

PECULIARITIES OF LEARNERS AUTONOMOUS WORK ORGANIZATION AT FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

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The article focuses on some problems of organizing independent learners' work and developing their thinking ability in a foreign language classroom. On the basis of theoretical analysis of the literature on the problem under research, authors of the article suggest possible ways of developing pupils' independent work. Specific ways of techniques use in organizing autonomous learners' work are revealed in the given article.

Keywords: independence, autonomous work, process of learning, cognitive autonomy, self-assessment, individual independent work, project, problem solving activities, harmonious personality

Fundamental requirement of a society to the modern school is the development of a personality, capable to solve his educational scientific, industrial, public objectives; think critically and defend own views, beliefs, systematically and continuously expand and update knowledge through self-education and creatively apply it in practice.

One of the most affordable, ways to improve the quality of knowledge of students in the classroom is the organization of learners' independent work.

Organization of independent work, its management is a responsible and hard task of every teacher. Cognitive activity and independence is considered as a part of the education of students. This problem is a task of paramount importance. Speaking about students' independent work, it is necessary to bear in mind two closely related tasks. The first of which is to develop students' independence in cognitive activity, teach them to acquire knowledge on their own, shape their worldview; the second one is to develop skills of application of their knowledge in practice. Independent work is not a goal in itself. It is a means of ensuring a deep and solid knowledge of students, a means of shaping their activity and independence as a personal quality, the development of their mental abilities. The child is unable to plan his actions from the very beginning of his school life, to correlate the result he achieved with the intended aims. The success of the training depends essentially on the conditions which the teacher creates for active and independent cognitive activity of students. Therefore, an innovative environment should be created for learners that would provide their cognitive activity and realization of their creative potential, involving self-improvement and systematic application of knowledge in life situations.

Progressive educators always believed that at the lesson children should work as much as possible on their own and the teacher's duty is

to guide this work, insuring the training material. [1] For developing an integrated and harmonious personality, a pupil should be involved in autonomous work of problem solving-character. There are many different directions in the study of the nature of the activity and independence of pupils in learning. Ancient scholars (Aristos, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle), deeply and thoroughly substantiated the importance of voluntary and independent child's mastery of knowledge. They considered that such activity gives the child the joy and satisfaction and thereby eliminates the passivity on his part in the acquisition of new knowledge. The problem was further developed in the statements of Francois Rabelais, Michel Montaigne, Thomas More, who at the time of the Dark Ages, in the midst of prosperity in the practice of scholastic school dogmatism and cramming required developing a child's self-reliance; cultivating in him a thoughtful, critically thinking person.

An interesting study conducted the representative of the Estonian Research School I.E. Unt. She considers that an independent work is a mental activity of learners, "when the student is given the training tasks and a teacher is a guide for work implementation is carried out by a teacher, but without his participation". I.E. Unt believes that the content and structure of the material defines the quality of independent work. Indeed, the content of the material affects the methods of the academic work, so they must correspond the studied material [2]. M.A. Danilov considers that main criterion for independent work is the solution by students of cognitive tasks and problem solving situations. The challenge, – he said-encourages students to work independently, serves as the initial point of their thinking process. Students seek out new ways to solve them through the acquisition of new knowledge and deepening of old. Success depends on the organization of independent activity which includes the proper distribution of time on some stages, a clear setting of the task to students [3].

P.I. Pidkasisty, who also studied the problem, said that the essence of independent work should reflect student's creativity and integration of the procedural and logical-content part of an independent work. In Pidkasisty opinion, they are not sufficiently taken into account in educational practice, cursing boring and monotonous activity of the student. He believes that the independent work in each situation is defined by the assimilation of specific goals and objectives. One cannot but agree with P.I. Pidkasisty, that self-study is essential for self-organization and self-discipline in mastery of the techniques of cognitive activity, it produces a learner's mental attitude to self-updating knowledge and develops skills to navigate the different flow of information for solution of different problems. In A.I. Zimnaya's opinion, independent work is characterized "as a purposeful, self-motivated, structured work; performed and corrected by the learner according to the results, having got by him".

Analyzing all the possible approaches to the definition of the concept, the following definition could be given: "Independent work is a kind of learning activity in which students with a certain degree of autonomy and, if necessary, with partial teacher guide perform various kinds of tasks, applying the necessary mental effort and showing the skills of self-control and self-correction".

