

HIGHLIGHTING THE PROBLEM OF COMPETENCE-BASED APPROACH IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO STUDENTS OF A BASIC SECONDARY SCHOOL

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The modern Ukrainian school has a difficult and ambitious task - the introduction of a competence-based approach in educational process, which involves updating the content of education and improving its quality. The competence-based approach is considered to be one of the leading ways for improving the national education system as a whole and one of the effective ways of modernizing general secondary education in particular.

A competence-based approach means the focus of the educational process on the formation and development of subject and key competences of each individual, which will allow him/her to become successful, self-sufficient, capable of self-realization, self-determination and self-awareness in the complex realities of the modern changing and controversial world. That is, the main task of the modern school is to prepare a competent person, able to make the right decisions independently in specific educational, life, and in the future in professional situations.

In the documents of the New Ukrainian School (NUS), the competence-based approach is defined as “a bridge that connects the school with the real world and the needs that life presents to a person”, and competence is interpreted as “a combination of knowledge, skills, ways of thinking, attitudes, values, personal qualities, which determines person’s ability to successfully carry out the activity in new unforeseen conditions” [3, p. 10]. The main task of NUS, which began its reform on September 1, 2018 in the first grades of primary school, is the introduction a competence-based

approach in educational process, which provides for the formation and development of a student's key competences.

The competence-based approach to teaching has replaced the traditional or so-called "KSA approach" (the acronym "KSA" stands for Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities). The main learning outcomes of the KSA approach was the accumulation of knowledge, while the competence-based approach determined it as students' readiness to use their knowledge and skills in non-standard life situations.

It is worth noting that a competence-based approach does not deny the role and importance of knowledge, but its focus is on students' ability to use the acquired knowledge in practical life.

According to the NUS Concept, the complete general secondary education has three levels: primary secondary education lasting four years; basic secondary education lasting five years; field-specific secondary education lasting three years. The basic secondary education is considered as the second level of the complete general secondary education and is acquired in gymnasium within five years. The basic secondary education consists of two cycles: the first is adaptation (grades 5-6), the second is basic subject education (grades 7-9) [2, p. 20–22].

Foreign language teaching in a basic secondary school is correlated in many ways with the educational spheres of primary and field-specific secondary schools, which indicates its target direction, continuity and succession throughout the school course.

A goal of the education is specified in the Law of Ukraine "On Education", namely: "comprehensive development of the human being as a personality and as the supreme value of the society, development of its talents, intellectual, creative and physical abilities, formation of values and competences necessary for successful self-realization, raising responsible citizens capable to make a conscious choice and channel their activities for the good of other people and the society, and enriching the intellectual, economic, creative, cultural potential of the Ukrainian people on this basis, improving an educational level of the people in order to ensure Ukraine's sustainable development and its European choice" [5, p. 5].

The main goal of teaching a foreign language in the basic secondary school is to form students' foreign-language communicative competence for direct and indirect intercultural communication, ensuring the development of other key competences and the satisfaction of various students' life needs. The leading means of realizing this goal is a competence-based approach to the organization of teaching in general secondary education institutions (GSEI) based on key competencies as a result of teaching.

Various aspects of the competence-based approach in teaching foreign languages to students of GSEI have been the subject of research by a number of Ukrainian and foreign scientists (O. Bihych, I. Bim, N. Borysko, N. Galskova, L. Zienia, I. Zymnia, L. Kalinina, R. Milrud, S. Nikolaieva, Yu. Passov, T. Polonska, V. Redko, Ch. Brumfit, D. Hymes, W. Littlewood, R. Mirabile, S. Parry, S. Savignon, L. Spencer & S. Spencer, etc.). However, considering the requirements of the NUS on the fundamental reform of the general secondary education, the problem of competence-oriented foreign language teaching in the modern primary school of Ukraine needs deeper study and coverage.

The updated curricula in foreign languages for basic secondary school highlighted ten key competences: 1) communication in the national language (and mother tongue, if different); 2) communication in foreign languages; 3) mathematical literacy; 4) competencies in science and technology; 5) ICT (information and communication technology) and digital competencies; 6) lifelong learning skill; 7) sense of entrepreneurship; 8) social and civic competences; 9) cultural awareness; 10) environmental awareness and healthy lifestyles [1, p. 5–7].

Foreign language communication is one of the key competences, which provides for “the ability to understand a foreign language properly, to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and views orally and in writing (through listening, speaking, reading and writing) in a wide range of social and cultural contexts. Skills for mediation and intercultural communication” [2, p. 11]. As for the indicated cross-cutting skills, all of them are, to one degree or another, relevant to the subject of “a foreign language”.

So, competence-oriented foreign language teaching can be defined as teaching aimed at complex acquirement of key competences by students, which provide their preparation for communication taking into account different communication situations. Such education involves shifting the focus from accumulating knowledge, skills and abilities to the formation and development of students' readiness to carry out interpersonal and intercultural communication in a foreign language in oral and written forms within the typical spheres and topics of communication available to them, as well as the ability to apply the experience they have learned to specific educational and life situations.

Competence-oriented teaching a foreign language to students of a basic secondary school, which is as close as possible to the real conditions of a foreign language environment, is primarily aimed at the formation of foreign language communicative competence, which will help to improve their foreign language communication experience and the formation of a competent personality of a modern student.

Foreign language communicative competence and its components (linguistic, speech, sociolinguistic), which are subject competences in a foreign language, form the basis for the formation of key competences. These competences characterize the content of teaching a foreign language in the GSEI, mastering it in oral and written forms in four types of speech activity: listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

However, the implementation of the competence-based approach to teaching students in basic secondary school involves not only updating the content of a foreign language education, but also selecting rational and effective methods, techniques and teaching aids. But these issues require separate analysis and coverage.

References

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