

VARK LEARNING STYLES IN VOCABULARY TEACHING

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The article deals with vocabulary teaching and vocabulary acquisition in terms of student-centered learning. The teaching approach presumes that students influence learning process and it expresses humanistic paradigm in teaching. Students are not merely provided with necessary information but they have possibilities for self-development as well. Teachers play a very significant role in the teaching/learning process, as they should help students in the learning process taking into account the use of corresponding pedagogical and psychological approaches. Vocabulary teaching is one of the most important constituents of language learning as words convey the meaning of message. Many scholars pay attention to vocabulary teaching as it is an indispensable aspect of foreign language teaching especially in non-linguistic educational institutions where students need to learn specific terminology. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are interconnected aspects of vocabulary. In the teaching process it is necessary for a teacher to take into consideration visual, auditory, read/write and kinesthetic (VARK) learning styles. The use of all perception channels is strongly preferred. Different kinds of exercises can help to conduct lessons which are useful for all types of learners. Students are supposed to deal with tasks that require the use of their least preferred perception channel. The main task of a teacher is to help students to transfer vocabulary skills from one of its forms into another. Student-centered learning can be an effective means of using peculiarities of all kinds of learners in vocabulary teaching especially in teaching a foreign language for special purposes.

Keywords: vocabulary teaching; vocabulary acquisition; student-centered learning; VARK learning styles.

Introduction. Nowadays multilingualism has become more than just "important". Knowledge of a foreign language other than your native one has evolved to be extremely beneficial. Languages should be learned not only to impress people around but also to develop one's own confidence, improve decision-making skills, become more open-minded and even increase brain power. Apart from the above-mentioned gains learning a foreign language can improve one's employability. We live in an increasingly globalized world and companies are expanding overseas and dealing with people from all over the world. So employers are much more likely to choose a person who knows a foreign language between two candidates with the same skills and experience.

English is the most commonly used language among foreign language speakers. When people, who speak different languages, come together they commonly use English for communication. Knowledge of English can open better job prospects and increase the standard of living. Thus, it is very important today to be able to use professional vocabulary when you use foreign languages in communication with colleagues or partners from abroad. It is also the language of science so a person needs to know English to excel in science which is of great importance for university graduates today.

The main goal of a foreign language acquisition in non-linguistic educational institutions is communicative competence:

the ability to use the language correctly and appropriately to accomplish communication goals in everyday life and professional environment. Learning a foreign language demands a proper and well-organized work of a foreign language teacher. It does not concern only providing necessary material but also an appropriate psychological and pedagogical approach to learners. Teaching English for specific purposes is becoming topical these days. According to this approach, students must be able to use a foreign language in professional, business and scientific fields.

Topicality. Many scholars of our country and abroad have been studying the main features of teaching and learning a foreign language for specific purposes. First important studies appeared in the 1960s in foreign literature. Today there is the need to use teaching methods that enable foreign

language acquisition by students of non-linguistic specialities. There is a number of works on this topic written by researchers (O. Kapinus, V. Mirochnyk, O. Vasylyeva, N. Koval). So the topic is interesting and still needs to be studied further.

The speciality, that a student is going to obtain in the future, influences the vocabulary that is selected for teaching a foreign language. Each speciality has its own micro-language with special vocabulary. Thus, it is vital to study how to select and organize teaching materials in terms of teaching a foreign language for specific purposes. Vocabulary selection process is difficult because language teachers aren't often qualified enough in business and technical fields because they haven't got special education.

Vocabulary acquisition is considered as one of the most important core constituents of foreign language learning. It is obvious that without words it is impossible to communicate or understand speech. Vocabulary acquisition is a time-consuming process which requires systematic work of both a teacher and students. But it allows students to obtain lexical competence which is an essential element for acquiring reading, writing and communication proficiency. A lot of scholars including A. Anosova, V. Borshchovetska, T. Veprieva, Yu. Gnatkevych, T. Gretska, Ye. Miroshnychenko, L. Miedviedieva, T. Panova, M. Pedanova, N. Saienko, I. Sverdlova, R. Carter, M. McCarthy, C. Rimmer etc. have examined the problem concerned with teaching and learning a foreign language for specific purposes in non-linguistic educational institutions but learners still lack necessary lexical competence in word knowledge. Therefore, methodologists still need to create a system of language teaching methods that will help to develop professional lexical competence.

