

ON SOME PECULIARITIES OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE NKR HIGH SCHOOLS*

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Modern school is changing, adapting to the modern pace of life and demands of society. Currently, the problem of teaching foreign language in school is important and topical. In modern methodics the main aim to achieve in teaching FL is to form a personality able to participate in intercultural communication. Therefore the study of foreign language provides not only educational ideas, but also personality development, supports the motivation of the learners. Motivation represents one of the most appealing, yet complex variables used to explain individual differences in language learning. [1] Teachers face the task of positive motivation formation, which should be associated with the cognitive interests of students, the need for mastering new knowledge and skills.

High school represents the final process of mastering English by pupils. It is obvious that the level of oral and written speech skills reached in the basic school should be increased. A lot of attention at the third stage of training should be given to oral speech, which acquires a qualitatively new development in terms of the content, correctness and information presented.

In the NKR high schools English is characterized as:

1. **interdisciplinary** (content of speech in a foreign language includes information from different fields of knowledge, e.g. literature, art, history, geography, mathematics, etc.);
2. **multi-layered** (the necessity to master various linguistic means that refer to aspects of language on one side (lexical, grammatical, phonetic), to acquire the abilities in four kinds of speech activity on the other side;
3. **multifunctional** (can act as a learning objective and as a means of acquisition of information in various fields of knowledge).

Being an essential element of the foreign culture and the instrument for transferring it to others, foreign language contributes to the formation of students' holistic picture of the world. English increases the level of humanitarian education of pupils, promotes the formation of personality and its social adaptation to the conditions of the constantly changing multicultural, multilingual world.

The English language extends the linguistic horizons of pupils, contributes to the development of communication culture, assists in the overall language development of students.

In the given research it would be appropriate to figure out and study three important components in teaching FL process in high schools: the audience, the content of teaching and the strategy of teaching.

The Audience

In order to analyze the audience of pupils of the NKR high schools it would be appropriate to use SWOT-analysis techniques. SWOT analysis (alternatively SWOT matrix) is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and is a structured planning method that evaluates those four elements of a project or business venture. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and

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unfavorable to achieve that objective. Some authors credit SWOT to Albert Humphrey, who led a convention at the Stanford Research Institute (now SRI International) in the 1960s and 1970s using data from Fortune 500 companies. [2] Despite the fact that the main applications of this method include economy and management, it can be adapted to the object of the study.

Thus, this methodology will allow identifying and structuring the strengths and weaknesses of the NKR high schools pupils, thereby highlighting the issues and identifying possible solutions.

Basing on teaching experience in the NK high schools two main groups of pupils in high schools can be distinguished. **The First Group** which comprises the most part of pupils is characterized by changing attitude towards the subject "Foreign Language", thus decreasing the motivation of its study. This significant portion of seniors are under delusion that in their later life English is not required. They do not see prospects where English would be necessary. According to them, English is needed only as a means of passing final exams and as a "ticket" for entering a university.

The SWOT analysis of the first group is represented below.

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Acquired intuitive knowledge of a small number of rules to be converted in the communication process in various statements.</i>	<i>Relatively low motivation to study English as a foreign language</i>
<i>Basic knowledge for communication in English</i>	<i>The lack of desire to acquire knowledge</i>
<i>Methodical readiness</i>	
<i>The relatively high flexibility</i>	
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
<i>Ability to improve foreign language communicative competence.</i>	<i>Learning English only for passing the finals.</i>
<i>Ability to improve language and sociolinguistic competence</i>	<i>Passivity in class</i>
	<i>Disinterest</i>

The Second Group includes pupils that have chosen English as future field of mastering. According to studies, these pupils first, choose the English language as the exam in a foreign language, and secondly- overcome the threshold and receive relatively high scores. A sufficient level of training is also evidenced by the results of the urban and regional academic competitions.

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Acquired high level knowledge of a fair number of rules to be converted in the communication process in various statements.</i>	<i>This group of pupils usually do not possess any weaknesses worth mentioning</i>
<i>The ability of competent and convincing argumentation in English</i>	
<i>Certain experience of independent assignments</i>	
<i>High flexibility</i>	
<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
<i>Further improvement of foreign language communicative competence.</i>	<i>Disinterest as the result of the slowness of the educational process in the classroom high school</i>
<i>Further improvement language and sociolinguistic competence</i>	

Based on the data stated above, the heterogeneous audience of the NKR high schools may be singled out. Consequently, the teaching of the English language in these schools should be built on

the basis of the level differentiation, i.e. the organization of the form of learning in which the basis of psychological, individual, linguistic characteristics of the students and the special relationship of teacher and pupils will be taken into consideration.

