

The importance of the fifth skill for the acquisition of a foreign language

Key words: mother tongue, cross-linguistic similarities, language transfer, bilingualism, linguistic situation.

The fifth skill is understood as an ability to function fluently in two languages alternately. This implies an ability to switch from one language to another at the moments notice, without any preparation or thinking time. For a monolingual speaker, this means an application of translation from (into) the first or native (L1) language into (from) the second or foreign language (L2).

This paper aims at examining students' perceptions of the use of mother tongue and translation in various linguistic situations.

The findings demonstrate that adult learners need a support of mother tongue in English classes, but the amount of the native language needed depends on students' proficiency in English.

Translation is sometimes referred to as the fifth language skill alongside the other four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. «Translation holds a special importance at an intermediate and advanced level: in the advanced or final stage of language teaching, translation from L1 to L2 and L2 to L1 is recognized as the fifth skill and the most important social skill since it promotes communication and understanding between strangers» [5, 61].

The issue of translation has been rather controversial and seems to be a step backwards from the communicative approach to learning/teaching English *through* English. Non-native learners realize that they need as much exposure to the L2 as possible during precious classroom time. For a long time any usage of the L1 in class or translation has been considered as a waste of time, and native and non-native teachers of English have been in favor of this attitude and supported it overwhelmingly. It should be emphasized that translation here is used in the meaning of the language learning tool, but not in its another meaning, i.e. as a vocational skill that professional interpreters need to acquire .

The investigation of students and teachers attitudes toward using L1 in the L2 classroom was carried out by Schweers [6, 6], who overviewed a number of possible applications of the mother tongue in the L2 classroom:

- eliciting language
- checking comprehension
- giving complex instructions
- testing
- developing circumlocution strategies
- negotiating of the syllabus
- classroom management
- language analysis
- presentation of grammar rules
- explanation of errors
- assessment, etc.

According to this source, there were 19 teachers-respondents, however, the number of students-respondents was not mentioned. The major result of this research was a very interesting fact: the majority of respondents supported the use of the mother tongue in teaching and learning English.

New ways of treating a need for translation in language teaching are advocated by Guy Cook indicating that communicative language teaching has prevailed for 30 years and outlawed the translation and explanation in the students first language, which was declared illegal. According to G. Cook, bilingualism and translation in the classroom are really quite authentic, together with the conscious focus on differences between languages... The notion that a bilingual environment with a lot of translation and a lot of code-switching and focus on form is something alien to what people are learning a language for is really quite peculiar. G. Cook concludes that learners need a bilingual environment with a lot of translation and a lot of code-switching and focus on form and a bit of focus on meaning and use.

Nigel J. Ross argues for translation as a useful language learning tool in the ordinary classroom: the real usefulness of translation in the EFL classroom lies in exploiting it in order to compare grammar, vocabulary, word order and other language points in English and the students mother tongue. The areas where differences occur range from relatively small points such as false friends, through sizeable areas such as tense systems, to more complex fields such as contrastive rhetoric. If students are aware of the differences, interference is likely to be reduced. N.J. Ross describes some practical examples how to employ translation in teaching writing, grammar, vocabulary, and idioms.

The use of translation as a discredited tool for language learning has been re-examined lately by Daniel Linder, who claims that EL teachers often reject translation in classroom because they associate translation with the use of grammar-translation as a non-communicative method. Another aspect of translation is its being a professional activity which requires special training. Thus, for students, translation into English as well as literal translation into students native tongue is professionally unrealistic task, and it should not be the focus of an English class. D. Linder advocates translation activities on a regular basis as natural language learning methods for promoting contextualised language use, discourse and textual-level language competence, and cultural transfer skills. Several practical translation activities, e.g. gist, jigsaw, cultural, sight translations, for the English classroom have been described and compared with translation in a professional context. According to D. Linder, translation activities should be used, and they should be supported by communicative, natural language learning methods.

Nobody would argue that human way of thinking is shaped by a mother tongue, which always interferes with a foreign language. The interference may be positive or negative, and the latter causes errors in a foreign language.

The term *transfer* is widely used to describe the issue of cross-linguistic influence. Cross-linguistic similarities and differences can produce varied effects: positive transfer, negative transfer, including underproduction, overproduction, production errors, misinterpretation.

The linguistic awareness of the L1 transfer to L2 helps learners to deal with the hazards of using two languages alternately. In our settings, learners are rather multilingual than bilingual, which involves multilingual transfer and importance of language distance. A phenomenon of code-switching, which is very common in multilinguals, is not a falling-back on the native language but rather a variety of switching skills that they possess. However, in the unknown territory of a foreign language for specific purposes, a demand for the mother tongue seems to be welcome. One cause for such a priority is probably a storage pool in memory linked to different languages. Another cause might be psychological. All people have a strong interest in preserving face, which has two aspects: (1) positive face, the self-image and self-respect that a person has; and (2) negative face, the claim to privacy, freedom of action,

and other elements of personal autonomy. The ability to switch to a native language even for a short time allows learners to preserve face, get rid of anxiety, build confidence and feel independent in their choice of expression. It is noteworthy that in teaching / learning English there has been a long-felt dissatisfaction, mainly on the students' part, about excluding or minimal use of translation in mastering complex issues. Learners constantly wanted to check the exact meanings of the occurring terms in their native language by consulting bilingual dictionaries or asking for teacher's explanations.

There is an opinion that rigidly eliminating or limiting the native language does not appear to guarantee better acquisition, nor does it foster the humanistic approach that recognizes learners' «identities».

