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ENGLISH TEACHER AND HIS ROLE IN THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL

L.B.Malotkina

Some aspects generalizing achievements of pedagogical thought about the role of a teacher of foreign languages and its influence on the formation of world outlook and intellectual development of individual students are being studied in this article.

Keywords: *teacher, intellect, spiritual development, education, world outlook.*

The language picture of the world represents an extremely complex pedagogical, psychological, sociological and informatively intellectual system which is constantly inherited, enriched and changes. Linguists allocate a situational model of the world as the communications occur on different circumstances. The aim of a teacher is the creation of such situations for modeling language behavior. Nowadays the problem of using different materials, knowledge of history, pedagogics, psychology in order to get a maximum result in formation of a sociocultural competence, becomes more and more actual. It is the problem which helps to understand the inner world of his students and the adequate communications in foreign languages.

The connection of teaching foreign languages and the spiritual development of a student has a long historical tradition and has been studied for many years by such British teachers and researchers as C. Chapelle and C. Roberts, E.M. Hatch, P. Carrell, S. Krashen, S. Silberstein, H.D. Brown, P. Floyd, P. Carrell, etc.

A great contribution into the investigation and development of this problem in our country was made by a great number of American teachers such as J. Hill, R. Politzer, D. Hymes, C. Burstall, D. Ausubel, S. Doron, A. Heyde, Canadian L.M. Nalman, Italian M. Finocchiaro and many others.

Review of publications has shown that implementation of innovations in higher education is being analyzed by many authors. Survey of scholarly literature has shown considerable number of subject – related researches by native and foreign authors, nevertheless for the moment the issue of development of innovative education requires further study.

The actuality of the problem being outlined in the conditions of paradigmatic changes is stipulated by the presence of persistent contradictions both on the legislative and practice – methodological levels, namely, between the recognition of the necessity to modernize the training of future specialists and the lack of a holistic approach to its realization; between the objective need of a specialist with high value orientators in his culturological sphere and its insufficient development inherent to the graduates of higher educational institutions.

The object of the present article is to investigate and summarize the main achievements of pedagogical thought about the role of a teacher of foreign languages in higher education, his influence on the formation of world outlook and intellectual development of individual students, to identify unresolved issues and the key factors of the introduction of innovations in this realm, to designate the set of conditions for the development of spiritual integration of mankind.

The role of the language teacher nowadays is not as simple as it once was.

It is obvious we have much to learn from the history of language teaching and investigations are progressing at an ever accelerating rate. However, at present the most significant discoveries are not those describing the new and revolutionary methods. «Really new different things» in language teaching today involve quite a different approach to teaching. Earlier it was believed that the only basic tool a language teacher needed was a sound knowledge of the language. He was then briefly trained in the current methodology and sent into a classroom. Now it is obvious that linguistics is not the only branch in which a language teacher should be trained. The importance of psychology and sociology, as well as more extensive training in pedagogy, is being recognized and taken into consideration. The relevance of each of these disciplines can easily be seen by analyzing three main areas in which the approach to language teaching has recently changed.

1. Emphasis on the individual learner or an individual approach to the students. In the past, the question most frequently asked was “Which is the best teaching methodology?” Now teachers ask “How can my students best learn the language?” The emphasis has shifted from the teacher to the learner, and with this fact has come the realization that each learner is an individual, with distinct needs, learning styles, mental scheme and personal attitudes. Not only do various learners have different overall styles, but an individual learner

utilizes different approaches to learning at different stages in the learning process. Gagne (1965) has identified eight different types of learning, including stimulus response learning, learning of concepts, and problem solving among others [9, 58-59]. According to the content and difficulty of the subject matter, the learner would apply one or more of these different types of learning in a given situation. It is evidently, if the teacher is to be aware of these multiple individual cognitive and personality factors and able to define and utilize them to the fullest, he must have more than a passing knowledge of recent investigations in psychology.

2. Eclecticism. Having come to the realization that each learner possesses distinct cognitive and personality traits, it follows that one and the same teaching methodology will not be the most suitable for all students. Therefore recent tendency has been shifted toward eclecticism selecting materials and techniques from various sources. It obviously puts a much larger responsibility on the teacher, because now he should be familiar with a much wider range of materials, exercises, and activities than before. It is no longer simply a matter of picking up the textbook and teaching it. A much broader training in pedagogy is needed now.

3. Communication in a social context. Two important points must be considered regarding this third general tendency: communicative and social. Politzer (1961) once said:

«The other possibility... that has been proved feasible... is to eliminate meaning almost totally from the initial phase of language instruction. It is entirely possible to teach the major patterns of a foreign language without allowing the student to know what he is saying. He would be acquainted with the precise meaning of what he has learned only after the student has gained complete and automatic control over the grammar patterns [18].

