



ASPECTS OF EFFECTIVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Annotation. Since Lithuania has become a part of European Union and the world community highly qualified, creative and skillful law enforcement officers able to communicate in foreign languages are in great demand. The paper analyses the aspects of successful foreign language learning. Students' opinion about foreign language learning at Mykolas Romeris University, the Faculty of Public Security and individual learning is investigated and assessed. Most motivated factors are presented and the most important problems students confront while learning foreign languages are reviewed in the paper. It also presents some recommendations for effective foreign language learning and successful legal career.

Keywords: language learning, motivating factors, learning conditions.

INTRODUCTION

Language phenomenon means that reality can be cognized handing experience and achievements of science and culture over generation. It is a must for a well-educated person to learn languages in order to get a certain social status¹.

Whereat Lithuania has become an integrated part of European and world community, typical tendencies of world development, such as globalization, interchange of life and activities and spread of mass media are influencing our life more and more positively. Nowadays Lithuania, as any other state, cannot manage without competent, qualified, informed self-starting specialists who can communicate in foreign languages. In modern situation a foreign language becomes a necessity for a future specialist. It is necessary to know a foreign language in order to communicate with the representatives of other nations and also to socialize in professional sphere as well as to know how to use special scientific works and modern technologies.

On purpose to ascertain the opinion, experience and expectations concerning foreign language learning of the students of the Faculty of Public Security of Mykolas Romeris University we have carried out educational research.

¹ Nunan, D., Bailey, K. Exploring Second Language Classroom Research. A Comprehensive Guide. Heinle/Cengage, Boston, MA, 2009, p. 496.

Purpose of investigation is to ascertain the assumptions of foreign language successful learning, to analyze and assess students' opinion on foreign language learning and independent language studies in the Faculty of Public Security of Mykolas Romeris University.

Object of investigation – opinion of the students of the 1st and 2nd courses about the assumptions of successful language teaching and learning in study programmes of Law and Police Activities, Law and State Border Guard and Law and Pre-trial Process of the Faculty of Public Security of Mykolas Romeris University. Seventy students participated in the process of the investigation.

Methods of investigation: review of scientific works, questionnaire filling, the analysis of investigation data.

Tasks of investigation are to ascertain and assess students' opinion about:

- Foreign language studies in the faculty;
- Importance of independent foreign language studies;
- Efficiency of motivation in foreign language learning;
- The most suitable teaching and learning methods helping to master knowledge and skills of a foreign language;
- Problems of foreign language learning that students are confronted with.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Assumptions of successful learning – motivation as a psychological factor determining adults' learning. Students' success and results are determined by their abilities to study individually – it is called *learning motivation and knowledge how to learn*².

Learning condition – memory. Learning is not considered as information storage only. It also includes such processes as perception, environment interpretation, experience acquisition, discovery and recognition of new things³.

Motivation in psychology and ethology (investigation of human's behaviour) means the force that encourages all functions of an organism. It can be used as a synonym of demand.

Motivation theories can be conditionally brought into two groups:

² Hercock, P.J. Assumptions of Thesaurus Successful Learning-Sharing-Growing. NZOQ Annual Conference. New Zeland, 2008.

³ Squire, L.R. Learning and Memory. <http://www.dana.org/news/brainhealth/detail.aspx?id=10020> [interactive] [accessed 2013-09-24].

- Theories that are based on *human's demands* that determine human's behaviour. They try to find the answer to the question about the origin and reasons of motivation.
- Theories that are based on *human's behaviour* that determine human's expectations and perception of consequences. They can also be called procedural theories. They explain how motivation functions, develops and determines human's behaviour⁴.

Factors of motivation according to Herzberg's⁵ theory of motivation are self-expression, advancement, responsibility, appreciation and success.

We can group all human demands according to the above-mentioned factors:

- Demands connected with appease of physiological requirements. A person can meet the requirements if he is paid appropriately. Implementation of the above-mentioned requirements depends on the factors of work (hygiene) environment.
- Demands connected with appease of mental requirements. Satisfaction of such requirements means inward perfection. Motivation factors help to guarantee work success and to implement mental requirements simultaneously.

According to Snowman⁶ conception of motivation consists of several supporting strategies:

1. Encouragement of student's self-confidence;
2. Creation of autonomous learning conditions.

Knowledge how to learn means application of effective learning strategies, discovery of individual learning style and active learning. The purpose is to have an ability to perceive and create a new product, still not to repeat memorized things⁷.