Aims. The article is aimed at investigating vocabulary acquisition process within student-centered learning approach being used in non-linguistic educational institutions. The aim determines the following tasks that have to be done:

- to define the term “student-centered learning” and research the peculiarities of its use in the educational process;
- to investigate the peculiarities of vocabulary acquisition, especially its psychological aspects that have an impact on a foreign language learning process;
- to define existing learning styles and determine how significant they are for students in order to acquire necessary lexical competence;
- to determine the strategies that make teaching a foreign vocabulary more efficient and take into account learning styles that students have.

Student-centered learning. Nowadays a lot of attention is paid to student-centered learning (SCL) that is an instructional approach in which students influence the content, activities, materials, and pace of learning. The learner is placed in the centre of this process. The teacher ensures opportunities for students to work independently and also teaches them the skills needed to do it successfully. If a teacher implements SCL properly, it can lead to increased motivation of students, greater retention of knowledge, deeper understanding and more positive attitudes towards the subject students are learning [2, p. 381]. There are two main reasons why teachers choose SCL approach. First, it makes teaching more enjoyable and changes the attitude to a learning process. It also has a positive influence on the academic performance of students as they appear as co-creators of the learning process.

SCL approach in structuring and implementing pedagogical process implies focusing on a personality as on objective, subject, result and main criterion of teaching process efficiency. The above-mentioned approach also requires acceptance of uniqueness, intellectual and moral freedom, the right to respect for a person thus expressing the main guideline of humanistic paradigm.

Taking into consideration the SCL essence it is possible to define necessary teaching constituents:

- to add value and notion components into a teaching process;
- to purposefully form professionally important qualities of a student;

- to simulate pedagogical situations that demand from a student a personal way of experience and behavior acquiring;
- to accomplish differentiation of learners according to their qualities.

SCL includes a student's personal self-development. Planning lessons on the SCL principles requires not only knowledge transmission by a teacher to a student. In terms of the above-mentioned approach teaching a foreign language presumes providing students with knowledge, helping them to acquire knowledge and giving them an opportunity to use knowledge in life-related situations.

For foreign language teachers SCL is one of the main elements of pedagogical activity efficiency. To conduct lessons with the use of SCL principles the following demands have to be met: using natural language learning mechanisms, paying students' attention to using foreign language in their daily life, predominantly focusing on speaking activities, to do transfer from elementary teaching units to difficult ones and vice versa (words, widely used collocations, most widely used verbs), creating a positive emotional background (songs, music, films, games exercises), conducting lessons when students can ultimately use their knowledge is absolutely necessary (discussion clubs, presentation and discussion of projects, situations modeling which require communication on different topics) [8].

The teacher's ability to perceive an emotional state of a student modifies the efficiency of a personally oriented communication between a teacher and students. There are two kinds of social perception: the perceptive kind (a teacher listens to a student and perceives them) and the empathetic kind (a teacher comprehends an emotional state of a student). Soft skills are one of the constituents of the above-mentioned teaching approach. Active listening includes a teacher's ability to help a student clarify the information which needs to be conveyed (additional questions, rephrasing, making conclusions, progressing in opinion expression). Empathetic listening is the teacher's ability to feel a student's mood. All these parts of a teacher's activity help to build up a constructive dialogue in communication with students. Readiness to communicate on equal terms, to understand an interlocutor, to accept an interlocutor's opinion is a constituent of SCL. In terms of SCL, a student undergoes social adaptation: psychological problems of self-development are solved; a student improves thinking and speaking skills and learns how to substantiate his or her point of view.

It is necessary to take into consideration a student's personal choice (group or individual work methods, certain types of tasks which are interesting for students). Self-concept formation is one of the motivating factors in foreign language learning – a student assesses acquired knowledge, speaking skills, sees himself or herself as a fluent speaker and gets more opportunities for self-development and employment prospects. Discussing real opportunities of a foreign language use contributes to the above-mentioned teaching constituents [9].