In fact, this is what frequently happened with the audiolingual method. Students «parroted» phrases, with no idea of what they were saying. In more formal terminology, they demonstrated “linguistic competence” (Chomsky), but not «communicative competence» (Hymes) [14]. Nowadays we do recognize the importance of what a language does (function) as well as what it is (structure) - and what a language does - enables us to communicate. According to Hymes (1974), communicative competence is what a person “needs to know in order to communicate effectively in culturally significant situations.” It is not quite enough to receive only knowledge of linguistic structure. A teacher must also acquire the appropriate scheme regarding the

language culture while learning in order to understand the communication and the student must be able to respond applying the vocabulary and structure that correspond to a specific social situation; therefore we see the growing importance of sociology in language teaching [14,75].

Teacher's central position

How should a language teacher cope with all this? Thirty years ago, using the audiolingual method, his role was sometimes caricatured in the form of a «combination drill sergeant and orchestra conductor» (Silberstein 1987) – a relatively easy role to play, as most activities were well programmed. Today, however, he is a «facilitator» of learning, and his classroom may well bear more resemblance to a jam session than to a Beethoven concert [19,32]. Today's language teacher must manipulate much more information in several different areas of knowledge. Of course the main problem is not only in the amount of information to be mastered, but in the organization and application of this knowledge its adaptation to a practical situation. In other words, how can he use his knowledge of linguistics, psychology, sociology, and pedagogy to help his students to learn English?

There is a simple model to illustrate the answer to this question. The central element in this model is the teacher. The main figure in education today is the student as the focus of learning. It must be emphasized that the teacher is still the person specially trained to guide the student. Naturally, this fact will help the teacher to select appropriate learning materials, and create a positive classroom environment. In order to perform these tasks, the language teacher should have access to three main types of information about his students: 1) psychological factors, 2) personal needs, and 3) social factors. Regarding the psychological factors, three areas are of particular importance: a) scheme, b) cognitive style, and c) affective fact

Psychological factors

The first type of psychological information the teacher must be aware of the scheme or knowledge structures his students possess. In other words, what is their background knowledge or experience with regard to the material to be studied? With relation to language learning, this scheme falls into at least two general areas: «content» scheme, or background knowledge of the content area under study, and «formal» scheme, background knowledge regarding the language itself, rhetorical structure of reading texts (Carrell 1983)[4]. This knowledge will help the teacher to determine the average level of the class and identify which students may need extra work to bring them up

to this level, and which students are already beyond it and could therefore better distribute and use their time on more advanced projects.

Information regarding student's scheme might be obtained through school records or interviews with students. But it is preferably to apply brainstorming session with the group before presenting new material. In this way students can share their knowledge with the other members of the group, including the teacher. Brainstorming is also a particularly good technique for increasing self - esteem and confidence among students who may be slow in English but very good in their speciality. The importance of being aware of the student's scheme cannot be overemphasized. More and more studies are showing that what we understand depends on what we know. Some studies even show that in certain cases the scheme may have more influence on reading comprehension than do differences in syntactic complexity (Floyd and Carrell, 1987) [8,4].

Another important type of psychological information concerns the cognitive styles of the students. Now psychologists are discovering that different individuals may have various ways of perceiving and organizing information based on a combination of cognition and personality. While cognitive learning styles may vary under certain circumstances, an individual generally tends toward one particular style. There exist a great number of opinions regarding a wide range of factors that influence cognitive style. Ausubel and Robinson (1969) mention at least 18 different styles [1], while Hill (1972) defines 29 different factors. Probably the factor that has been most closely studied is field - dependence/independence. A field - dependent person perceives the "whole" but has difficulty in distinguishing the factors that make up the whole, while a field-independent individual easily perceives the components and imposes his own structure on them. According to Chapelle and Roberts (1986) [5], Hatch (1983) and Nalman (1975) [17], there are positive and significant relationships between field independence and language learning. Tendency toward reflection about impulse and tolerance of ambiguity are some of the other factors that have been studied and found to be related to language learning Doron (1973)[6], Nalman (1975) [17], etc. The language teacher should be aware of these different learning styles in his students (and in himself) and take actions accordingly, either by individualized instruction or by teaching aimed in the style of the majority of the students, with special work for those with different learning styles. Another solution might be to try to change some student's style. Since field

independence is positively related to success in language learning and field - dependence/independence seems to be at least partly affected by environment (authoritative societies seem to produce more field-dependent individuals (Brown 1980) [2, 91].