It is very important for a future specialist to realize that he has to acquire the knowledge himself. The question is how to perform it effectively. The answer is simple: it means to find an authentic path how to develop knowledge self-independently. Scientists assert that knowledge that is acquired with a help of a teacher are systematic and information that is acquired independently is comprehensive and specific. Knowledge found independently is

⁴ Meyer, J., Wilson, S. Ethological and Psychological Models of Motivation Towards a Synthesis. From Animals to Animats: Proceedings of the first International Conference on Simulation of Adaptive Behavior. MIT Press, 1991, pp. 194-205.

⁵ Herzberg, F. Motivational Theory. <http://www.businessballs.com/herzberg.htm> [interactive] [accessed 2013-05-01].

⁶ Snowman, B. Psychology Applied to Teaching. 8/e, Houghton Mifflin, p. 339.

⁷ Ramalingman, B. Tools for Knowledge and Learning. Overseas Development Institute, 2006.

useful in all spheres of life.

As demonstrated by experience (survey on the organization of individual work), a student, who has newly come from secondary school and has known only colloquial foreign language, is placed in a position where he has not only to perfect knowledge that was obtained earlier but to learn professional vocabulary in order to be able to communicate verbally and in a written form in professional environment. A student can endeavour the above-mentioned aim by learning both at university and at home studying independently the more especially as there is a lack of contact hours in foreign language teaching and learning.

It is certainly true that a role of a teacher in helping a student to learn important conceptions and facts remains the same, however, it is not enough to learn texts, thoughts and actions a teacher has presented. Every teacher has to make a reach for perfection: he has to interest students in realizing and developing teaching material, training their creativity and desire to know more and more. A teacher has to help students to learn, perceive inner connection with a teaching subject, help to discern what he knows from what he does not know and cannot do. A student has to know what he is learning and where he will apply his knowledge. In this process both sides are responsible for knowledge digestion. In proof of it the application of new teaching and learning methods can be used. It is relevant that in such situation when the number of contact hours is lessened, independent work gains a great importance. Independent work can vary in forms and the best way to increase students' abilities is preparation of such tasks that encourage their creativity, critical thinking and wish to know more. All the above-mentioned compose one of the main problems in foreign language teaching and learning.

Student's independent activities are based on news and information which is mainly in a written form. That is why the ability of effective reading or application of interactive learning strategies is of great importance.

Lissitz⁸ defines statement “student's individual work” in three aspects:

- *Individual work* can be interpreted as something done with somebody's own proper hands. It is the only one way to gain experience that will be useful in real life. Independent work includes students' initiative of discussing; they solve problems related to uncertainty themselves. (Such independent work can be the main academic

⁸ Lissitz, R. W. Longitudinal and Value Added Models of Student Performance: Maple Grove, Minnesota: JAM Press, 2006.

way to study foreign languages, because, as Russian scientist Leontiev⁹ states, students communicate with one another more easily due to the reason that they are not afraid of making language mistakes).

- *Classical individual work* means that a student works not being face-to-face but at home or library. Leontiev¹⁰ says that one of the productive independent methods in foreign language learning is a method of collective activity when tasks are given not for every student individually but for the whole group. Bykova¹¹ states that application of such methods creates a certain psychological climate that promotes the development of a personality through a positive interpersonal system of perception.
- *Investigative individual work* means semestrial, term and diploma papers.

All these aspects are different, though, when put together, make the whole course of academic studies.

On purpose to ascertain the assumptions of effective foreign language learning and assess teaching and learning of foreign languages, students were given a survey.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE INVESTIGATION

According to the study results most students assessed their knowledge as average (35,7%). Only 7,1% assessed themselves excellent and 2,8% – very good.

Table 1. How do you assess your foreign language knowledge after entering the university?
Indicate one answer only.

Sr. no.	Rating scale	Number of students	Percentage of students
1.	Excellent	5	7,1%
2.	Very good	2	2,8%
3.	Good	24	34,3%
4.	Average	25	35,7%
5.	Satisfactorily	8	11,4%
6.	Weakly	6	8,6%
7.	Unsatisfactorily	0	0,0%

The above given results show that students were self-critical and honest. According to the data from Table 1 a conclusion can be drawn that students' foreign language knowledge is

⁹ Leontiev, A.A. Язык и речевая деятельность в общей и педагогической психологии. Москва –Воронеж, 2004.

¹⁰ Leontiev, A.A. Язык и речевая деятельность в общей и педагогической психологии. Москва –Воронеж, 2004.