In terms of SCL, it is possible to give students possibilities to improve their knowledge of a foreign language. One of the aspects of such language teaching is learning and memorizing vocabulary. Role-play games, communicative exercises, discussions, reports, presentations are all means of foreign language vocabulary acquisition that can supplement foreign language teaching in the use of the above-mentioned approach.

Vocabulary acquisition. Vocabulary teaching is one of the most important issues of learning a language because without sufficient vocabulary students can't understand other people or express their own ideas. It is a set of words one knows in any language. Knowing a word implies the ability to understand it in reading or writing or to use it in expressing one's ideas in speaking or writing which is possible provided a learner has a corresponding level of knowledge. But actually, vocabulary is not just about words. It can be defined as the words of a language, including single units and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning. Vocabulary instruction is an essential element in teaching reading and writing. It is like the "glue" that holds our ideas together and allows us to express our thoughts and communicate effectively.

Words are learned in context, not separately, though using a dictionary is indispensable. Dictionaries are extremely important in learning a foreign language for special purposes as they help learners to find proper equivalents of terms in their native language. While reading it is possible to comprehend the context a word is used in, and try to infer the meaning of new words. Reading provides whole language, not merely a list of words. Reading is considered as one of the most necessary means of

enriching vocabulary. It also helps to use words in the correct context. Reading is an indispensable part of vocabulary acquisition. Guessing the meaning of a new word from the context is a part of a reading process, which also helps in learning the vocabulary of a foreign language [3, p. 1-28].

Video resources are very useful as well as listening activities, e. g. listening to music etc. Low levels of vocabulary can have a negative influence on reading and therefore writing. It also plays a very important part in acquiring speaking and listening skills. Vocabulary knowledge consists of expressive and receptive vocabularies. The first type refers to lexical units people use to express themselves and is used in speaking and writing activities. People perceive receptive vocabulary when they listen to speech or when they read. Cognitive processes such as thinking, perception, imagination and memory are very important in language mastering. The above-mentioned processes help to identify a new lexical unit, learn and use it in speaking activities. Thinking processes help to understand, process and transform new words and store them in vocabulary. Reproductive thinking is necessary for acquiring language patterns. Creative thinking helps to use such patterns depending on purposes and tasks of a communication process. The process of perception implies identifying a word by means of recognizing its aural and graphical images. Imagination includes images in a speaker's mind which are expressed by words. It can help in vocabulary acquisition as well. Short-term memory provides processing and perception of new information. It also creates permanent connections with the knowledge stored in long-term memory.

There is an increasingly high relationship among all four aspects of vocabulary – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, encouraging improvement in one aspect leads to improvement in another. The main task of a teacher is to help students to transfer vocabulary skills from one of its forms into another because the lack of vocabulary instruction in one of the activities will have a bad effect on mastering a language in general [7, p. 3].

VARK learning styles. One of the ways how to improve vocabulary teaching within SCL approach is taking into account visual, auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic (VARK) learning styles. The VARK model was proposed by N. Fleming. The author defines a learning style as “an individual's characteristics and preferred ways of gathering, organizing, and thinking about information. VARK is in the category of instructional preference because it deals with perceptual modes” [5, p. 1]. Learning style is the way in which different people learn. This way allows a person to concentrate, process and retain new information. People perceive information in different ways. Although it is difficult to select one channel because students use different ones depending on the type of the task they need to perform it is possible to put them in one of the groups based on their generally preferred channel of perception.

Visual learners use vision as the main sensory receiver. They tend to think in pictures. When visual learners get new information they usually create a mental picture of what is described to them. They don't pay much attention to the information that is difficult to visualize. So it is very important for a visual learner to have the material presented using pictures, maps, diagrams, charts etc.

Auditory learners perceive the world through sounds. They learn best by hearing information. So the best way to get and retain new information for them is to listen to lectures, audio books, music, and radio, take part in group discussions, follow verbal instructions etc. This type of learners can sometimes have problems with understanding information because they are sensitive to the speech quality, tone and timbre of voice.

People who prefer information to be displayed as words represent read/write learning style. This style involves reading and writing in all its forms. Such learners prefer to use wordlists, dictionaries, thesauruses etc.

