal skills.

**Key words:** *methodological competence, psychological component, educational, psycholinguistics, language and speech, the mechanisms of speaking, mechanisms of memorizing and forgetting.*

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