¹¹ Вукоча, Е. С. Роль и место психологии в формировании личности в условиях меняющегося мира. Материалы межвузовской конференции студентов, аспирантов и молодых ученых. Новосибирск, 2013.

credible, however, there is place for deepening and perfection.

The answers to the question why students attend foreign language practice were different.

Table 2. Why do you attend foreign language classes? Match one of three answers.

Sr. no.	Statements	Number and percentage of students		
		Yes	Partially	No
1.	Compulsory participation	55 (78,5%)	10 (14,2%)	5 (7,1%)
2.	Want to improve foreign language	60 (85,7%)	5 (7,1%)	5 (7,1%)
3.	Want to speak correctly	40 (57,1%)	20 (28,5%)	10 (14,2%)
4.	Want to obtain new information	30 (42,8%)	35 (50%)	5 (7,1%)
5.	Strict lecturer	20 (28,5%)	42 (60%)	7 (10%)
6.	Agreeable lecturer	33 (47,1%)	25 (35,7%)	12 (17,1%)
7.	Foreign language is necessary for future work	50 (71,4%)	15 (21,4%)	5 (7,1%)
8.	Foreign language is necessary to study specialty literature	25 (35,7%)	35 (50%)	10 (14,2%)
9.	Ability to study in a foreign country according to students' exchange programme	30 (42,8%)	15 (21,4%)	25 (35,7%)
10.	Other	0	0	0

The majority of them want to improve their knowledge (85,7%), other understand that foreign languages are required at work (71,4%), other want to study in a foreign country according to students' exchange programmes (42,8%).

Table 3. What foreign language knowledge and skills you require most? Match one of three answers.

Sr. no..	Skills	Number and percentage of students		
		Yes	Partially	No
1.	Colloquial language	41 (58,5%)	15 (21,4%)	14 (20%)
2.	Grammar and writing	10 (14,2%)	32 (45,7%)	28 (40%)
3.	Reading and comprehension of specialty literature	45 (64,2%)	25 (35,7%)	0
4.	Development of specialty vocabulary	32 (45,7%)	22 (31,4%)	16 (22,8%)
5.	Art of presentations	20 (28,5%)	22 (31,4%)	16 (22,8%)
6.	Writing and filling legal documents	15 (21,4%)	20 (28,5%)	35 (50,0%)
7.	Communication	40 (57,1%)	15 (21,4%)	15 (21,4%)

During investigation we wanted to know what foreign language knowledge and skills are in lack. 64,2% of respondents answered that there is a lack of reading and comprehension of specialty literature, 45,7% - development of specialty vocabulary, 57,1% - communication and 45,7% partially mentioned knowledge of grammar and writing. As ever, grammar is disliked. However, grammar serves regular speaking and writing.

Table 4. What problems do you confront with while learning foreign language (both during practice and working independently)? Match one of three answers.

Sr. no.	Problems	Number and percentage of students		
		Yes	Partially	No
1.	Lack of time	45 (64,2%)	15 (21,4%)	10 (14,2%)
2.	Vague requirements	13 (18,5%)	5 (7,1%)	52 (74,2%)
3.	Do not find information in a library or on the Internet	25 (35,7%)	13 (18,5%)	32 (45,7%)
4.	Overlarge load of studies	42 (60%)	12 (17,1%)	16 (22,8%)
5.	Do not have personal computer	15 (21,4%)	5 (7,1%)	50 (71,4%)
6.	Long break between secondary school finishing and study at university	45 (64,2%)	15 (21,4%)	10 (14,2%)
7.	Too large volume of independent work	35 (50,0%)	10 (14,2%)	25 (35,7%)
8.	Talentless for language learning	43 (61,4%)	13 (18,5%)	14 (20,0%)
9.	Inaptitude to plan time	52 (74,0%)	10 (14,2%)	8 (11,4%)
10.	Lack of independent work skills	38 (54,2%)	20 (28,5%)	12 (17,1%)
11.	Other	0	0	0

Respondents mentioned the following problems – lack of time (64,2%), too large load of studies (60%), long break between finishing secondary school and studying languages at university (64,2%), inaptitude to plan spare time (74,2%) and lack of independent work skills (54,2%) - as the mostly happening ones. The answers to the above-mentioned question show that in spite of constantly changing times, students are in a lack of one night in order to prepare for the examination or the presentation of independent work.

Students' proposals and requests:

- Double number of hours intended to a foreign language;
- More hours for specialty literature;
- Classes are more interesting than at secondary school; have no complaints;
- Interesting presentations, though students are not prepared very well after secondary school. More colloquial speech and topics on general subjects.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the investigation and scientific references have shown that students' attitude towards foreign language studies and the quality of independent work depends on students' motivation. Theoretical analysis revealed that motivation is a real state of a person and has to be promoted by the context of foreign language studying.