Kinesthetic learners learn best through physical activities. Their muscles play a huge role in learning. The best way to remember information for them is writing or physical manipulation.

To choose the right learning style a teacher has to pay attention to a student's preferred channel of perception. Teachers play a critical role in the teaching/learning process. The term “teaching style” refers to a teacher's personal behavior and media used to transmit data to or receive it from the learner [6, p. 29]. The mismatch between learning and teaching styles often occurs and it could result in a bad effect on the attitude that students have to learning a foreign language.

These learning styles should be taken into account when teaching new vocabulary. It can help a teacher to choose the most appropriate tools and tasks that will make vocabulary instruction more efficient. New vocabulary can be presented to visual learners by writing keywords, using mind maps and flashcards, making word lists, using highlighters and underlining. Listening to audio materials and watching videos is suitable for auditory learners. They can also take part in group discussions or any other speaking activities as they are talkative and enjoy debates. The worst idea that a teacher can come up with when dealing with students whose preferred channel of perception is auditory one, is to give them reading comprehension tasks as these students don't pay much attention to information until it has been heard. Read/write learning style involves a variety of ways to present new vocabulary to students. It can be anything from typical reading tasks to writing essays, reports and making different presentations. Kinesthetic learners enjoy discovery and action. Different role-playing activities and simulations will be the perfect way of teaching them. Multiple choice tasks, short definitions, fill in the blank exercises might be also useful for this type of learners.

It should be noted that the simultaneous use of more than one channel of perception is likely to have a positive influence on the learning process. Students will definitely benefit from the mixture of learning techniques. But since there are many students in the classroom at the same time, it is necessary for a teacher to use a variety of instructional approaches to involve all of them paying attention to their learning preferences, strengths and weaknesses. It is impossible to use only those teaching methods, tasks and materials that correspond to the preferred channel of perception that a student has. Students inevitably have to deal with problems and challenges that require the use of their least preferred perception channels. Moreover, they should practice the use of these channels on a regular basis. However, students might get frustrated if a teacher uses teaching styles inconsistent with their learning preferences over long periods of time. The mismatch between teaching and learning styles can be avoided if teachers are aware of learning style preferences that their students have. The multisensory approach can be used to help students learn through more than one of their senses. Multisensory instruction refers to any learning activity that includes the use of two or more sensory modalities simultaneously to take in or express information [1, p. 1]. Multi-sensory lessons are simultaneously visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile to boost memory and learning. They allow teachers to engage students on multiple levels. Students can use their personal areas of strength to help them learn. Multisensory techniques that stimulate visual reasoning are called visual techniques. If techniques are focused on sound and stimulate verbal reasoning, they are called auditory techniques. If they involve body movement, they refer to kinesthetic techniques. It is claimed that the amount of information retained by students differs depending on the channel of perception and learning activities. Students retain 10 percent of what they read, 26 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, 50 percent of what they see and hear, 70 percent of what they say, and 90 percent of what they say as they do something [4, p. 28]. Thus, efficient foreign language learning must be based on balancing instructional methods to engage students with different learning styles.

It might be difficult to design a unit within English for specific purposes syllabus that takes into account each student's learning style and enables efficient vocabulary instruction. However, multisensory lessons make it possible to give each student at least some tasks that match his or her learning style preference and stimulate the learning process. If a student has to learn a particular vocabulary set based on the text within a given topic, it might be useful to work with the text in different ways. Students whose preferred channel of perception is vision will definitely enjoy reading it as they tend to think in pictures. Pictures, diagrams, charts might also help them to visualize and remember the vocabulary from the text. Although most of students are visual learners, it is necessary to pay attention to the needs of auditory and kinesthetic learners too. For instance, a teacher can offer auditory learners to listen to the same text or both groups of learners first listen to the information from the text and then read it. Also students can do exercises in which they have to listen to an excerpt from a text and fill gaps with missing words, or listen to words from a text and underline stressed syllables. Another type of exercise is to listen to a set of words and divide them into groups of verbs and nouns or define synonyms or antonyms and make a list of them. Such exercises are useful for both auditory and visual learners and students have to use their weak and strong perception channels. It might be a good idea to prepare pre-reading and after-reading activities that correspond to the needs of kinesthetic learners. For kinesthetic learners role-play games can be

helpful in vocabulary acquisition. Students can listen and read new information and then discuss it in pairs or with a teacher, do additional research on a studied topic.