The use of modern and innovative teaching methods is the basis for the organization of independent work of students in the classroom. Problem solving approach is considered to be one of such methods [4]. It is based on the theoretical position of the American psychologist and educator John Dewey. At the present time the problem solving approach refers to a method of organization of lessons, which involves the creation of teacher guided problem solving situations and active independent work of students on their solution, as a result of which creative mastery of the knowledge by students and development of their thinking skills take place. The specific feature of problem solving technology is the fact that the knowledge and ways of work are not presented in a ready way; rules and regulations are not proposed, following which, students could speak in a proper way. The essence of the method is stimulation of students' search activity. Such an approach is caused by the orientation of modern education on formation of the creative individual, developed through problem solving situations. Enhancement of the cognitive work of students, the development of their interest to the subject; the formation of independent, creative attitude to the studied problem succeeds, if the teacher constantly thinks, involving students in an active process of argumentation, sup-

ports their own view point, when the proposed tasks require search activity. Problem solving approach is based on the creation of a special kind of motivation, therefore requires an adequate construction of the didactic content of the presented material as a series of problem solving situation. The source of the internal stimuli of independent cognitive activity in this case is intensification of students' actions, caused by setting of problem solving tasks and rational organization of independent work. Such tasks develop the students' desire for self-cognitive activity. It should be noted that this method, despite its effectiveness like any other, cannot be considered the only acceptable one for training, since the effectiveness of training depends on the skilful combination of different methods. Teachers should remember that not every ordinary question could be regarded as a solution of the problem. Too challenging assignments cannot be given for to the students, as they require special training and knowledge. Problem-solving based learning suggests solution of feasible tasks by students, which create opportunities for their own discovery.

The important point is summarizing of the issues discussed. The teacher can use different ways of encouraging students. Also, the teacher needs to show tolerance to errors of pupils and correct them when the student needs help. As it was noted above, the problem solving method corresponds to the social requirements, developmental nature of scientific knowledge, the basic laws of the development of personality. The use of a problem-solving approach in teaching and learning process promotes development of the students independent work skills and solution of problems, set by them.

Improvement of skills of independent work of students at foreign language lessons can also take the form of individualized learning, called Dalton Plan [5]. This system is also known as the laboratory or workshop system, since instead of classes, the school laboratory and subject workshops function. The main goal of this form of training is adapting the work of the school to the capabilities and abilities of each student. In the laboratory the students work individually according to the tasks, given from the teacher. The tasks in each subject are given for a whole year. Then they are specified monthly, students within a month are to perform these tasks and report on them. If there occur difficulties, the student could ask a teacher for help. Group work is performed for 1 hour per day. The rest of the time students individually study material and account the teacher for the performance of corresponding topic. On the bases of such form of the work many effective methods of educational activity were created. For example, to stimulate the students and

enable them to compare their achievements with the achievements of their peers, teachers developed special tables (screen performances), in which monthly the progress of the students of their assignments were noted. One of the main components of the Dalton Plan is a task. Deadline for the task can be different – from several days to several months. Making various Dalton-tasks, a teacher faces the problem of multiple meanings of words that can occur in the text. Therefore, before performing tasks, all problems should be discussed. Tasks should be based on the real experience of students and contain conditions that expand students language experience. As any other method, it has a number of positive sides:

- Individualization of the learning process;
- The development of ways for choice;
- Improvement of the ability to work independently with all kinds of literature;
- Development of cooperation skills and one's own ideas.

Dalton plan is an effective means of organization of students' independent work at foreign language classes.

The project work is another method of improvement of students' independent work. Method of projects occurred when the minds of educators, philosophers were focused on trying to find ways to develop active, independent thinking of the child, teach him not only memorizing and reproducing knowledge that will give him the school, but to be able to apply them in practice [6]. The method of projects has been widely used in many countries, mainly because it allowed to integrate students' knowledge from different fields to solve one problem, made it possible to apply this knowledge in practice, thereby generating new ideas. But let us turn to a foreign language. The project is valuable only, when in the course of its implementation, students learn to work independently, gain experience of cognitive activity. This method helps improve the learning process in ordinary schools, develop skills of independent work of students.

Project-based learning involves the use of a wide range of problem-solving, research, exploratory activities, focused on clear results, relevant to each student who participated in the development of the project. One must remember that at every stage of the lesson the teacher should initiate an independent search, creative activity of a student, guide students to identify problems that form the basis of the project and find ways to solve it.

