

# TEACHING ENGLISH TECHNIQUES BASED ON SELF-PERFORMANCE APPROACH IN RUSSIAN LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITIES

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## Abstract

The relevance of the problem under research is determined by the fact that in modern world of globalization and integration the knowledge of English as a global language is essential. Moreover not only the study of the language is important but the formation of foreign language competence as well. Consequently it leads to solution of some practical tasks. The aim of the given article is to implement innovative methods of teaching English in Russian linguistic universities based on self-performance approach using traditional didactic means. The authors consider such methods as quests, mind-mapping, brainstorming, debates, projects, role play. Methods of research are experiment, analysis and generalization of theoretical and practical data concerning the theme of the article. As a result a set of exercises based on self-performance approach intended for Russian linguistic universities was worked out.

The results of the article may contribute to English teaching practice, development of didactic materials in teaching the English language and English grammar.

Keywords: self-performance approach, traditional approach, project method, web quest.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

It is while worth mentioning the fact that the standards and requirements of training a foreign language to the specialists of linguistics differ from the standards and requirements of training a foreign language for general purposes. According to the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standard of the Russian Federation a graduate in a Bachelor program "Linguistics" should, *inter alia*, possess a system of linguistic skills, such as phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, word-formation; possess ethical and moral norms of behavior accepted in other cultures; know the principles of interaction between the participants of intercultural communication. A graduate also should be able to express his/her thoughts freely using a variety of language means; he/she should know peculiarities of formal, neutral and informal registers of communication; he/she should fully possess the skills of oral and written communication [1]. It is obvious that in order to achieve the above mentioned aims one need to keep up with the time, using the latest achievements of methodology and didactics, modern methods and approaches to teaching foreign languages (such as communicative and self-performance approach).

However, taking into account all new things, it is important not to refuse all the positive things that were in the old traditional system of training of the intended linguists - teachers and translators. The following fact remains undeniable: the level of training in the Soviet higher education system in any field could be described as "a very high one." Graduates of the Soviet universities were considered to be highly qualified, fully developed specialists having the classical academic education. Soviet linguists were no exception. Russia is proud of numerous linguists and translators who reached unprecedented heights in their area.

The modern world with its scientific and technical achievements offers numerous possibilities of introduction and successful application of the communicative and self-performance approach in teaching foreign languages: latest textbooks, technical means of training, authentic audio and video materials, access to authentic texts (newspapers, books) through the Internet; communication with native speakers there, etc. In regard to the latest textbooks, written on the basis of communicative method, it should be pointed out its effectiveness in achieving their communicative tasks, in the formation of required levels of language competence in the framework of the European System of language skills of the trainees. But having all of its benefits, these textbooks are insufficient for the training the specialists of linguistics, whose aim is to acquire the level of a native speaker.

Since the Soviet times we inherited a lot of didactic works, textbooks. They were used in the classroom in a foreign language, in particular - English and gave good results in the formation of grammar, vocabulary and word-building skills - the so-called language foundation, which provides a solid basis for achieving the other tasks set for the student and teacher. But it should be mentioned that these educational materials are aimed only at the «drilling» of certain grammatical constructions and development of lexical units, which is a demotivating factor in learning English. Thus, for example, the textbook by V.D. Arakin "A Practical Course of the English language" for students of language universities [2] certainly is the best textbook for the development of complex grammatical structures and an enormous stock of lexical units. Yet, translators and English teachers - graduates of the Soviet universities characterize this series of books by the word "boring", without compromising the efficiency.

## **2 HYPOTHESIS**

In this article we hypothesize that there is no need to refuse the experience of the traditional method of teaching, and the use of this experience in a self-performance approach will make English language training the most effective one.

### **2.1 The purpose of the study**

The purpose of the article is to describe the process of implementation of advanced methods of teaching the English language in language universities in the frames of self-performance approach on the basis of traditional teaching materials (based on the textbook by V.D. Arakin "A Practical Course of the English language" for the 3rd year students of language universities ).

### **2.2 Research Tasks**

To achieve this goal it is necessary to solve the following tasks: 1) to reveal the essence of self-performance approach in teaching English; 2) to consider the basic techniques and methods of teaching English on the basis of self-performance approach; 3) to reformat one of the units of the textbook by V.D. Arakin "A Practical course of the English language" so that the exercises and activities of the unit meet the requirements of self-performance approach.

### **2.3 Research methods and methodological principles**

To solve these problems, we used the following methods: 1) study and analysis of scientific literature on the subject under study; 2) learning and generalization of the best practice on the subject; 3) monitoring the process of teaching English using the techniques and methods of self-performance approach on the example of one unit of the textbook by V.D. Arakin "A Practical course of the English language."