It is established that students assess the influence of foreign language on formation of a personality and training of general abilities.

It is ascertained that students assess the necessity of a foreign language as “very needful” and “needful”.

The data of investigation revealed that students were mostly motivated by three factors: perfect language usage was related with successful career (60%), wish to learn well (60%) and knowing that foreign languages would be needful in future (57,1%).

It was established that, in students' opinion, the learning at university success depends on the following factors: born talent to learn languages (85,7%), knowledge obtained at secondary school (85,7%), learners' personal properties (diligence, sense of responsibility, ability to plan time (even 88,6% of students do not know how to plan their time), learners' motivation (60%).

Students accentuated the following commonly-used problems of foreign language learning: a lack of time for studies (64,2%), too long break between secondary school finishing and foreign language learning at university (64,2%), talentless for language learning (61,4%), lack of independent work skills (54,2%).

Students of the Faculty of Public Security are motivated to study foreign languages; however, it would be purposeful to individualize tasks of independent learning in order to correspond to the level of students' knowledge.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study the following recommendations can be made:

1. Orient students towards successful learning and positive results of activities.
2. Promote students to learn and to aim for achievements according to capability.
3. Acknowledge the differences of students' individuality, social origin and convictions. Every learner has to feel well.
4. Do not forget that assessment system is a motivated force.

5. Pay attention to work environment.
6. Do not forget that motivation appears when benefit is felt, safety is guaranteed and delight of impressions is experienced. Students tend to learn more when they consider themselves talented, responsible and valuable. Therefore, methods that help students recognize and value themselves have to be searched.
7. Learners will be active for a long time if their value, uniqueness, importance are promoted; their necessities are learned as well as optimal tasks are prepared using special methods; clear requirements and assessment are presented.
8. Apply methods that energize students' thoughts and actions as well as to promote generation and implementation of ideas.
9. Analyze personal properties, talent, interests, assumptions of activity, roles at university and applied methods of students and ourselves.
10. Respect students' attitudes and failures, trust in them, do not compare them one with another, develop tolerance towards course mates, encourage to think independently, teach to create and implement plans, teach to communicate freely, pay attention towards viewpoints and to solve problems.

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EFEKTYVAUS UŽSIENIO KALBOS MOKYMOSI ASPEKTAI

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Santrauka

Kalbos dėka galime pažinti tikrovę, iš kartos į kartą perduoti patyrimą, mokslo ir kultūros laimėjimus. Išsimokslinusiame teisėsaugos pareigūnui būtina mokėti užsienio kalbų, kad įgytų atitinkamą socialinį statusą. Per kalbų įvairovę atsiveria įvairios pasaulio pažinimo galimybės. Kalbos atveria įvairiausių mąstymo bei suvokimo būdus.

Aktyviai dalyvaujant Europos Sąjungos ir pasaulio bendrijoje mūsų šaliai reikalingi kvalifikuoti, kūrybingi ir gabūs, užsienio kalbomis bendraujantys teisėsaugos pareigūnai. Todėl Mykolo Romerio universitete vienas iš mokomųjų dalykų yra profesinės užsienio kalbos mokymas(-is), padedantis būsimiems pareigūnams susirasti jų gebėjimus atitinkantį darbą.

Straipsnyje apžvelgiami Viešojo saugumo fakulteto studentų efektyvaus užsienio kalbų mokymosi aspektai, pateikiama būsimų pareigūnų nuomonė apie užsienio kalbų studijas universitete ir savarankišką kalbų mokymąsi. Tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad daugiausia studentų gerą kalbų mokėjimą sieja su karjeros sėkme, noru gerai mokytis ir siekti aukštesnio mokslinio laipsnio, žinojimu, kad, užbaigus studijas, užsienio kalbos žinių tikrai prireiks. Mokydamiesi kalbų studentai susiduria su tokiais sunkumais kaip laiko trūkumas studijoms (dauguma dirba), pertrauka tarp vidurinės mokyklos baigimo ir užsienio kalbų mokymosi universitete pradžios, savarankiško darbo įgūdžių stoka, negabumas kalboms. Straipsnyje taip pat pateikiamos rekomendacijos, orientuotos į efektyvų ir sėkmingą užsienio kalbų mokymą(-si), teigiamus teisinės veiklos rezultatus.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: kalbų mokymas(-is), motyvuojantys faktoriai, mokymosi sąlygos.

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