THE IMPORTANCE OF SELECTING A TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGY IN STUDIES OF A PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE

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Annotation. Understanding of learner's preparation for life and activity changing in a rapidly evolving world as well as passing from a teaching paradigm to a learning one, learning strategies in studies of languages are becoming more and more important. The article deals with the issue of selecting learning/teaching strategies as management and anticipation of one's learning activity in studies by emphasizing the ratio between learning/teaching strategies and principles of teaching languages as well as discussing the peculiarity of professional language studies and its determined selection of a certain learning/teaching strategy. At the end of the article theoretical conclusions are provided, emphasizing assumptions of communicative language teaching principles and learning paradigm implementation in studies of a professional language made by transfer strategy.

Keywords: professional language, learning strategy, teaching principles.

INTRODUCTION

Recent discussions about studies of languages pay a significant attention to the analysis of introducing general teaching principles and application of different teaching/learning methods. These topics are crucial, calling for constant attention. As understanding of learner's preparation to live and act in a rapidly evolving world is changing, it has been assumed that one needs to pass from teaching (i.e. an active teacher and a passive learner) to learning (an active learner). The underlying difference between the teaching and learning paradigm lies within the objectives raised: the aim of the teaching paradigm is to elicit the correct answer whereas the aim of the learning paradigm is to understand in what way and how the correct answer can be elicited. Thus, the concept of learning as acquisition and reproduction of information transforms into interactive, dynamic searching process, where by exploring and interacting with the surroundings, one's new understanding or conception is born[1]. When the conception changes, the significance of each individual's thinking, learning methods and system of actions arises.

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[1] Greene, M. (1973). *Teacher as Stranger: Educational Phylosophy for the Modern Age*. Belmont, Ca.:Wadsworth.

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In contemporary higher education goals of language studies vary as well. As requirements increase, knowing a language becomes a factor of developing one's professional competence[2]. A language turns from a tool of personal communication into that of professional activity, used for successful rendering of information and establishment of social contacts. It is not enough to learn a set of words or phrases by heart. Such learning is more common to the so-called extinct languages. Constant development of living languages requires from a learner skills of a language creator.

In scientific literature, especially among foreign authors, the term '*strategy*' frequently defines a separate teaching/learning method[3]. This article keeps to the understanding more and more permeating into educational environment that the concept of *strategy* defines management of one's learning activity. From a managerial point of view, a strategy is perceived as a certain perspective, encompassing the system of basic methods and ways[4], which is a wider point of view, involving not only a separate method but the set of methods and anticipation of the methods applied in order to reach desirable goals.

These assumptions allow to form and actualize the issue of selecting a learning/teaching strategy in studies of languages.

The **object** of the research is a teaching/learning strategy in studies of languages. As language studies is a wide field, investigation of the problem is specified by a professional language and a language for specific purposes used by representatives of a certain profession within the field of studies.

Research **aim** – to highlight peculiarities of a teaching/learning strategy in studies of a professional language by observing communicative principles of language teaching.

The research is based on methodological regulations of teaching paradigm.

Research **method** – theoretical analysis of literature.

The issue of selecting a teaching/learning strategy in studies of a professional language is analysed by underlining the ratio between teaching/learning strategies and principles of language teaching as well as discussing the peculiarity of professional language studies and its determined features of selecting a teaching/learning strategy.

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[2] Brunevičiūtė, R. (1999). Kalba kaip profesinės kompetencijos ugdymo veikslys. Aukštojo mokslo sistemos ir didaktika. Konferencijos pranešimų medžiaga. Kaunas: Technologija, p. 127-133.
[3] Ramsden, P. (2000). Kaip mokyti aukštojoje mokykloje. Aidai.
[4] Mady, C.,Garbati, J. (2014). *Calling upon other language skills to enhance second language learning.*Research Monograph, USA.

RATIO BETWEEN LEARNING STRATEGIES AND PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING LANGUAGES

In education science sufficient attention is paid to different learning theories and the discussion of learning strategies deriving from these theories. Philologists, analysing problems of language studies, do not consider a learning strategy to be such a significant issue and pay more attention to other aspects. Therefore, it is reasonable to initially discuss certain general learning theories, revealing peculiar learning strategies and the ratio of the strategies with historically established principles of language teaching by outlining: a) grammar-translation method, b) natural (direct) teaching and c) communication method.