The question arises: would it not be possible to train students to be more field - independent in the open, but not threatening classroom environment?

The third type of psychological information concerns affective factors. Humanistic theory in psychology has paid great importance to emotions and feelings in recent years. In language learning, two factors that have been found to affect learning are attitudes and self-esteem. Lambert (1963) and Burstall (1972) found positive correlations between language learning (in this case French) and favourable attitudes towards French culture and language [17,3]. In 1979, Adelaide Heyde found a high correlation between self - esteem and capacity for oral production in the studied language under[12]. Gardner and Lambert (1972) [17] also studied self-esteem in language learning, and while their results were not statistically significant, they did indicate that self-esteem appears to be an important factor in language learning. The language teacher should be aware of these and other feelings his students may have, as in some cases the change in attitude may lead to much more success in learning than long hours of exercises.

Different sources of information

Student's needs may constitute the second major source of information for a teacher. What do the learners want and need to get from the course? Will they have to read scientific texts or do they simply want to learn a few phrases for their next trip to New York? Do they need general or technical vocabulary? Have they chosen to take the course or do they simply study it because it is required for graduation? It is important for the teacher to discuss her student's needs with them for two main reasons. On the one hand, this will help him to select and present materials in the most appropriate way. On the other hand, by voicing their needs, students will clarify them in their own minds and be able to formulate realistic and concrete goals in their work. But the students the teacher should especially focus on are those who are there only to earn credits for graduation. The teacher must help such students to see the practical benefits of language study for them as individuals and what they can really expect to obtain from this course.

The social factors are the third major type of information vital to the teacher. In addition to knowledge about the social and cultural environment surrounding the language being taught, the teacher should also realize the importance of the factors in the student's social environment that might affect his learning. There are two levels on which this social environment may influence language learning. The first level refers to human society as a whole from which the student comes or in which he lives. Is success in that society measured by how well one follows orders or by one's level of critical thinking? Which is more important in this society: the needs and goals of society as a whole or of the individuals living in the society? What are the collective attitudes of the society? From the student's point of view, these attitudes may hinder language learning.

The second level of social factors refers to the individual social environment of each student, i.e., his reference groups. Psychological factors such as attitudes and self-esteem are known to affect language learning, but these attitudes and self-images are largely influenced by the people close to us: family, friends, professional colleagues, etc. Many of our values and goals are also the reflections of those held by the reference groups which we belong to.

Responsibility for language learning

Today, the knowledge of the linguistic structure of the language is only one of the requirements of a good language teacher. At present the teachers should also have a profound knowledge of the social environment that influences their students, different pedagogical techniques, social and cultural aspects of the language being taught, and techniques for diagnosing certain psychological characteristics of learners. A foreign language is much more than lists of vocabulary and sets of grammar rules. Language learning is not simply a matter of acquiring a system of linguistic formulas. A foreign language is a form of communication among individuals in a specific social context and environment. But even more than it is a way of thinking and processing information. It is a symbol of culture and of personal identity.

This new, increased responsibility for language learning does not fall entirely on the teacher, however. The student must also assume more responsibility for the learning process. Now, the student is not simply a passive participant of this process. He must participate actively in the learning process. In the final analysis, it is the learner who must assimilate the

language and allow it to become part of him. We, as teachers, can only «facilitate» this process.

Thus, the spiritual development of an individual and the role of the English teacher in it is a continuous process of qualitative changes in education, resulting from implementation of innovations, becomes the object of the teachers of higher school.

The role of the language teacher nowadays is not as simple as it once was. To select appropriate learning materials and create a positive classroom environment the language teacher should be trained not only in linguistics. The importance of psychology and sociology, as well as more extensive training in pedagogy, is being recognized and taken into consideration. In other words, his knowledge of linguistics, psychology, sociology and pedagogy will help his students not only to learn English, but to make a great contribution into the spiritual development of an individual.

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У статті розглядаються деякі аспекти, узагальнюючі досягнення педагогічної думки про роль викладача іноземної мови та її вплив на формування світогляду та інтелектуальний розвиток особистості учнів.

Ключові слова: викладач, інтелект, духовний розвиток, навчання, світогляд.

В статье рассматриваются некоторые аспекты, обобщающие достижения педагогической мысли о роли преподавателя иностранного языка и его влияния на формирование мировоззрения и интеллектуальное развитие обучаемых.

Ключевые слова: преподаватель, интеллект, духовное развитие, обучение, мировоззрение.

Мальоткіна Людмила Борисівна - магістр, старший викладач кафедри англійської мови Східноукраїнського національного університету імені Володимира Даля, (м. Луганськ, Україна)

Рецензент – кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент Е.Г. Міквобія