At first, the teacher needs to develop a plan for project work and think over a system of communicative exercises [7]. Students must be fluent in the use of active vocabulary and grammar within the framework of an educa-

tional theme before discussion of certain issues. Work on the project usually takes a few lessons. Organizing work on the project, it is important to meet following requirements:

- Correspondence of the project theme to the lesson theme;

- Students need to focus on the comparison of events; facts from the life of people of different nationalities and countries, approaches to solutions various problems.

Pupils should be able to generalize reading material, make their own conclusions, based on their experience, knowledge and creativity. They should be able to analyze the studied material, compare different facts, predict the course of the project defense. Method of projects in the framework of the foreign language educational process focuses on practical results that are meaningful for students. Their educational horizon is expanded, cognitive interest is increased; they become natural participants in the dialogue of cultures. Pupils have the opportunity to show their organizational talents and ability to independent acquire of knowledge, which is very essential for the organization of the teaching and learning process in the modern school.

One of exercises, developing the students' initiative speech is the story telling, based on pictures with non-deployed complicated situation (essential in this case is not a picture, but "internal" visibility, own speculation, fantasy, and the language capabilities of each student). For example, the teacher shows a picture, which depicts three students sitting in a cinema chair. Exercise can be performed within the following framework:

- a) a story on behalf of one of the guys in the picture;
- b) a story on the part of the third person;
- c) a story in a chain;
- g) a story of a teacher for getting additional information.

Thus, while introducing students new language material, it is important gradually to complicate it by "creative" tasks-it develops students' speech. The use of different materials in the work, including into the cognitive process different audiovisual supports, keys, educational games, the creation of communicative self-oriented situations, which stimulate independent work of pupils, support interest for learning a foreign language.

Special difficulties cause students' independent reading work. Therefore, much attention must be given in 5–6 grades to a culture of academic learning work, focused on planning of independent work of students, wide use of cards for reading; individual work with students.

Cognitive opportunities for independent student work will be increased if the students'

work is organized according to the principle of contact groups, which include students of various educational opportunities, but the same interests. This group performs the same task, which is distributed among students in accordance with their interests and language capabilities. For example, when studying the topic "My Country" (Grade 7) students, who are interested in history, prepare their own monologue about its past; those, who are interested in art – its sights; those, who are interested in sports, tell about sports its inhabitants are fond of. The work is coordinated by the student, working as an Assistant teacher. In the organization of learning activities for students pair and group forms of work are used. For the organization of group work, it is necessary to prepare a special card with tasks that allow all members of class to be involved in active communicative work and effectively manage the work of the whole class.

One and the same dialog can be presented in different ways. If learners are accustomed to creativity and fantasy, they think over numerous original versions. Further work on this dialogue can be continued. The task may be: broaden the dialogue, adding five or six remarks, depending on the situation.

In high school, while performing creative exercises, it is important for pupils to use the real facts from school life, class; express their attitude, opinion on a particular issue. Use of the speech situation in the classroom can serve different goals in teaching and learning process: develop skills of dialogical and monological speech, promote the assimilation of lexical and grammatical material, serve as a means of testing reading comprehension, etc. Offering a communicative situation, a teacher should take into account the language skills of students, think over the problem of organization of weak students work. For example: in the 6th grade, when working on theme "My home" the following situation may be offered: "You have a new flat. Help your father and mother arrange all the furniture in the living-room". For weak students teacher prepares cards with the plan: "Say what you put on the left; on the right; in the middle of the room; between the sofa and

the bookcase; in front of the television". And in such a way, gradually, students cope with the task. Developing dialogical and monological speech skills on the theme "Family" (6 grade), a teacher could offer the situation:

"You have a new friend and he (she) wants to know about your family". Students work in pairs.

All the above mentioned methods and techniques of training, types of work help increase the effectiveness of the lesson, involve children in the active independent speech activity, make foreign languages teaching and learning process interesting for students.

Thus, the need for enhancement of independent work skills of students in the educational process has been raised in recent years. The technological revolution has demanded human mobility and adaptation to constantly changing conditions of life. Today's worker of any sector of the economy should be able to manage the increasing flow of information. In our opinion, organization of students' independent work depends much on professional competence and creativity of a teacher; his ability and skills in the use innovative pedagogical technologies.

In conclusion we resume that development of students independent work skills at foreign language classes will create better opportunities for improvement of their creative, cognitive potential in the assimilation of language and culture.

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