Bydam (2000) provides the classification of learning theories, where he distinguishes between 1) classical theories (sign theory and behaviourism) and 2) modern theories such as active, constructive and cognitive learning.

The main idea of classical sign learning theory is that one can learn best only by repeating. Learning subject is not related to human experience and, most significantly, cognition. A learner is not given an explanation why he/she needs to learn a sign. Thus, learning is mechanical, based on unconscious process[5]. Classical behaviourist theory is based on aspects of behaviour psychology, most important of which is to learn for reward. Learners are constantly controlled and asked for the answer. Learning depends on teacher's permission: if he/she estimates that the material has been mastered, one can learn further. If not, it is revised[6]. Thus, unconscious learning process prevails here as well. One can generalize that classical theories determine the strategy of mechanical, unconscious learning, which can be called recollection (learning by heart).

Up to the beginning of the 20th century the only system of teaching principles revived, namely grammar-translation teaching[7]. These principles were transferred from classical language teaching:

- Theory of grammar, separate words, and word-by-word translation are taught, i.e. signs that are essential for learning, identifying and reproduction; thus, one seeks unconscious learning.

- Learner's interests and psychological conditions of learning a language are disregarded. Thus, language learning is not related to learner's experience;

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[5] Bydam, J. (2000). Pedagogika. Vilnius:Charibdė.
[6] Bydam, J. (2000). Pedagogika. Vilnius:Charibdė.
[7] Jacikevičius, A. (1970). Daugiakalbystės psichologija. Apybraiža. Vilnius:Mintis.

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- Written language and artificial, mechanical system are taught; this principle also determines unconscious learning of languages.

One can claim that applying the teaching principles of grammar-translation in language studies imply the prevalence of recollection (memorizing) strategy. This strategy does not ensure the main aim raised for studies of a professional language, i.e. to develop professional competence when gaining the linguistic one[8].

Modern teaching theories are based on different aspects of pedagogical psychology. Factors of activity are related to human development. In this theory learning is perceived as a natural activity of human interaction with nature[9]. Construction theory observes a similar approach. It is based on the statement that in order to perceive a complicated world, a human being is supposed to design its pattern. For a successful pattern one must communicate with other people[10]. The prevailing strategy in activity and constructivism learning theory is imitation (of reality).

In language studies of the 20th century upon the impact of modern learning theories, principles of natural or direct language teaching start prevailing:

- To teach grammar using the inductive method by perceiving it from the context, i.e. the language studied;
- To avoid intermediation of one's native language and translation, thus creating natural interaction with the environment of that language;
- The most targeted form of teaching is dialogues between teachers and students,. i.e, communication with other individuals;
- It is most important to teach colloquial speech, to invoke as many senses as possible by using audio and visual material. In other words, to approach natural language environment as close as possible by imitating it.

One can summarize that natural or direct language learning can be best implemented when imitation strategy is prevailing (imitation of reality). Although this strategy seems to be more suitable for gaining linguistic competence, it does not provide favourable conditions for implementation of the main aim of a professional language, i.e. to turn a language into a factor of professional competence development.

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[8] Brunevičiūtė, R. (1999). *Kalba kaip profesinės kompetencijos ugdymo veikslys.* Aukštojo mokslo sistemos ir didaktika. Konferencijos pranešimų medžiaga. Kaunas: Technologija, p. 127-133.
[9] Bydam, J. (2000). Pedagogika. Vilnius:Charibdė.
[10] Bydam, J. (2000). Pedagogika. Vilnius:Charibdė.

It is important to emphasize one more aspect. The discussed learning theories have not separately analysed the issue of learning strategy. Therefore, the dominance of learning strategies can only be identified when comparing the basic statements of language teaching and learning theories.

PECULIARITY OF PROFESSIONAL LANGUAGE STUDIES AND ITS DETERMINED FEATURES OF SELECTING THE TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGY

The main direction of language teaching in a higher education institution is studies of professional language. The term of a professional language is typically used to define a foreign language for specific purposes. The conception of a professional language should be slightly extended by combining studies of a foreign language used by representatives of a certain profession, professional culture of a native language and professional terminology in Latin (medicine, law, biology, etc.). What are the peculiarities of the so-perceived professional language studies? First of all, with some exceptions concerning professional terminology in Latin, to a lesser or greater extent it means the development of the already learned language. Thus, a student has the basic knowledge of a language, which can be used and applied for subsequent learning. Secondly, a professional language is closely related to studies of a certain profession and, therefore, the boundaries of real language use within a situation are clear enough. Thirdly, studies of a professional language are the factor of professional competence development, providing assumptions for improvement of individual action competence within linguistic field of a profession[11].Selection of a *learning strategy* in studies of a professional language is determined by both the peculiarities and principles of communicative language teaching. The peculiarity of a learning situation is determined by the learner's need for adaptation: one can successfully communicate in a prospective professional activity if the knowledge and skills gained and developed during studies are used creatively. In every real-life situation an individual is supposed to adapt and find the most suitable linguistic formula or create it by applying the learned one in similar learning situations. Therefore, the learning itself has to be the process of regular creation and studying of linguistic variations.

A significant attention is paid to learning strategies by cognitive learning theory, which developed in the 20th century under the impact of Piaget. According to the underlying cognitive

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[11] Mačianskienė, N. Užsienio kalbų mokymosi strategijos. Lietuvos mokslas. Available at: http://www.elibrary.lt/resursai/Leidiniai/Mokslotyros_institutas/Liekis/Ak_Edukologija/Edukologija_17.pdf

statement, learning is an active process during which a learner strives to enrich his/her knowledge with new elements as well as evaluates and selects newly gained knowledge. Thus, a learner constantly controls and affects his/her learning process[12]. As Gage and Berliner (1994) point out, theorists of cognitive science claim that a learning strategy is composed of operations surpassing processes directly related to the task fulfilment. A learner can use the system of methods and ways facilitating the learning process. The system is supposed to make a learner's position more active, i.e. to allow him/her to pass to the paradigm of active learning.

Cognitive transfer strategy has been most analysed. The conception of the strategy in the 20th century from the traditional approach, that only transfer of the content or principles is possible turned into the contemporary approach maintaining that transfer means using the system of learner's knowledge (meta-cognition) about self-perception while learning. The main principles of transfer strategy are as follows[13]:

- Teaching situation is similar to real-life as much as possible;
- Large practice and a variety of tasks;
- Necessity of basic knowledge and skills making assumptions for subsequent learning;
- Conceptual patterns and a variety of examples;
- Application of newly gained knowledge and skills.

The essence of the strategy is that a learner creates his/her individual pattern, which facilitates cognition and learning.

When analysing the communicative method of teaching languages that developed in the 20th century, one must take into consideration the understanding that teaching of a language is supposed to satisfy learner's needs and interests, i.e. the biggest attention is paid to a learner, reinforcement of his/her motifs and development of skills. The basic principles of communicative language teaching are as follows:

- Teaching of a language is aimed at life and communication in real situations, i.e. the educational situation turns into learning of a language in real-life situations;
- Students learn independently, interact, i.e. fulfil many different assignments, according to the patterns and examples provided independently form new linguistic combinations, thus using the previously gained knowledge;

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[12] Bydam, J. (2000). Pedagogika. Vilnius:Charibdė.
[13] Gage, N.L.,Berliner, D.C. (1994) Pedagoginė psichologija. Vilnius:Alma litera.

The most important feature of the communicative language teaching is to teach students to learn, develop their communicative competence[14]. This aspect in studies of a professional language opens even wider transfer possibilities: one can use not only linguistic but also sociocultural elements and metacognition in different areas of life, primarily in the area of the selected profession.

Communicative teaching of languages is not excluded from the learning concept. In studies of a professional language this teaching allows one to implement the most important provision: it is important not only "what I said" but "how I said and why". In such a case, we can hardly rely on memorizing or imitation strategies. In a real linguistic situation, a set of phrases learned by heart may not be sufficient. It may differ from learner's experience by imitating potential conversations.

A learner can develop his/her own pattern, which would allow him/her to use the correct linguistic construction in any real-life situation only if he/she has formed, for instance, combinations based on a sequence of tenses or constructions of prepositions many times in different cases. It all means that transfer strategy perfectly implements the principles of the communicative language teaching.

The previously conducted analysis of learning strategies prevailing in studies of languages allows one to claim that the memorizing or imitation strategy is not sufficient in order to implement objectives of developing action competence in professional language studies. Transfer strategy can fully implement this aim because transfer allows demonstrating the learned behaviour in a different situation from that of the learning process, i.e. in a similar but new situation. That is the main aim of professional language studies.