In the coming years of greater mobility of population, successful multilingualism, on the one hand, and on-going maintenance of minority language within a single dominant language in the community, on the other hand, will increase. Undoubtedly, the necessity for people to be able to function fluently in a few languages will rise. The issue of the fifth skill a proficient use of several languages – in teaching/learning a foreign language will become even more important in the future than it is now.

Based on this paper considering implications of an understanding of the importance of the fifth skill for the acquisition of a foreign language the following conclusions have been drawn.

The teachers attitudes to the use of learners native language in the classroom on the tertiary-level have undergone significant changes from a complete denial to a reluctant acceptance. The majority of teachers support the limited use of translation in the ESP classroom and agree that L1 assists students in learning a foreign language. The prohibition or avoidance of the mother tongue minimizes the effectiveness of its learning. Use of translation helps develop bilingualism due to learners ability to recall appropriate word networks spontaneously.

The fifth skill of being able to function fluently in two or more languages alternately is becoming an important part of learning a foreign language and needs promoting within the framework of communicative language approach.

References

1. Benson, C. Transfer / Cross-Linguistic Influence / C. Benson // *ELT Journal*. – 2002. – Vol. 56, № 1. – P. 68–70.
2. Carless, D. Student Use of the Mother Tongue in the Task-Based Classroom / D. Carless // *ELT Journal*. – 2008. – Vol. 62, № 4. – P. 331–338.
3. Cook, G. Unmarked Improvement: Values, Facts, and First Languages / G. Cook // *IATEFL Conference, Aberdeen, 18–20 April, 2007*.
4. Odlin, T. *Language Transfer* / T. Odlin – USA: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
5. Ross, N. J. Interference and Intervention: Using Translation in the EFL Classroom / N. J. Ross // *Modern English Teacher*. – 2000. – Vol. 9, № 3. – P. 61–66.
6. Schweers, C.W. Using L1 in the L2 Classroom / G. W. Schweers // *English Teaching Forum*. – 1999. – Vol. 37, № 2. – P. 6–9.
7. Promoting the fifth skill in teaching ESP // *ESP World, Issue 2 Volume 1, 2002* [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: [http://esp-world.info/Articles_2/Promoting%20the%20Fifth%20Skill%20in%20Teaching %20ESP.html](http://esp-world.info/Articles_2/Promoting%20the%20Fifth%20Skill%20in%20Teaching%20ESP.html) – Дата доступа 10.01.2020.

Л. В. Кажкина

Витебский государственный университет имени П. М. Машерова
e-mail: kazhelu@mail.ru

Важность пятого навыка для овладения иностранным языком

Ключевые слова: родной язык, межъязыковое сходство, языковой перенос, билингвизм, языковая ситуация.

Под пятым навыком понимается способность свободно работать с двумя языками одновременно в зависимости от ситуации общения. Это подразумевает способность переключаться с одного языка на другой в нужный момент без предварительной подготовки и времени на обдумывание.

Для говорящего на одном языке это означает применение перевода с(на) первого или родного (L1) языка на(с) второй или иностранный язык (L2).

Целью данной статьи является изучение восприятия студентами использования родного языка и перевода в различных языковых ситуациях.

Полученные данные показывают, что взрослые учащиеся нуждаются в поддержке родного языка на занятиях по иностранному (английскому) языку, но необходимый объем родного языка зависит от уровня владения последним.

О. А. Климкович, И. Я. Кураш, С. М. Яковлев

Витебский государственный университет имени П. М. Машерова

e-mail: olga-klimkovich@mail.ru

УДК 811.161.1'243:378.147:371.33

Диалог на занятиях по русскому языку как иностранному

Ключевые слова: диалог, методика преподавания, русский язык как иностранный, последовательность, этапы.

В статье рассматриваются общие закономерности формирования коммуникативных навыков, специфика диалогической речи, анализируются учебные пособия, предназначенные для развития навыков говорения, приводятся примеры возможных заданий.

Возможность обучения иностранного студента на первом курсе белорусского вуза предполагает, что им усвоен русский язык как иностранный на уровне пороговой коммуникативной достаточности. Требования указанного уровня определяют, какими навыками в области чтения, письма, аудирования и говорения должны обладать обучающиеся. Говорение является одним из наиболее сложных аспектов обучения РКИ. Предполагается, что при поступлении в университет студент владеет навыками монологической и диалогической речи, которые позволяют ему достаточно свободно вести коммуникацию как на профессиональные, так и на бытовые темы. Частично это объясняется тем, что традиционно на занятиях по РКИ изучается грамматический материал, происходит знакомство с новой лексикой, формируются навыки работы с текстом, в то время как для участия в речевых ситуациях необходимо формирование навыков аудирования и автоматизация речевых навыков. Поэтому сложности вызывает не только монологическая речь на заданную тему, но и участие в различного рода диалогах, которые связаны с учебными и бытовыми ситуациями. Хотя «обучение речевой деятельности на иностранном языке в большинстве случаев предполагает овладение умениями и навыками в наиболее естественной форме – диалогической» [2], у многих обучающихся участие в диалогах вызывает определенные трудности. Нередко уровень владения диалогической речью является важнейшим показателем для определения того, знает ли иностранец русский язык, так как именно диалог является основной формой коммуникации.

Больше всего иностранному обучающемуся хочется говорить на русском языке, и больше всего его пугает именно этот аспект. Кроме того, следует отметить, что многие студенты сейчас не приемлют абстрактного изучения грамматического материала, за-