

## **Psychological Features of Teaching Foreign Languages**

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### **Abstract**

The article deals with the problems of psychology of teaching foreign languages. The directions of using psychological knowledge and the role of organizing group interaction and taking into account individual characteristics in intensive adult education are shown. The psychological and pedagogical features of teaching a foreign language to schoolchildren and adults are discussed. Theoretical approaches in the psychology of teaching foreign languages are considered, presented by the works of G. Lozanov, G.A. Kitaygorodskaya, I.A.Zimnaya, I. M. Rumyanseva and others.

**Keywords:** psychological features of teaching foreign languages; improving the effectiveness of teaching foreign languages; group interaction; educational communication.

### **Introduction**

The modern development of domestic education is characterized by the intensity of innovative processes, which is manifested in the system of teaching foreign languages. At the same time, many of the techniques and methods used by innovators to improve the effectiveness of teaching foreign languages are based on old concepts and theoretical positions of psychology. Among them: psychological and socio-psychological theories and concepts of behavioral, psychoanalytic, cognitive and interactionist orientation [Richards, Rodgers 2001]. Russian authors use the provisions of the theory of activity, the concept of step-by-step formation of mental actions, etc.

Currently, a paradigm shift is taking place in psychology and theories of communication and interaction are in the first place, on which various communicative, socioperceptive trainings, personal growth trainings and programs aimed at helping in ethnocultural adaptation are based. These theories and trainings are more relevant to the practice of teaching foreign languages [Rumyantseva 2004]. Mastering foreign languages is associated with the need to develop the skills of perception, understanding of oral and written foreign speech, the ability to speak and write in a foreign language. Difficulties in the formation of these skills among students serve as a motivating reason for the development of new approaches and various teaching methods. It is no coincidence that many researchers recognize the need to update the forms and methods of teaching a foreign language, which requires a revision of psychological and pedagogical concepts that at one time had a significant impact on teaching and need a thorough revision in the changed modern conditions.

## Theoretical overview

The psychological functions that foreign language teaching performs at different age stages of a person's mental development are not the same. In addition, in childhood and adolescence, the system of goals for teaching foreign languages includes the development of educational activities, and in adults, the need to learn a foreign language arises in connection with practical necessity or for the purpose of self-development. When teaching foreign languages to young people and adults, a different approach is required, which takes into account the development of thinking properties, characteristics of motivation and personality of students. The training should correspond to the psychophysiological age possibilities, the nature of the cognitive activity of the individual. From a psychological point of view, learning a foreign language is a complex process of forming a new speech system that begins to coexist and interact with the already developed system of the native language, experiencing its interfering influence. In adolescence and in adults, individual personality traits play an important role in learning. For example, M.K.Kabardov, studying them, obtained experimental data that confirmed the idea of B.V.Belyaev about the existence of two types of foreign language acquisition: "intuitive-sensual" and "rational". M.K.Kabardov defined them as "communicative" and "non-communicative" personality types, distinguished by the study of a foreign language. The communicative type characterizes the volume of auditory perception, the speed of updating knowledge and processing new information, the success of involuntary and voluntary memorization. Persons with a non-communicative type of foreign language acquisition are more productive with arbitrary memorization and in the presence of visual reinforcement of verbal material. The former showed better results in "verbal fluency", while the latter coped better with language analysis, involving the identification of logical and grammatical patterns in an unfamiliar language. Most students have psychological barriers in relation to a non-native language. They manifest themselves in the uncertainty of their ability to speak a foreign language. Some have shyness, others have a fear of making mistakes or getting low grades. These barriers are usually caused by frequent failure and the attitude of the teacher himself towards the student. In order to overcome barriers, the teacher needs to strengthen the role of stimulating assessments and approval in the course of teaching a foreign language, strengthen the student's faith in their abilities. The training should focus on the individual advantages of the students. For example, to what extent is the student capable of mastering his native and foreign languages, which L.I. Aidarova writes about. In the late 1970s. In the last century, a new requirement for teaching foreign languages appeared – speed and the corresponding method of intensive learning. Bulgarian psychotherapist G.Lozanov was one of the first to propose a method of teaching a foreign language, designed for three months. It was based on the use of involuntary memorization, on the role of context and communication in the group. G.Lozanov identified critical logical and intuitive affective psychological barriers that protect the brain from information overload and, considering them, suggested using his methods in teaching foreign languages. His system involves the introduction and consolidation of speech material in various communication situations and is focused on creating a natural speech environment and activating hidden mental reserves in students during the lesson. It is aimed at comprehensive personal development due to a number of factors, including the creative role of the teacher, the creation of a high emotional tone of the audience, the use of special pedagogical methods and techniques. Under the influence of G.Lozanov's works, the effect of the group in teaching foreign languages began to be discussed. For example, G.A.Kitaygorodskaya proposed the system "Activation of the reserve capabilities of the individual and the team", also designed to achieve the assimilation of the maximum amount of educational material in the shortest possible time. In her system, special attention is paid to the conditions of special interaction in the study group with the creative influence of the teacher's personality, in which an important role belongs to the creation of an emotional state among students that positively affects the effectiveness of assimilation and a favorable emotional climate in the study group. G.A.Kitaygorodskaya developed the idea of individual learning through group learning, in which the learning process itself has a distinct group character. This requires the organization of not only educational material, but also

interpersonal relationships in the study group, implementing the five principles of the method of activating the capabilities of the individual and the team: 1) the principle of personal communication; 2) role-playing organization of educational material and educational process; 3) collective (group) interaction; 4) concentration in the organization of educational material and educational process; 5) the multifunctionality of exercises. G.A.Kitaygorodskaya introduced the concept of “learning communication”, which is characterized by specially selected educational material consisting of polylogue texts, a system of communicative exercises designed as personal communication, calculation of the number of trainees, the composition of the group and its spatial location, subordinated to the principle of personal communication. The optimal size of the group is 12 people, the composition is heterogeneous, the location in the audience is in a semicircle, face to face. These parameters are typical for all group forms of psychological work. The experience of intensive teaching of foreign languages allowed us to conclude about the possibilities of applying the principle of role-based communication. Such training corresponds to the principle of communication as the basis for the intensification of foreign language teaching. From the point of view of linguistics, role communication is an effective way to acquire speech competence, and from the point of view of psychology, methods of using role communication activate the action of motivation mechanisms. In the educational process, the use of role-playing and role-playing communication determines the interactive form of organization of this process, and for students, learning becomes a communicative, cognitive, and playful activity. The principle of collective interaction requires the organization of active communication between students with each other. The exchange of educational information contributes to the expansion of knowledge, improvement of communication skills, the formation of positive relationships, which serves as a condition and means of effective learning, creative development of each and mutual success. Intensive training involves the development of the ability to communicate orally and in writing in a foreign language. Therefore, the selection of educational material for classes is aimed at training students in solving any communicative task, training in the use of a particular grammatical form, training in the use of vocabulary, training in the correctness of pronunciation. Thus, the system of G.A. Kitaygorodskaya is based on the psychological reserves of the individual and the team, it is possible with the directed management of socio-psychological processes of interaction and communication in the study group. I.A.Winter’s works are devoted to the psychological aspects of improving the effectiveness of teaching a foreign language.

As one of the most important aspects of optimizing foreign language teaching at school, I. A.Zimnaya considers the psychological analysis of a foreign language lesson carried out by a teacher. The analysis of the lesson contributes to the development of the ability to observe complex pedagogical phenomena and make correct psychologically sound conclusions. It serves as an important means for a teacher to improve his professional and pedagogical skills and identify the psychological reserves of teaching a foreign language at school. The specifics of a foreign language lesson have a number of features: firstly, a foreign language, like any language, is a means of communication and formation, formulation and expression of thought; secondly, the lesson has psychological goals for the development of students’ speech-thinking activity by means of the studied language in the process of generating and receiving a foreign-language utterance; thirdly, it assumes the presence of a student’s communicative need for speech utterance in a foreign language and understanding of another’s utterance. The success of learning depends not only on the content of the lessons, the methodology or the skill of the teacher, but also on the psychological characteristics of the students and the very activity of the teacher. The main ideas of lesson analysis in teaching a foreign language were presented in the works of I.A. Zimnaya, L. T. Okhitina and others. They have been further developed and are currently being implemented in special training programs for foreign language teachers. A special direction in the theory and practice of teaching foreign languages is represented by the works of I.M.Rumyanseva, who proposed a system of integrative linguistic and psychological training (ILPT). I. M. Rumyantseva’s approach is to use elements of special socio-psychological trainings, such as role training, perceptual training, sensitivity training, etc., when teaching foreign language speech. The training is based on the role of speech communication, which

involves all cognitive processes, especially when using exercises from socio-psychological trainings. Additionally, special cognitive trainings in a foreign language and associated with cognitive psychophysiological trainings are introduced into the learning process. The training is called integrative, as it is characterized by an interdisciplinary methodological approach.