The methodological base of the research is the theoretical principles of the communicative approach (E.I. Passov, I.L. Bim, G.V. Rogova, N.D. Galskova, H.-E. Pytho et al.), person-centered approach (A. Maslow , K. Rogers, A.N. Leontiev, N.F. Koryakovtseva, V.A. Slastenin, I.S. Yakimanskaya, A.K. Markov, A.B. Orlov et al.) and self-performance approach (I.A. Zimnyaya, S.L. Rubinstein, S.L. Vygotsky, V.A. Belikov, V.D .Shadrikov, P.Y.Galperin et al.) to teaching foreign languages.

## **3 RESULTS**

It is known that self-performance approach was formulated about the middle of the 80-ies of the XX century, and was designed primarily as a subject-oriented organization of student training activities in solving specially organized tasks of various complexity. According to I.A. Zimnyaya, these problems develop not only subject knowledge and communicative competence of the student, but his/her own personality. [3] The personal component of self-performance approach assumes that in the process of teaching of any school subject as much as possible it is taken into account nationality, gender and age, individual psychological peculiarities, especially the student status [3]. Self-performance approach provides a reorientation of the communicative process from subject-object scheme of communication, where the object is a student, and the whole process of training is the accumulation by the object a certain amount of knowledge and skills disregard of his/her personal characteristics and requirements into subject-subject scheme of communication. Subject-subject scheme involves "equal partnership of the teacher and students in jointly organized by a teacher solving learning tasks"

[3]. That is, as it was claimed by L.S. Vygotsky, "A teacher from a scientific point of view is only the organizer of educational social environment, the regulator and supervisor of interaction with every student" [4].

The performance component of self-performance approach provides a leading role of activities in the formation of personality. Thus, V.A. Belikov determines the relevance of the self-performance approach by the following factors: firstly, the activities express the level of activity of the student, determines his/her ability to form the relationship with the outside world; secondly, effective development of the individual is possible only in the process of knowing the surrounding world, the experience of previous generations, culture, his/her own positive experience of social relations. It is possible to do through the activities. Thirdly, the relevance of the self-performance approach is also determined by the psychological law of the unity of activities and personal development, which one is universal. [5]

In the most general term, according to the I.A. Zimnyaya, self-performance approach with its components means from the point of view of the student the process of organization of his/her training and management of his/her training activities focused on the life of the student in the general context - orientation of his/her interests, life plans, values, understanding the meaning of education process for the development of the creative potential of the individual. [3]

Based on the foregoing and paraphrasing Jank&Meyer, we would like to define the lesson within self-performance approach as a complex lesson with a high degree of activity of students, where the organization of the educational process depends on the final product of joint activities of the teacher and students [6]. In other words, the main characteristic features of the lesson within self-performance approach are: the complexity, the activity of the student, the orientation on the student, the orientation on the final product, focus on the process [7]. At the same time the teacher is to a less degree the initiator of the educational process who determines the content, who gives knowledge, who controls and corrects mistakes. And mostly the teacher can be characterized as a tutor, strategist, organizer and coordinator of the educational process, and besides, as a partner in the educational process.

There is a sufficient number of methods and techniques used in foreign language classes that meet the requirements of self-performance approach. This includes project method, the method of discussion and debate, the tandem projects, dramatizations as macromethods; as well as web quests, mind mapping, brainstorming, ABC-method, role play, work stations and a variety of games as micromethods. Let us consider some of the techniques in more detail.

Method of projects is the most effective method within self-performance approach concerning foreign language lessons. Method of projects is a set of actions of students aimed at its specific sequence to achieve the objectives, t.i. solving specific problems relevant to students and designed in the form of a final product, such as a poster exhibition, dramatization, a quiz on a particular topic, a collage, a video, a web site, comic books, a brochure, power-point presentations, etc.

Project-based learning has been developed by an American educator W.H. Kilpatrick in the 20-ies of the XX century as a practical realization of the ideas of humanistic philosophy and education of John Dewey. The main objective of the project method is to give students the opportunity to independently acquire knowledge in solving practical problems, or problems that require the integration of knowledge from different subject areas. So, Herbert Gudjons believes that the project is not only committed «actions», but also carefully thought out plans. It is the planning that intensifies the desire to achieve the goal, which is the driving force of the project, its organizational means [8].

The next activity taking place in English lessons is a discussion. The discussion can be implemented in different variants, whether the simulation, debates, conferences, interviews, talk shows. According to R.S. Appatova, group discussion is one of the most productive ways of organizing communication in the classroom. "The debate as a way of successive solution of communication tasks makes a significant contribution to enhancing the interaction of students' communication" [9].

Brainstorming method was proposed by the American scientist A.F. Osbourne. The inventor noted that it is better to collectively generate ideas than individually. Conversation in a brainstorming acts as a means to remove constraints such as an embarrassment, fear of mistakes and criticism, the pressure of authority of more successful friends, habits, etc., and to release the creative energy of the participants for creative problem solving. The direct method of collective brainstorming is generating ideas for creative problem solving. The purpose of this method is to collect as many ideas as it is possible, to get rid of the inertia of thinking, to overcome the usual course of thought in creative problem solving. However, more effective brainstorming happens when the participants are divided

into groups: 1) generators of ideas; 2) generators of counter-ideas; 3) expert group.

One of the project activities is a webquest. This task includes role play elements. Internet information resources are used here. The important point is the presence of references to the resources needed for the job, prepared by the teacher in advance.

Well, one of the most effective techniques to learn a foreign language, in our opinion, is a mind mapping. This method was proposed by the American scientist and businessman T. Buzan in the 60-70-s of the twentieth century. Through the use of colors, patterns and spatial relationships, any information is perceived, analyzed and stored much more efficiently. Mind maps can be used to work both with grammar tasks, and lexical tasks. According to E.Yu. Vishnevskaya a mind map is a powerful visual method, which is the universal key for unlocking the potential in the brain of every man [10].

## 4 DISCUSSIONS

A textbook by V.D. Arakin "A Practical course of the English language. 3 course" is the third part of a series of textbooks for students of IV year of language universities, department of the English language. This textbook consists of four parts: the main course, exercises on speech sounds and intonation, grammar exercises section and applications. The main course consists of eight lessons, each contains speech patterns and exercises for its drill, the text is an excerpt from the original work of the English or American author, brief information about the author, comments with explanations of realia and linguistic phenomena, dictionary of active lexicon, a list of phrases found in the text and later drilled, and exercises to ensure consolidation of given material [2].

This series of books went through several editions, and still has not lost its relevance, including a textbook by V.D. Arakin "A Practical Course of English" for the third year students. The latest editions of the textbook were thoroughly revised and adapted for the communicative approach to learning a foreign language. It would have been inappropriate to refuse rich didactic materials contained in the book. But, as it was noted by A.N. Vernigorenko and N.P. Selihova the textbook edited by V.D. Arakin "makes it impossible to carry out the [communicative] approach [11].

However, as it was already mentioned, the advantage of this textbook is rich factual materials to consolidate grammatical structures and to master vocabulary. Nevertheless, to avoid "lethargy and boredom that are dangerous symptoms of the educational process" [11], it is recommended to "reformat" sections and to build lessons so that they correspond with the objectives and tasks of self-performance approach.

For example, if we take the theme "painting" (unit 5) from the textbook by V.D. Arakin for the third year, at first it is necessary for a teacher together with students to answer the question what result they want to receive at the end of this section. Alternatively, the teacher may propose to hold an exhibition of the most famous and iconic pictures at the end of this lesson. Thus, the "tool" of self-performance approach is the project activity, where the result of the project is a presentation.

The entire process of preparing for this presentation can be divided into several stages. Every stage can be an additional type of activity within the self-performance approach if necessary. So, to achieve set goals, you can use such a method as a web quest, which consists of the following tasks: 1) to divide the class into pairs or groups; 2) to choose a school of painting (classicism, romanticism, realism, impressionism, cubism, expressionism, surrealism) and find information on the chosen school (using the English-language sites given by the teacher in advance) on the following points: the time and the country of the painting school, the period of its flourishing, typical features of this school, the most prominent representatives of this school and landmark paintings; 3) to select the landmark paintings of this school and to make a presentation - a description of these pictures (in the form of brochures, ppt-presentations, video messages, etc.); 4) to give a lesson - an exhibition with a guided tour. At the same time it is necessary to use the language and lexical materials and grammatical structures of the unit.

If the previously mentioned activity organizes mostly the independent work of the student, then for a class work within this theme you can use activities such as brainstorming or discussion. For example, brainstorming can be done to help young talented artist to hold an exhibition of his/her paintings. The discussion can be carried out in the form of talk show with role-playing elements. The possible topics of discussion may be questions such as "is it a portrait or picture?" Or "is a contemporary art an art?"

## 5 CONCLUSION

In this work we considered the theoretical principles of teaching English to students on the basis of self-performance approach. As it was previously mentioned, self-performance approach is a complex lesson with a high degree of activity of students as subjects of the educational process. The most effective activities within self-performance approach to the English language training are such activities as project method, a web quest, brainstorming, discussion method, etc. Moreover, these activities allow to change useful didactic materials of traditional textbooks without difficulties. That fact helped to confirm our hypothesis that there is no need to refuse the experience of the traditional methods of teaching.

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