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SOCIOCULTURAL APPROACH TO LEARNING TO SPEAK ENGLISH

СОЦІОКУЛЬТУРНИЙ ПІДХІД ДО НАВЧАННЯ ГОВОРІННЮ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЮ

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ABSTRACT

Purpose. This study investigates how sociocultural factors influence the process of learning to speak, with a focus on the interaction between learners and their social environments. The rationale stems from the need to understand language acquisition as a socially situated activity rather than a purely individual cognitive process. The paper also examines the impact of cultural identity, motivation, and community participation on language learning outcomes. It is emphasized that the integration of the sociocultural component contributes to the development of interpersonal communication skills, understanding the norms and values of native speakers, and also increases motivation to learn a foreign language. Drawing on the sociocultural theories, the study highlights how communication in authentic settings, peer interaction, and scaffolding contribute to developing speaking skills in learners of English. Social speech, private speech, and inner speech are discussed as developmental stages in the

Meta. У цьому дослідженні розглядається, як соціокультурні чинники впливають на процес оволодіння мовленням, зосереджуючись на взаємодії між учнями та їхнім соціальним середовищем. Обґрунтуванням виступає потреба розуміння набуття мовних навичок як соціально зумовленої діяльності, а не виключно індивідуального когнітивного процесу. У статті також аналізується вплив культурної ідентичності, мотивації та участі у спільноті на результати вивчення мови. Підкреслюється, що інтеграція соціокультурного компонента сприяє розвитку навичок міжособистісного спілкування, розумінню норм і цінностей носіїв мови, а також підвищує мотивацію до вивчення іноземної мови. Спираючись на соціокультурні теорії, дослідження висвітлює, як комунікація в автентичних умовах, взаємодія з однолітками та метод «скафолдингу» сприяють розвитку мовленнєвих умінь у тих, хто вивчає англійську. Соціальне мовлення, приватне мовлення та внутрішнє мовлення розглядаються як етапи розвитку в процесі інтеріоризації, коли учні

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internalization process, where learners move from guided conversation to self-regulated use of English. The findings suggest that integrating sociocultural principles into English language teaching can enhance learners' communicative competence and foster more meaningful engagement with the language.

Methodology. The research employed a qualitative case study approach involving students in multilingual urban settings. Data were collected through non-participant observation, audio recordings of interactions, and semi-structured interviews with educators and students. Discourse analysis and thematic coding were used to analyze the interactions and identify recurring patterns of language learning.

Results. Students' speech development was significantly influenced by peer interactions and participation in culturally meaningful activities. Instances of guided participation and collaborative dialogue were more frequent in environments with structured routines and high adult involvement. Variability was noted in language output based on the students' cultural backgrounds and their roles in the group.

Conclusions. The findings support the sociocultural theory that speech development is mediated through social interaction and cultural tools. Learning to speak is not only a cognitive task but also a relational and contextual one. Future research should examine the role of digital tools and transnational cultural practices in shaping early language experiences.

Keywords: cultural context, discourse analysis, guided participation, interaction, language development, peer communication, speech acquisition.

переходять від керованої розмови до саморегульованого використання англійської. Результати свідчать, що інтеграція соціокультурних принципів у викладання англійської мови може підвищити комунікативну компетентність здобувачів освіти та сприяти більш змістовній взаємодії з мовою.

Методологія. У дослідженні застосовано якісний підхід до тематичних досліджень із залученням студентів у багатомовних міських умовах. Дані було зібрано шляхом спостережень, аудіозаписів взаємодії та напівструктурованих інтерв'ю з педагогами й студентами. Для аналізу взаємодії та виявлення повторюваних моделей вивчення мови використано дискурс-аналіз і тематичне кодування.

Результати. На розвиток мовлення студентів суттєво вплинули взаємодії з однолітками та участь у культурно значущих заходах. Випадки керованої участі та спільного діалогу були більш частими в середовищах зі структурованими процедурами та високою залученістю педагогів. Варіативність була відзначена в мовному виведенні на основі культурного походження студентів та їхніх ролей у групі.

Висновки. Отримані дані підтверджують соціокультурну теорію про те, що розвиток мовлення опосередковується соціальною взаємодією та культурними інструментами. Навчитися говорити – це не лише когнітивне завдання, а й реляційне та контекстуальне. Майбутні дослідження мають вивчити роль цифрових інструментів і транснаціональних культурних практик у формуванні раннього мовного досвіду.

Ключові слова: аналіз дискурсу, взаємодія студентів, засвоєння мовлення, керована участь, культурний контекст, розвиток мови, спілкування з однолітками.