The reducing of the motivation to learn a foreign language is also due to too slow progress of students in mastering a foreign language. Thus positive motivation is absolutely necessary while teaching English to the NKR high school pupils. We suggest the following key points of motivation rise:

- 1. English is one of the most popular languages in the world.*
- 2. Knowledge of English broadens possibilities: Tourism, cinema, art, science, Internet and other areas are much more available.*
- 3. Knowledge of English opens the way to many countries.*
- 4. English opens up access to the best universities in the world.*
- 5. Value as a worker is higher.*
- 6. English is a key aspect for mastering professional competence.*

The Content of Teaching

Completion of basic school education supposes that pupils achieve European Waystage level of training in a foreign language (in our case it is English), that is A-2 Level. [3] This level allows the basic school graduates to continue their education at the senior level in secondary school, in special schools and for further self-education. Certainly the English language training in high school should ensure continuity with the preparation of students in the basic school. By the end of basic school pupils reach Waystage (A2 on the common European scale) level of communicative English proficiency when performing the main types of speech activity (Speaking, Writing, Reading and Listening), which gives them the opportunity to continue language education at the senior level in high school using English as a tool of communication.

Our investigation showed that 8 - 9 grade pupils have already experienced the execution of projects in English, as well as other works of creative character. This allows them to carry out the projects of interdisciplinary focus and encourages them to intensive use of foreign Internet resources for social and cultural development of the modern world and social adaptation in it. The high school pupils' degree of speech formation, educational-cognitive and cultural skills at the basic level of learning English creates real prerequisites to meet their specific needs in the study of other school subjects and in educational purposes, in specific areas of knowledge and spheres of human activity (including professional guidance and intent).

In this regard, the importance of the interdisciplinary connections of English with other school subjects is constantly increasing. To the end of training in high school pupils are supposed to reach the Threshold or Intermediate Level on the common European Scale (B2 Level), that is:

- Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.*
- Can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken.*
- Can produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest.*
- Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. [4]*

Communicative language teaching involves developing language proficiency through interactions embedded in meaningful contexts. This approach to teaching provides authentic opportunities for learning that go beyond repetition and memorization of grammatical patterns in isolation. A central concept of the communicative approach to language teaching is communicative competence: the learner's ability to understand and use language appropriately to communicate in authentic (rather than simulated) social and school environments.

We would like to highlight the ways each communicative area (CA) contributes to communicative competence.

Linguistic CA – understanding and using:

- Vocabulary
- Language conventions (grammar, punctuation and spelling)
- Syntax

Socio-linguistic CA – having awareness of:

- Social rules of language (formality, politeness, directness)
- Nonverbal behaviour
- Cultural references (e.g. idioms, expressions, background knowledge)

Strategic CA – using techniques to:

- Overcome language gaps
- Plan and assess the effectiveness of communication
- Achieve conversational fluency
- Modify texts for audience and purpose

Discourse CA – understanding how ideas are connected through

- Patterns of organization
- Cohesive and transitional devices [5]

Thus learners not only need to acquire the linguistic but also pragmatic knowledge of the TL. [6] It is suggested that competence, both linguistic and pragmatic, is the knowledge developed and acquired through exposure and use.[7] In other words, without sufficient exposure needed for learners to notice and acquire the language input and chances to use the knowledge, communicative competence is not likely to be promoted.

"We have then to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. This competence, moreover, is integral with attitudes, values, and motivations concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes toward, the interrelation of language with the other code of communicative conduct." [8]

A foreign language teaching should promote the communicative competence in foreign languages, ensuring the use of a foreign language in situations of formal and informal communication in educational, social, cultural, administrative and professional spheres of communicative interaction. The development of culture of speech and writing in a foreign language and deepening of cultural knowledge about the way and style of life in the countries of the languages studied should be in the center of attention.

Summing up we distinguish the following aims of teaching English in the NKR high schools:

1. The development of communicative culture and socio-cultural education of pupils, allowing them to be equal partners in intercultural communication in a foreign language in everyday, cultural, educational and professional fields;
2. The development of discussion ethics in communication in English when discussing culture, styles and lifestyles of people;
3. The development of general educational skills to collect, organize and summarize cultural and other information of interest;
4. The acquaintance with the technologies of self-monitoring and self-assessment of language proficiency;
5. The development of skills to represent his native country and culture, lifestyle of people in the process of foreign language communication;

6. *The Use of English in professionally-oriented education.*

The Strategies of Teaching

Different approaches in language teaching develop a specific "strategy of assimilation" and complex methods to be applied in this strategy. «The strategy of assimilation is the combination of techniques... which are applied by the student for understanding, remembering and learning...». [9] The choice of strategy is extremely important for teaching a foreign language, as well as strict adherence to the methods used in this strategy.

Today pupils show extreme desire for self-assertion, self-expression, the opportunity to defend their views and beliefs. Therefore it becomes obvious that the communicative aspect of teaching foreign language and the creation of a favorable psychological climate for communication are those factors which are of special significance in high schools today. In this regard, it is important to select material of problematic nature, stimulates the exchange of ideas and prompts reflection.