The ILPT methodology is based on a broad psycholinguistic study of speech in conceptual synthesis with linguopsychology. It involves working at the intersection of linguistics, psychology, pedagogy, with the inclusion of knowledge about neuro-linguistics, psychophysiology, educational psychology, psychocorrection, etc. The theory of ILPT as a learning system is based on an integrative (multidimensional) descriptive model of speech and is based on the following principles: the principle of unity of learning and personal development; the principle of lifelong development of mental functions; the principle of organic unity of man, speech and its learning process; the principle of correlation of all facets of the learning system with the relevant aspects of speech to be developed and formed; the principle of building a learning system as integrative and interdisciplinary, which implies both reliance on an integrative model of speech and synthesis of interdisciplinary tools and a number of other principles. When using ILPT, they are based on the mechanisms of speech itself as a multifactorial phenomenon, as well as on the internal structure of a person's linguistic and speech abilities. ILPT technologies are a complex of psycholinguistic, psychotherapeutic methods, methods and means that are targeted at the appropriate speech mechanisms responsible for the development of all aspects of speech and the free mastery of it by a person. ILPT know-how consists of specific exercises, techniques and teaching techniques that are based on scientific, technological and practical developments. I.M.Rumyanseva emphasizes the important fact of language acquisition, including foreign language. Before speaking a foreign language, a person needs to turn on wordless, expressive communication, which will later lead him to foreign language speech. Non-verbal communication languages (facial expressions, gestures, posture, intonation, expressive movements) in real life are used as special means of communication both as part of speech and by themselves. The ILPT proposed by I. M. Rumyanseva creates conditions for creative spontaneity of the individual in the process of group interaction, which has the best effect on the learning process. The student gets the opportunity to involuntarily work out the necessary foreign phrases, phonetic models, grammatical constructions. New vocabulary is acquired in natural communication, which contributes to solving problems of personal growth and development, as well as improving the work of the entire cognitive sphere of a person, including speech. However, the ILPT system was developed for older people and is primarily focused on the development of speaking a foreign language, so it cannot be considered universal. The above approaches and theories suggest that the authors are guided by the fact that teaching foreign languages should be based not only on the rational sphere of the psyche, but also on its irrational components, which are most often present in non-standard methods of teaching a foreign language. However, it is important to find out how often non-standard approaches to teaching foreign languages in higher education are used in practice.

The analysis of the techniques and methods described by the students shows that the essence and form of innovative techniques of the practice leaders were manifested in the use of: video and audio materials, typical situations of communication in a foreign language, translations of relevant articles from the press, associative diagrams, specially equipped classrooms, etc. When using innovative forms and techniques, many teachers relied on psychological patterns and increased interest in the material being studied, the specifics of each other's perception, communication and interaction. In their classes, the use of visual and auditory channels of information perception was noted, which improved memorization and assimilation of educational material. They tried to develop the psychological abilities and thinking of the students. For example, the technique of describing a portrait of a person in a foreign language with assigned tasks is to guess what he is doing and what his character is. Such tasks favor the development of perception of others, the ability to understand others, interpret their appearance and character. We have also established techniques that were used by teachers of English and German to train communication skills, listening comprehension of foreign speech, memory

development, as well as training analyticity and reflexivity as properties of thinking. Teachers pay sufficient attention to the development of perception and thinking using game elements. But most often they use techniques to train communication skills. Rare and of particular interest are the attempts of teachers to promote the development of students' self-presentation skills. It can be stated that experienced teachers more often than students use techniques that promote the development of thinking properties and memory training. It is more interesting for student trainees to select exercises and use techniques that address the student's personality and can enhance motivation. To do this, they use elements of competitive games and actively use self-presentation skills training.

## **Conclusion**

The results of the study of the theory of teaching foreign languages allow us to conclude that teachers are looking for the possibility of using modern psychological knowledge. They select techniques and methods of teaching foreign languages, which are either aimed at developing the properties of psychological processes of students, or based on the degree of their development. Student in teaching foreign languages focus on personal development, increasing motivation to learn a foreign language and use it in communication. In general, both teachers and student trainees have a tendency to show in the classroom the importance of the fact that language is a means of communication for people engaged in various fields of activity.

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