INTRODUCTION

In this article, we propose methodological recommendations for working with high school or university students. The proposed material can be used in optional classes, or as part of the development of students' speaking skills. In our opinion, these tasks can be very useful in training future teachers. This material will help them develop their professional skills.

The gradual complication in the global industry of studying and teaching English has created many new approaches in the methodology (Dovzhenko et al., 2022; Lavrinenko, 2005; Polikarpova, 2017; Tsepko, 2020). Today, no one can argue with the fact that a foreign language should not be taught as a formal linguistic system; education should

be reoriented from the usual acquisition of detached knowledge to the acquisition of a culture that reflects the sociocultural reality, where students should express and develop themselves (Semotiuk, 2015).

The main idea of this approach is not only the enrichment of the personality and the possibility of mastering all its diversity, but also the strengthening of its deep foundations, which are closely connected with the national culture and the perception of universal spiritual values.

The peculiarity of learning a foreign language is that it begins on the basis of the native language and culture, which determines the formation of foreign language abilities and skills. If a foreign language is more successfully learned in parallel with the development of native language skills and abilities, entering the world of foreign culture can contribute to a higher level of development of the student's personality as a subject of national culture (Kharkovskyi, 2021; Slavova, 2012).

Pragmatics is a socially oriented evidence of deep connections with culture. In the process of speech acts, a person interprets, evaluates the spiritual experience of generations, and builds his individual cultural space. This cultural space contains a system and hierarchy of values, assessment and ways of expressing and interpreting relations to events (Serazhym, 2002; T. van Leeuwen & Kress, 2011 ; Yatsyshyn, 2001).

We tried to apply the model of communication of speakers of a foreign language, engaging cognitive actions referred to a foreign language, to students who learn this language and in view of:

- the national spiritual heritage;
- language traditions;
- communicative individuality formed in the native language.

Another principle we adhere to is the maximum individual approach to work with a student. It is widely known that specific cognitive structures are responsible for the information process formed in the human mind. This process is highly individual and cannot be controlled by the conscious mind. In order to make the learning process more effective, we must be sure that there is no such thing as a 'mediocre' student in our learning process.

Each individual student has a unique inner world with its own type of memory and cognitive strategy. Therefore, the educational strategies that we use should be numerous and varied enough to take into account the individuality of each student.

It is also no secret that students who have already mastered certain speaking skills and have proven themselves well in understanding their interlocutor or teacher, sometimes experiences some difficulties in understanding the speaker in a real life situation. Therefore, the language material that must be used in the first place should contain situations that simulate real communicative conditions; thus, in our opinion, it is necessary to practice the wide use of British or American video materials.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology aims are to explore how social interaction, cultural context, and collaborative learning influence the development of English-speaking skills among learners and included:

Research Design

A case study method was employed to examine how learners of English interact in authentic communicative settings. This design was chosen to allow for in-depth analysis of individual and group behavior in language learning processes framed by sociocultural dynamics.

Data Collection Methods

To explore learners' development of speaking skills within a sociocultural framework, the following methods were used: classroom observations, audio and video recordings, semi-structured interviews, learning journals, and data analysis.

The collected data were transcribed and coded thematically using qualitative content analysis. Special attention was paid to the role of scaffolding in speaking development, the impact of cultural norms and values on language use, and patterns of mediated learning via tools such as gestures, visuals, and first language use.

Thirty-five university students, aged 18-22 years, 33 female and 2 male, and staff members volunteered to participate in the experiment. All were assigned to the same experimental task. In this experiment, informed consent was obtained orally from all participants.

The main goals of our work are:

- to increase students' level of understanding of the pragmatics rules;
- to increase students' contribution to communication and their ability to observe native speakers' pragmatic behavior.

According to the cognitive model, we define the first stage of learning pragmatics as the sensitivity stage, when students do not imitate models of communicative behavior yet. They form an image and try to understand the features of communication in action.

By this time, students have already subconsciously acquired images of communication through experience in the classroom. They have already received some personal experience of communication and have a stock of images, concepts, and knowledge about acceptable communication behavior in the classroom and in various culturally related situations.

Thus, they have already formed their own idea of communication. We only help them realize and develop this representation. For this purpose, they can be shown a few excerpts from politicians' speeches in films. Here we help students gain awareness and specify the parameters of communication behavior. The tasks and questions of the teacher to the students can be as follows:

- Watch an excerpt from the film, paying attention to the politicians' communication style.
- What is special about the politicians' language? What do they want? How do they achieve the desired effect?
- Pay attention to the means by which the speaker expresses his point of view.

After the students have shared their first impression of the behavior of the people in the film, they can be asked other questions that specify the pragmatics of language and emotions. The teacher comments on the communicative behavior in the film, "The person's persuasive speech, as you can see, is stimulating and inspiring. The speech of the politician who deceives is very often calm, balanced, etc."

- What attitude does the speaker convey when s/he deceives? S/he sounds:
 - preoccupied, confused;
 - encouraging, non-categorical;
 - serious, categorical.

It is very important here to emphasize the influence of national and cultural heritage.

- What does the politician do to deceive the interlocutor?
- What gestures help to make his/her communication behavior successful?
- What does the politician do to make his/her speech clear and inspiring?
- How does the politician make his/her speech impressive and stimulating for the people around them?

After that, students are shown a few more fragments from politicians' speeches. Each fragment is followed by questions from the teacher that emphasize different pragmatic parameters of the language.

- What does the politician want to achieve?
- How does s/he achieve the effect of their speech (e.g. by making it moving or exciting for the recipient)?

In this way, we form the basis of language perception of the surrounding people and communicative representation by comparing the communicative behavior of different people. Students do not try to imitate them yet; they only answer questions about and describe communicative behavior from different sides. They collect more and more images of communicative behavior and gradually develop their own cognitive tool, measuring this or that behavior and style. The presented authentic materials are redundant and diverse in order to ensure sufficient assimilation of culturally bound communicative images by students.

The second stage is operational, where students generalize and verbalize accumulated communicative images. Here students imitate discussed and subconsciously received examples of communicative behavior. They develop the ability to empirically evaluate and approximate authentic language parameters, adjusting their individual pragmatic tools, specifying the characteristics of a foreign language for socially and culturally acceptable presentation in the classroom. At this level students receive scripts of the fragments they have watched and are asked to complete the following tasks: try to imitate as best as possible the linguistic pragmatic characteristics of the politicians from the films.

- Read examples of the language of a politician who deceives, paying attention to their behavior.
- Now read examples of the language of a politician who conveys truthful information and compare them with the language of a politician who deceives.
- Try to demonstrate the same pragmatic characteristics of language as best you can.
- Read the phrase and then pronounce it without referring to the text, using appropriate gestures and facial expressions.

If the students feel unsure at the second stage, they are invited to watch the fragments from the films again and comment on them.

The third stage is analytical, where students more deeply specify the acquired communicative images based on a conscious analysis of communicative behavior. Here, students are trained to consciously understand language modifications and to comment on these modifications using linguistic terms. Evaluating various pragmatic characteristics of communicative behavior, they learn to control their language, to regulate it in a communicative situation in the classroom. The tasks can be as follows:

- Comment on your partner's reading from the point of view of pragmatics.
- Evaluate the sociocultural characteristics of the language.

Students can be asked to read a few phrases from the speech of various politicians from the films and asked to comment on their reading in the following way:

- What is the purpose of the statement?
- What attitude was expressed? What helps to express it? What language means does the politician use to deceive the interlocutor?
- How would you behave in this situation?
- How should a person identify their goals?
- How should people demonstrate their communicative intentions, logic, and conclusions?

High school students and undergraduates are already able to appreciate the communicative characteristics of language, so the question is to make sure that students are confident in analyzing the characteristics of fragments of a given language and know how to manage them to achieve the desired effect.

The last stage – creative rhetorical development – is achieved by spontaneous activation of received images and their consolidation as individual means of communication. This stage aims to show how students and pupils can use the acquired skills and how they can manipulate different forms of language effects.

The students are invited to prepare a short fragment of a persuasive speech (5–7 sentences):

- Try to talk about any political topic of your choice convincingly;
- Try to justify the importance of studying pragmatics;
- Convince people of the importance of pragmatics for linguistic science;
- Inspire your friends to do something you want;
- Instruct people how to express their point of view properly.
- Imagine that you were given false information, what linguistic means would you use to correct the behavior of the person who deceived you?

RESULTS

By completing these tasks, students develop their ability to operate with communication parameters using communication representation. If they cope with the previous tasks successfully, you could work with students in class to prepare a lecture with examples, in which they can summarize the acquired knowledge and skills to manage and regulate their language in various sociocultural situations. As homework,

you can ask students to prepare a short fragment of a conversation, using a developed communicative imagination.

The second stage of the work will be a deeper familiarization with the peculiarity of reactions to a politician's false statement. It is more appropriate to work with students in class to complete this stage.

