COMMUNICATIVE GAMES IN THE SECOND-LANGUAGE ACQUISITION.

Modern language teaching in the UK and European countries has seen an enormous shift in the methodology in the past two decades. Gone is the traditional approach, along with its dictations, prose translations and explicit grammar studies. In have come notional/functional syllabuses, graded objective tests, and pupil-centered work in the target language.

The change in emphasis in language teaching connects with recent second-language research. A well-known psycholinguist Stephen Krashen claimed that languages are normally acquired rather than formally learnt. Such psycholinguists as Hymes and Halliday argued for a functional view of the nature of language. The upshot of all this was to see communication as not only the end of language learning.

It should be mentioned that the idea of changing the traditional education model of teaching has become popular not only language teaching. Teaching different disciplines in Europe has focused on learning rather than teaching. The so-called communicative tasks are the normal type of exercise the schoolchildren in most European countries do at the lessons of History, Geography and even Chemistry (Science). It is of paramount importance that students are active in their learning process - they should be subjects rather than objects - so that they become as effective as possible in real life situations.

Though the wealth of psycholinguistic and socio-linguistic research have underpinned claims about learning languages, an enormous amount of time and attention has been devoted to researching the process of language learning, there has been a general reluctance to extrapolate findings in terms of actual classroom methodologies. And the teachers have been told not to place too much faith in better research to proved answers. In this connection in 1989 in Britain the Flexible Learning project was set up. It involved a number of schools in London and student teachers at Goldsmith College. The aim of the project was to encourage students and teachers to move away from the teacher-centered classroom and help develop greater pupil autonomy in language acquisition. The initial aim was to give language to students and allow them to work on their own terms. For this purpose a simple model of classroom organization was adopted where pupils rotated in groups through a carousel of activities (computer exercises, board games, an oral activity, some reading and writing). On the basis of this a more sophisticated model was developed. It included a unit of work defined in terms of topic. The completion of the tasks and the work schedule depended on the pupils.

Soon it became clear that not enough attention had been given to the process of language learning itself. In particular, the skills and strategies. One of the major outcomes was understanding of what the presence or absence of certain types of strategy implied in terms of the process of language learning. It was found out that on early seminal study the pupils should gain success in ten Learners strategies: 1) planning strategy; 2) active strategy; 3) emphatic strategy; 4) formal strategy; 5) experimental; 6) semantic; 7) practice; 8) communication; 9) monitoring; 10) internatisation. Learner's strategies refer explicitly to the habitual practices, such as dictionary techniques, ways of remembering etc. Communicative strategies are part of a learner's repertoire of techniques for carrying out conversations, they are under conscious control and personally determined. Although communicative strategies are what we desire of pupils in free, interactive speech, it is learner's strategies that are most readily accessible to classroom teaching. If pupils have a good set of learner strategies, we can provide opportunities for pupils' autonomous use of language, then it is possible that learner strategies can form the basis of more developed communicative strategies, and thus communicative competence.

Taking into consideration the difference existing between communicative and learner's strategies we cannot but accept the classification of communicative activities, offered by Paul Bress in MET Nov.2 1994. He roughly divided the most common communicative activities, information gap activities, into two main types - authentic
and unauthentic ones, defining information transfer activities used in English for Academic Purposes as a different 3d type. Unauthentic activities are the ones which required to bridge "knowledge gaps" in a way different from a real communication (back to back exercises, jigsaw milling, human ordering on cards). These games are very valuable at lower levels. Authentic activities come closer to real life communication as there is no contrived blockage to the communicative process - discussions, surveys. The examples of the 3d type of activities can be found in EAP course books. Most of them are threefold listening tasks. They may not seem communicative as there is no student to student interaction, but for more advanced students the sense of gain comes from the degree of interest of the materials used in the classroom. Thus, the students can not only have an opportunity of practising the target language, but also learn something in addition to just learning. Otherwise, students' needs and expectations might well not be met. As the students' proficiency increases, there should be a tendency to phase out unauthentic activities and to phase in more authentic ones. This insures that learners focus on and learn what is immediate to their needs and communicative purposes, involving them as people, not just as language students. Which seems to be the most important factor of motivation that helps to gain the target.

The authors of the above mentioned Flexible Learning Project emphasized its clearly developmental character, but the attempts to find the best way of teaching without teacher’s domination are being constantly made. “Communicating without the course book” project was designed by teachers at the British Council in Naples. The courses begin at lower-intermediate level. They do not use any course book and finding material and tasks as well as the ways of assessment are the problems exploited linguistically. The students have a range of non-material-based project work, such as interviewing people in the streets or planning a reorganization of the city transport system. When material is needed they use educational publications as well as “realia” in the shape of magazines, newspapers etc. Focusing on errors can also be a source of language input. There is no limit to the extent of practice that can be generated in such activities. And the most important point is that language work emerges naturally and is generated by the group itself rather than is contrived or predetermined. This insures that learners focus on and learn what is immediate to their needs and communicative purposes, involving them as people, not just language students. Which is the most important factor of motivation that helps to gain the target.

Communication method is considered to be efficient not only for solving purely methodological problems. It is viewed as the most efficient way of creating the general encouraging atmosphere, which is so important in the classroom where young people are educated and brought up. This method has been used for solving problems within “peer education “ framework internationally well-known within AIDS education. Thus, communication method developed on the basis of the latest educational and behavioral theories (social-learning theory, theory of reasoned actions, theory of diffusion of innovations) can help solve numerous problems in the modern society.

Reference books

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РАЗВИТИЕ СИСТЕМЫ ДИФТОНГОВ В НЕМЕЦКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

Целью настоящего исследования является рассмотрение развития немецких дифтонгов в процессе эволюции начиная с древневерхненемецкого и заканчивая нововерхненемецким периодом.

В настоящее время проблема развивающихся языковых изменений, регистрируемых исследователями практически на всех уровнях языковой системы, привлекает внимание многих лингвистов. Изучение истории фонетического строя немецкого языка показывает, как постепенная эволюция языка привела, в конечном счете, к его современному состоянию. Это современное состояние, равно как и любой другой синхронный момент в истории языка, не является состоянием статическим. Напротив, движение в языке происходит непрерывно; поэтому все явления и факты истории языка взаимосвязаны.

Чтобы отчетливо была видна диахроническая оболочность синхронных состояний, каждый из периодов развития немецкого языка рассматриваются, в данной статье, как самостоятельное целое. При этом фонетика предстает как развитие системы, а не изолированных явлений.