Conclusions. Student-centered learning implies that a student is not just the one receiving information but also an active participant in a teaching/learning process. Vocabulary acquisition includes word learning and an ability to use it in speaking or writing and define its meaning in reading and listening. Different thinking processes and types of memory should be taken into consideration in a teaching process. It defines the efficiency of lessons and vocabulary learning. In terms of student-centered learning students have many possibilities to learn new words with the help of a teacher providing all necessary kinds of exercises are employed. Multisensory lessons can be an effective means of teaching students of all learning styles. It is necessary to mention that visual and read/write learning styles are very similar in information perception. Learning styles defined above are indispensably important for teaching vocabulary in the most effective way. Though visual learners comprise the majority of learners, psychological peculiarities of auditory and kinesthetic learners should not be neglected. Using mixed types of exercises for all learning styles is recommended. Student-centered learning can help to provide students with favorable conditions for learning new material including vocabulary acquisition as well.

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О.О. Іванова, А.В. Павлович. Типи сприйняття інформації у навчанні лексики. В статті розглядаються викладання лексики та її засвоєння в рамках особистісноорієнтованого навчання. Ми маємо на увазі, що студенти впливають на процес навчання, і він відображає гуманістичну парадигму у викладанні. Студенти є не лише забезпеченими необхідною інформацією, але у них також є можливості для саморозвитку. Викладачі відіграють дуже важливу роль у процесі викладання/вивчення матеріалу, так як вони повинні допомагати студентам в процесі вивчення нового матеріалу враховуючи використання відповідних психологічного та педагогічного підходів. Викладання лексики – це одна з найважливіших складових вивчення мови, так як слова передають значення висловлювання. Слухання, говоріння, читання та письмо є взаємопов'язаними аспектами освоєння словникового запасу. У процесі навчання викладачу необхідно враховувати такі типи сприйняття інформації: візуальний, аудіальний, сприйняття інформації в процесі читання або написання та кінестетичний. Бажаним є використання всіх каналів сприйняття. Різні види вправ можуть допомагати проводити заняття, які є корисними для студентів з усіма типами сприйняття інформації. Студенти повинні бути в змозі виконувати завдання, які вимагають використання каналу сприйняття, якому віддається найменша перевага. Головне завдання викладача – це допомогти студентам переносити навички володіння словниковим запасом з однієї форми в іншу.

Ключові слова: викладання лексики; засвоєння лексики; особистісноорієнтоване навчання; типи сприйняття інформації (VARK).

О.А. Иванова, А.В. Павлович. Типы восприятия информации в обучении лексики. В статье рассматриваются преподавание лексики и ее усвоение в рамках личностноориентированного обучения. Студенты влияют на процесс обучения, и он отражает гуманистическую парадигму в преподавании. Студенты не только получают необходимую информацию, но у них также есть возможности для саморазвития. Преподаватели играют очень важную роль в процессе преподавания / изучения материала, так как они должны помогать студентам в процессе изучения нового материала, включая использование соответствующих психологического и педагогического подходов. Преподавание лексики – это одна из важнейших составляющих изучения языка, так как слова передают значение выражения. Слушание, говорение, чтение и письмо являются взаимосвязанными аспектами освоения словарного запаса. В процессе обучения преподавателю необходимо учитывать следующие типы восприятия информации: визуальный, аудіальний, восприятие информации в процессе чтения или написания, а также кінестетический. Желательно использование всех каналов восприятия. Различные виды упражнений могут помочь проводить занятия, которые полезны для студентов с разными типами восприятия информации. Студенты должны быть в состоянии выполнять задачи, которые требуют использования канала восприятия, которому отдается наименьшее преимущество. Главная задача преподавателя – это помочь студентам переносить навыки владения словарным запасом из одной формы в другую.

Ключевые слова: преподавание лексики; усвоение лексики; личностноориентированное обучение; типы восприятия информации (VARK).