The diversity of interests, the formation of professional orientation makes it necessary to further strengthen the individualization of teaching English. In its turn the sense of responsibility, conscientious attitude to learning opens up great opportunities for independent work and for self-education needs stimulation. Independent study of the language should prepare pupils for self-finishing the study and mastering the English language, namely: to develop the ability to work with reference books, foreign texts, technical means. Thus in high school the combination of individual, pair and group work where the teacher acts as a partner, organizer and director becomes even more important.

High school pupils have a higher level of communicative development: they absolutely possess morphological and syntactic aspects of speech, coherence, logic and sequence statements. They exhibit the ability to analyze, draw conclusions, predict. All these features should be taken into account in the process of learning English.

Also "Learning to Learn" is the key theme in an instructional focus on language learning strategies. Such strategies include, at the most basic level, memory tricks, and at higher levels, cognitive and metacognitive strategies for learning, thinking, planning, and self-monitoring. Research findings suggest that strategies can indeed be taught to language learners, that learners will apply these strategies in language learning tasks. Simple and yet highly effective strategies, such as those that help learners remember and access new second language vocabulary items, will attract considerable instructional interest. [10]

In response to the modern educational challenges, the NTC developed a resource titled "Accelerating Academic Language Development: Six Key Strategies for Teachers of English Learners." The six strategies are based on multiple research studies from the past decade that identify effective methods for developing English-language learners' content knowledge, use of the academic language associated with math, literature, history, and science, and basic interpersonal communication skills in English. We find these key strategies useful not only for pupils in their study of English but also for beginning teachers.*

- ✓ *The first of the six key strategies is vocabulary and language development. Using this strategy teachers introduce new concepts by means of discussing vocabulary words key to that concept;*
- ✓ *The second strategy is guided interaction. With this method, teachers try to structure lessons the way that students cooperate to understand what they read—by listening, speaking, reading, and writing.*

* The New Teacher Center (NTC) was established in 1988 at the University of California at Santa Cruz, with the goal of supporting new K–12 teachers and administrators during their first two years in the profession.

- ✓ *The third strategy is metacognition and authentic assessment. Instead of having students simply memorize information, teachers try to form and teach thinking skills decisive to learning new concepts. Metacognition is a critical skill for learning a second language and a skill used by highly proficient readers of any language.*
- ✓ *The fourth strategy is explicit instruction, or direct teaching of concepts, academic language, and reading comprehension strategies that are needed to complete classroom tasks.*
- ✓ *The fifth strategy is the use of meaning-based context and universal themes, referring to taking something meaningful from the students' everyday lives and using it as a springboard to interest them in academic concepts. The point is that when students are interested in something and can connect it to their lives or cultural backgrounds they are more highly motivated to learn it at a better rate.*
- ✓ *The final strategy is the use of modeling, graphic organizers, and visuals. The use of a variety of visual aids, including pictures, diagrams, and charts, helps all students—and especially ELL students—easily recognize essential information and its relationship to supporting ideas. Visuals make both the language and the content more accessible to students. [11]*

Summing up, the following peculiarities of organization of educational process in learning English in the NKR high schools can be singled out: the consistent implementation of a communicative-cognitive learning associated with the increase of students' content of speech and the use of techniques that encourage expression of personal relationship to the issues that are discussed; targeted implementation of the principle of individualization of training, oriented on the use of English in the future practical activities of students, extensive use of types and forms of independent work.

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SUMMARY

On Some Peculiarities of Teaching English in the NKR High Schools Angela Babayan

This article discusses the peculiarities of the English language teaching in the NKR high schools. In particular, the analysis of the EL audience by means of SWOT-structure is presented. In addition, the main content of EL teaching in high school is viewed and key strategies of productive learning are suggested.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Некоторые особенности преподавания английского языка в старших школах НКР Анжела Бабаян

Ключевые слова: образование старшей школы, коммуникативная компетенция, ключевые стратегии, положительная мотивация, содержание обучения.

В данной статье рассматриваются особенности преподавания английского языка в старших школах НКР. В частности, представляется анализ контингента учащихся с использованием SWOT-корпуса. Кроме того, рассматривается основное содержание обучения английскому языку в старшей школе и предлагаются ключевые стратегии продуктивного обучения.

ԱՄՓՈՓԱԳԻՐ

Անգլերենի դասավանդման որոշ առանձնահատկություններ ԼՂՀ ավագ դպրոցում Անժելա Բաբայան

Բանալի բառեր` ավագ դպրոց, հաղորդակցման իրավասություն, հիմնական ռազմավարություն, դրական մոտիվացիա, ուսուցման բովանդակություն:

Այս հոդվածում քննարկվում է անգլերենի դասավանդման առանձնահատկությունները ԼՂՀ ավագ դպրոցներում: Մասնավորապես ներկայացվում են անգլերեն սովորողների քանակակազմի վերլուծությունները SWAT-կառույցի միջոցով: Բացի այդ` քննարկվում է ավագ դպրոցում անգլերենի ուսուցման հիմնական բովանդակությունը և առաջարկվում են արդյունավետ ուսուցման ռազմավարություններ: