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MODERN APPROACHES TO THE ORGANIZATION OF ENGLISH CORRECTION COURSES IN THE MULTILEVEL GROUPS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF STUDY

The article deals with the problem of the different initial foreign language levels of first-year technical students and suggests the organization of remedial courses as the means of solving the problem. Several approaches to the organization of English remedial courses are analyzed, among them are: the differentiated approach, competence-based approach, integrated and differentiated approach, communicative cognitive approach and learner-centred approach.

Key words: ESP, remedial courses, approaches foreign language studies, multilevel group instruction.

Rapid development of modern technologies dictates the necessity for technical students to study English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as the means of acquiring, analyzing and rendering information. Nevertheless, one of the greatest problems of ESP study in the universities is the substantial gap between the actual foreign language level of school graduates and the required foreign language level of the first-year students at universities. Language learning without taking into account the initial language level of students negatively influences the whole system of ESP instruction. Therefore, the problem should be solved through the development of remedial and correction courses, which will help poorly performing students to attain the level of their group mates in the area of foreign language command/ **The aim of this research** is the theoretical analysis of the main methodological approaches to the development of English remedial courses at technical universities, which is an important stage of further development of English language correction methodologies.

In the field of the issue stated the most significant are the following **methodological approaches**:

- research in the field of preparatory, remedial and correction instruction [1; 2; 3; 5; 6 and others];
- research of multilevel English instruction and teaching English to multilevel groups [10 and others].

The end of the last millennium was marked by the emergence of many new, interesting and effective approaches to foreign languages instruction. The reasons for this were changes in the conditions of language learning, development of new technologies and achievements of such disciplines as psychology, linguistics, pragmatics etc. With the aim of finding the most effective methodology, many approaches to the English instruction were adopted for remedial courses as well.

At the current stage of the issue's development scholars concentrate on the application of different approaches to remedial courses organization; among those approaches there are: the differentiated approach [5], competence-based approach [1; 3], integrated and differentiated approach [4], communicative cognitive approach [2] and learner-centred approach.

Thus, the **differentiated approach** to the remedial courses takes into account the psychological characteristics of individual students and typological features of groups of students in the process of teaching and learning activities. This approach is realized through the selection of content, levelled tasks, forms and teaching methods, appropriate for specific characteristics of students. The purpose of a differentiated approach is not only to adapt the components of educational process to the peculiarities of the student contingent, but also to correct the students' progress in a particular area of study according to their real learning opportunities and interests.

The already conducted research is devoted to the organization of differentiated learning of a foreign language. It mainly focuses on:

- the issues of forming homogeneous and heterogeneous groups of students [10],
- the differentiation of educational material,
- the differentiation of the tasks and methods of instruction [9],
- the improvement of the control system, etc.

The differentiated instruction involves the creation of permanent or mobile homogeneous groups of students, i.e. the selection of so-called typological groups according to one or more attributes. In case of the remedial course, typological groups are formed in accordance with the language level of students. The aim of such external differentiation is not to make students reach one standard, but to correlate teacher's actions with the available knowledge of the selected groups and to create the conditions for the maximum language progress of each student. The teaching pattern in such a case also includes differentiation of specific tasks within the general educational system, the differentiation of the content of learning material, the differentiation of conditions in which tasks are performed (internal differentiation).

The integrated and differentiated approach to remedial courses represents a model in which studies areas conducted in subgroups selected within the general group according to such criteria as individual psychological characteristics, the level of foreign language, the styles and strategies of learning [4, p.:17]. Unlike differentiated instruction, all students in this case study the same thematic material in small autonomous groups (differentiation) and interact with students with different levels of proficiency (integration).

Differentiation is expressed through a clear separation of students, depending on their individual psychological characteristics, the styles and learning strategies and the language level, whereas integration is reflected in the effective interaction between autonomous subgroups. Communication in the learning process based on the integrated and differentiated approach is aimed at providing students with opportunities to interact with all partners, which helps to develop the communicative adaptability, and improves compatibility of the group. Integrated and differentiated approach in a multi-level group is realized through:

- 1) work in small autonomous groups in accordance with actual language level of students;
- 2) the interaction between small autonomous groups;
- 3) work with the same content of the study which has differentiated tasks according to the language level.

One of the important aspects of the integrated and differentiated approach is the development of learning autonomy, i.e. the responsibility of the students for their own learning progress. It is important to establish the measure of such responsibility, that is, define to what extent a student is involved in the organization of the learning process.

A textbook example of a task widespread within this approach is arranging a group project with internal differentiation of roles:

Appoint a task force of 5–7 students to deliver a presentation on the topic «Cutting Edge Devices in IT». The members of the groups should find information on the new developments, write their essays on the topic and hand in the essays to their group leaders. The group leaders are to analyze the essays and to compile them into a single report. The other team members are to edit and type the project materials as well as be prepared to report on its outcomes to the rest of the group.

One of the perspective approaches to the organization of remedial courses is the **learner-centred approach**, foundations of which were laid in psychology by the works of L.S. Vygotskiy, A.N. Leontiev, S.L. Rubinstein. The main idea of the learner-centred approach is the prominent

role of the individual characteristics of students, their inclinations and interests. The main achievement in this area of research is the development of a variety of *learning strategies* and *activity styles*, which we understand as an individual and unique way of the student to perform any activity [8].

Research of activity styles is an important direction in the optimization of general human activity, and in particular, of learning activities. Taking into account learning strategies and activity styles of the students helps them to find their own effective and suitable way of study corresponding to their individual needs.

Learner-centred approach also allows more effective use of the lesson time due to the constant communication in a foreign language, which is of particular importance under the conditions of restricted time spent on training in specialized groups of non-linguistic departments. In this approach, the learning process is a 'subject-subject' scheme of communication between a teacher and students, and involves a special organization of learning activities in the process of foreign language learning.

Learning-centred remedial course proposes a variety of tasks which take into account individual psychological characteristics of students, such as intelligence, memory, attention, perception, skills, abilities, types of nervous system, emotional quality, the ability to protective reactions, desire to take risks, capacity for empathy etc. For example:

Work in pairs. Look through the list of new words and translate them. Try to make up memory associations between English words and Ukrainian translations. Explain to your partner what associations you have made and why. Find out the best associations and share them with the class.

Research of the trends in modern education shows the worldwide successful implementation of **competence-oriented education** that helps students acquire the key competencies. Scholars believe that the acquisition of knowledge and skills by young people is aimed at improving their competences, promotes intellectual and cultural development, as well as creates the ability to respond quickly to the requests of time.

A.M. Schukin defines **foreign language communicative competence** as an ability to cope with important tasks in different spheres (everyday life, work, culture, education and science) with the help of foreign languages; the ability to use language and speech for the purposes of communication [7]. Foreign language communicative competence is considered as a unity, which consists of several components, i.e. competencies. Most scholars distinguish such competencies as linguistic, sociolinguistic, socio-cultural, discursive, strategic and substantive.

Remedial courses in the competence approach continue the formation and development of foreign language communicative competence, which was started at school. Thus, correction of *language competence* involves systematizing previously learned language material, namely:

- Actualization of the previously learned vocabulary and acquiring new vocabulary which corresponds to the basic level of English (B1); activation of grammatical means, correction of grammatical competence in accordance with the basic level;
- Expanding vocabulary with professionally-oriented vocabulary of socio-cultural nature that contributes to the students' general understanding of their future job;
- Development of communicative skills at a basic level.

Correction of the *speech competence* involves the formation and development of communicative skills in the four basic types of speech activities (speaking, listening, reading and writing). This should be done according to the principle of interconnected development of all kinds of speech activities.

Further development of *sociocultural competence* during the remedial course is aimed at increasing professional and socio-cultural knowledge in the field of future profession and professionally-oriented vocabulary.