To do this, we offer to give an introductory lecture on the topic "*Strategy of identifying someone else*". The content of this lecture may be as follows:

This strategy is focused on the discursive formation of the 'our' and the 'other' spheres. As the results of the research showed, the monocultural perspective of the British political discourse on the identification of 'foreigners' is characterized, firstly, by the desire to negatively assess the opponent, and secondly, by the desire to present oneself positively (Butarbutar, 2025; Yavorska, 2000).

In this regard, within the framework of the monocultural interaction of political opponents, two of the most common discursive and semiotic techniques for identifying foreignness were identified: the technique of negative positioning of opponents, which is most often simultaneously focused on positive self-presentation, and the technique of isolation, which emphasizes the difference between 'them' and 'us'. Let's present the techniques in more detail.

The discursive-semiotic technique of negative positioning of opponents is characterized by a widespread system of discursive means focused on the categorization of 'foreigners' as 'politicians who do not correspond to the responsibility assigned to them', the argumentation is based on the type 'they are bad' (Fairclough & Wodak, R. 2004).

Today, when a person, on the one hand, is increasingly aware of their inclusion in the network of numerous social, political, cultural, psychological, household, personal, etc. connections in society and society, and on the other hand, tries to identify or separate their 'I', such a science as the theory of communication acquires great cognitive significance (T. A. van Dijk, 2009). The object of this science is communicative activity, which is an information connection of entities and human communication, transmission of information, thoughts in a linguistic and symbolic way.

The main means of negative positioning of 'foreigners' are personal and possessive pronouns *they, them, those*, which perform the function of distancing and contribute to the formation of the image of 'foreigners', often in a negative light:

They've deliberately held their cards close to their chest. They've done their best to conceal their policies and their instincts. But the financial crisis forced them to show their hand and they showed they had no hearts (Cameron, 2010).

In this example, British Prime Minister (in 2009) Gordon Brown from the Labour Party speaks out against the Conservative Party, positioning its members as secretive and pragmatic politicians who deceive the people. The abundance of 3rd person plural pronouns distances G. Brown and those who support him from conservatives. To enhance the impact, negatively connoted lexemes *conceal, deliberately*, a metaphor with the semantics of indifference are used, e.g., *they showed they had no hearts*, and also metaphors with the semantics of secrecy and deceit, e.g., *held their cards close to their chest, forced them to show their hand*.

For the negative positioning of 'foreigners' in a monocultural perspective, British politicians resort to nominations that cause negative associations:

You are Mr Brown a prime minister full of sound and fury, signifying nothing (Cameron, 2010).

The example demonstrates the attitude of the representative of the Conservative Party, Eric Pickles, towards the policies of the then Prime Minister, Gordon Brown. The negatively connoted nomination is part of a quote from the famous work of William Shakespeare "Macbeth":

...And then is heard no more: it is a tale – Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

It should be noted that E. Pickles used only the last part of the quote, avoiding the insulting nomination "an idiot", which, however, is implicitly assumed, since the text of the work is quite well known and can be easily restored. In this context, negative associations arise as a result of drawing parallels with the original text of a literary work.

The positioning of 'foreigners' is also carried out through personifications with political organizations and party names, presented through a negative context:

This is not because of plain speaking from the Opposition, but because the markets could take fright over the prospect of the irresponsible, profligate Gordon Brown government somehow hanging onto office for another five years (Cameron, 2010).

The personification *Gordon Brown government* allows you to designate 'foreigners', while the key here is the context, revealing the author's intention to present Gordon Brown's government as irresponsible, wasteful and somehow spending time in power, e.g., *profligate, somehow hanging onto office*.

A metaphor is actively used for the negative positioning of opponents in British political discourse. According to researchers, "national metaphor in some of its aspects reflects the current state of society, national culture and national mentality, in others it is typical for a certain cultural space (West, East, Africa, etc.), and in the third it has a universal character". As an example of a specific metaphor that reflects British political reality, one can note the metaphor *sofa government* *We need to end the culture of sofa government* (Young, 2010).

The metaphorical representation of the government (represented by the Labour Party) as a *sofa government* testifies to its inaction, passivity, lack of mobility.

The analysis of the multimodal texts of British political communication has shown that negative metaphorical positioning of opponents can also be carried out through visual means. Metaphorical images in a monocultural perspective are more culturally mediated, that is, the images presented reflect domestic political situations, quite often they are a 'visual reaction' to the verbal actions of politicians that are widely discussed and, possibly, condemned. To a greater extent, the attitude of alienation in a monocultural perspective is focused on demonstrating the negative professional qualities of specific political opponents, not institutions in general.