Taking everything into consideration, one can claim that in studies of a professional language selection of transfer strategy can provide favourable conditions for implementing communicative language teaching principles.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy to emphasize potential problems. Scientific cognition of transfer strategy in professional studies is not sufficient: there are numerous practical patterns of transfer management. However, the analysis of transfer control, evaluation of activity and peculiarity of the situation shows that transfer strategy, despite its efficiency, is not applied widely enough. In studies of languages paying little attention to the issues of a learning strategy,

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[14] Wong,L.C., Nunah,D. (2011). *The learning styles and strategies of effective language learmers.* System. Vol,39, issue2,pp.144-163.

wider implementation of transfer strategy in studies of a professional language is hardly possible.

Thirdly, communicative teaching of languages has not encompassed all areas of language studies. Many teachers tend to guide their activity in studies of languages by the principles of grammar-translation and direct teaching of languages, frequently by their specific combination, thus taking more responsibility for successful learning themselves rather than students. Simultaneously students tend to promote memorizing or imitation strategies. Dominance of the latter facilitates primarily teachers' work, simplifies control and evaluation; on the contrary, selection of transfer strategy requires more intense activity of a student and a teacher, special willingness and preparation, which invokes a sense of fear as well.

Nevertheless, theoretical analysis makes the assumption that deeper understanding of efficiency of the transfer strategy, especially in studies of a professional language outweighs uncertainty of the discussed problems. In the paper the aim limited itself to theoretical aspects of research into peculiarities of selecting a learning strategy. The subsequent step would be research into practical preparation and transfer strategy application.

CONCLUSIONS

Summarizing peculiarities of selecting a learning/teaching strategy by observing the principles of communicative language teaching in studies of a professional language, one can claim that theoretical analysis highlighted the factors which determined selection of the learning strategy in professional language studies, such as importance of prevailing language teaching principles and the peculiarity of professional language studies.

In studies of languages principles of grammar-translation and direct language teaching prevailing up to these days determine only promotion of uncomplicated learning strategies. Dominating traditional memorizing and imitation strategies do not provide favourable conditions for efficient studies of a professional language.

The peculiarity of professional language studies, making assumptions for development of independent action competence within the area of a professional language, requires a learning strategy, which helps reach the aim concerning creative use of a language in real-life situation and provides grounds for development of one's professional competence.

In the environment of communicative language teaching principles and learning paradigm, despite the potential problems, transfer strategy is the best option to implement

specific aims raised for professional language studies, making assumptions to develop the individual language learning and skill development pattern in one's professional field.

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MOKYMO(SI) STRATEGIJOS PASIRINKIMO SVARBA PROFESINĖS KALBOS STUDIJOSE

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S a n t r a u k a

　　Keičiantis suvokimui apie studentų pasirengimą gyvenimui bei veiklai sparčiai kintančiame pasaulyje bei pereinant nuo mokymo prie mokymosi paradigmos, mokymosi strategijos pasirinkimas kalbų mokymosi procese tampa itin aktualus. Straipsnyje analizuojamas mokymosi strategijos pasirinkimas profesinės kalbos studijose išsiaiškinant ryšį tarp mokymosi strategijų bei bendrų kalbos mokymosi principų ir aptariant profesinės kalbos specifiškumą, kuris nulemia mokymosi strategijos pasirinkimą. Analizuojant santykį tarp istoriškai susiformavusių mokymo principų bei mokymosi strategijų, svarbu paminėti: a) gramatikos-vertimų mokymą bei mokymosi mintinai strategiją ir b) natūralistinį mokymą, kuris geriausiai realizuojamas per imitavimo strategiją. Šios strategijos nepakankamai realizuoja komunikacinius kalbos mokymo principus; originalus kalbos mokymosi modelis gali būti sukuriamas naudojant perkėlimo strategiją. Straipsnio pabaigoje pristatomos teorinės analizės išvados. Jose akcentuojamos komunikacinio kalbos mokymo principų naudojimo prielaidos bei mokymosi paradigma, profesinės kalbos studijose sukurta perkeliamosios strategijos. Straipsnyje pateikiami tyrimo rezultatai apie studentų nuomonę bei kompetenciją mokantis profesinės anglų kalbos, jų daugiakultūrinio diskurso suvokimą, pasiūlomi būdai, kaip pagerinti esamą situaciją.

　　Pagrindinės sąvokos*:* profesinė kalba, mokymosi strategija, mokymo principai.

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