Of particular importance is further formation of *compensatory competence*, namely the development of skills to use linguistic and contextual guess when reading and listening; predict text content by the title of the text, use text prompts of various type (headings, tables, graphics, font selection, comments, footnotes), use vocabulary replacement during oral communication, and the development of communicational skills under conditions of a shortage of linguistic resources.

In terms of the **communicative approach**, language teaching should take into account the characteristics of real communication, and thus, the process of learning should be based on a model of real communication. That is of particular importance because knowing the system of a language (grammar and vocabulary) is not sufficient for its effective use in communication.

Cognitive approach is based on the principle of consciousness in learning and the assumption that the student is not a simple subject of the teacher's actions, but an active participant in the learning process. Each student possesses a certain way of performing cognitive activities (cognitive style), which depends on individual psychological characteristics and personality of students. Such characteristics of students as the desire to take risks (which is necessary to overcome the language barrier), the ability to self-reflect and self-esteem, anxiety, fear of mistakes, empathy, the ability to empathize (which is necessary while performing different tasks in pairs, when students have to consider the partner's skills) belong to the cognitive style. The cognitive style typical of a particular student determines his/her learning style and influences the choice of teaching strategies.

The cognitive approach is the theory of teaching foreign languages, developed from cognitive psychology by James Bruner and William Rivers. Cognitive approach to learning foreign languages means that the study of a particular linguistic phenomenon should be based on thinking processes. This means that in order to learn some linguistic unit, a student should first understand it and actively use it in speech. The cognitive approach also pays attention to students' ability to organize their learning activities consciously.

Characteristics of cognitive styles are represented in the psychological literature, and some of them have been investigated in relation to mastering a foreign language. Thus, a certain type of cognitive style dictates the selection of special learning tasks, which will increase the effectiveness of study and individualize the correction of foreign language skills.

O.P. Gustova [2, p. 12–13] suggested a model of accelerated correction of foreign language level based on the communicative and cognitive approach, which means:

- acquisition of a language as a communication tool;
- preparing students for further self-education, ability to work with different sources in the target language;
- the use of structural and functional organization of the material at all levels – this includes processing of audio, lexical and grammatical material in the course of working with statements and dialogues related to the situations of communication;
- cyclicity in the educational process;
- complex training that provides a rational combination of different organizational forms, the broad use of information technologies;
- direction towards natural way of learning a language – from understanding the properties and purpose to its structure and components;
- flexible use of cognitive strategies, the ability to apply strategies to the tasks given to student.

To generalize everything said above, the present stage of remedial courses development represents a number of approaches to their organization. Choosing the right approach to the organization of remedial courses (depending on the purpose of learning, conditions of the learning process and personal qualities of students) will allow selecting the most effective learning way and achieving the learning goals. Further development of the of remedial courses should be connected with choosing the main principles of remedial methodologies and selecting the content of those courses.

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Статтю присвячено питанню організації курсів вирівнювання ступеня володіння іноземною мовою на першому році навчання у технічних ВНЗ. Курс вирівнювання розглядається автором як шлях вирішення проблеми поляризації початкових знань студентів з іноземної мови. У статті аналізуються різні підходи до створення курсів вирівнювання, серед яких диференційований, диференційовано-інтегруючий підхід, компетентнісний підхід, особистісно-орієнтований підхід, комунікативно-когнітивний підхід.

Ключові слова: англійська мова технічного спрямування, курс вирівнювання, підходи до навчання іноземних мов, багаторівнева група.

Статья посвящена вопросу организации курсов выравнивания уровня владения иностранным языком на первом году обучения в технических вузах. Курс выравнивания рассматривается как путь решения проблемы поляризации начальных уровней владения языком у студентов. В статье анализируются подходы к организации курсов выравнивания, среди которых дифференцированный, дифференцированно-интегрированный подход, компетентностный подход, личностно-ориентированный подход, коммуникативно-когнитивный подход.

Ключевые слова: английский язык технического направления, курс выравнивания, подходы к обучению иностранным языкам, многоуровневая группа.

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