The second technique for implementing the strategy of identifying foreignness in a monocultural perspective is the discursive-semiotic technique of isolation, which is focused on emphasizing 'one's own' advantages and underestimating the merits and achievements of opponents. Accordingly, the argument is based on the type 'they are bad, we are good'.

A very productive means of isolating in British political discourse in a monocultural perspective is opposition based on the lexical unit choice. A characteristic feature of such constructions is the use of unions *or / and*, actualizing the choice:

future – past: It's a choice between the future and the past;

Conservative – Labour, democracy – control: Conservative local democracy or Labour Whitehall control;

Conservatives – Government, weak – strong: A choice between a weak and divided Government and a strong, united Conservative team;

Cameron – Brown: Our country is at a fork in the road. At that fork is a choice between five more years of Gordon Brown... Or the change we need under David Cameron and the Conservatives (Brown, 2010).

tired Government – energy: It is a simple choice 5 more years of GB and his tired government or David Cameron and the conservatives who have the energy, leadership and values to get the country moving (Brown, 2010).

The actualization of the difference between 'them' and 'us' is also carried out through the lexeme *difference*:

Because there is a difference between the parties. It's the difference between Conservatives who embrace pessimism and austerity and progressives like Labour who embrace prosperity and hope (Brown, 2010).

Emphasizing the difference between the two parties, Gordon Brown repeats the word group *difference between* twice and explains his point of view with negative attributions to the conservatives (*who embrace pessimism and austerity*) and positive attributions to the Labour Party (*progressives, who embrace prosperity and hope*). The argument is built on the principle of concretization, that is, the second sentence explains and complements the first. Syntactically, the second clause is complex with two relative clauses having parallel constructions, giving the argument a clearer oppositional intention.

There are frequent cases of transferring the personal qualities of politicians to the characteristics of the parties they represent, also with an element of opposition:

Between the granite-like resilience and big brain of Gordon Brown or the plastic PR and wobbliness of David Cameron (Brown, 2010).

Agitating voters to vote for his party, Labour MP Peter Mandelson uses such positively connoted lexemes to describe the leader of the Labour Party Gordon Brown as *granite-like resilience, big brain*, contrasting them with negative nominations in relation to the leader of the opposition party David Cameron, e.g., *plastic PR and wobbliness*. A similar example is from the Conservative Party:

The decisive George Osborne or dithering Alistair Darling? (Brown, 2010).

The second stage of work with students is operational, where students use acquired theoretical knowledge in practice.

The first group of tasks may consist in the fact that the student is asked to review an example of a verbal reaction to the credibility of a statement from the language of a politician and to characterize the linguistic material used by the speaker to express their attitude depending on the level of emotionality of the statement or the nature of the statement.

For example:

- Review the description of a person's verbal reaction to a politician's false statement, and indicate with the help of which vocabulary we learn that the reaction of the person who was deceived is: negative, positive, or ironic.
- Which vocabulary used by the author to describe human behavior indicates the level of emotionality?

The next level is the analytical level, where students are asked to analyze what might depend on the intensity of a person's reaction to the credibility of a statement, or a negative assessment. To do this, they need to analyze several examples of reactions to the distortion of the truth.

For example:

- Read the person's reaction to the credibility of the politician's statement and determine what could have caused their type of reaction.
- Read a person's reaction to the distortion of the truth and try to determine how a negative assessment of the situation may depend on the intensity of the reaction.

The next stage of work with students is creative. Students are invited to try to model their own reaction to a false statement.

For example:

- Imagine that you were deceived. You need to achieve a communicative goal, which is to change or correct the behavior of the person who told the lie. What form of expression of your reaction and what vocabulary would you choose to achieve this goal?
- Students are divided into pairs, each pair receives an individual task to simulate a situation of distortion of the truth, the rest of the class must recognize the falsehood in the language and react to it.

DISCUSSION

By the end of the course, undergraduate students develop their individual communication style, communication imagination and skills. The course can be an effective preparation for conducting a dialogue of cultures in the process of communication and provide a gradual growth of students' abilities and skills. Thus, the presented material can serve as an aid in working with students within the framework of a special course on pragmatics and help in the development of their communication skills.

CONCLUSIONS

The provided material can help in the development of students' communication skills in a pragmatic aspect in connection with the gradual complication in the industry of learning and teaching the English language and the growth of requirements for the educational process.

Thus, it should be noted that within the framework of the integrative approach, which is embodied in discursive analysis, the prospect of researching speech acts in their conditioning by cognitive, pragmatic and social contexts is opened, because each of them is reflected in speech interaction.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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