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SOME ASPECTS OF THE ADDRESSEE FACTOR WHEN DEVELOPING E-LEARNING LANGUAGE COURSES

Introduction

In the modern world, distance learning (hereinafter — DL) meets the needs of information societies, corresponds to the concept of education throughout life, the necessity to stay on the cutting edge of modern discoveries. DL as a form of training suggests obvious advantages: flexible schedule, the opportunity of training anywhere, within the reach of any recipient. The development of e-learning courses is carried out in accordance with the principles of accessibility, ease, attractiveness, visibility, practical orientation. In this form of training, games, educational videos, and interactivity are widely used. Learning resources such as Kahoot, Socrative, videopresenter, timelines, instant polls, and many others lighten up the educational process, helping to create extraordinary and unique content.

In 2018–2020 distance courses in English for adults in Belarus were designed, the development team consisted of representatives from 6 Belarusian universities. The educational material is designed for 16 weeks, during which 8 thematic blocks are to be studied. Each developer had the opportunity to embody some creative ideas in organizing a certain

topic individually, as well as to make it blend in with the entire course. Thorough mutual reviews made it possible to identify some weak points timely and, if necessary, update the content. Regular Skype meetings have contributed to the progress of the whole MOOC course development process.

Before moving on to discussing some aspects of the course development, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the European organizers of the project, all experts, colleagues, coordinators of such an innovative event; for the opportunity to participate in the development of the first distance MOOC courses in Belarus, for all kinds of assistance and fruitful cooperation. I would also like to thank all copyright holders who readily allowed to apply the materials of their sites in our project. Special gratitude is expressed to graduate students of Yanka Kupala State University of Grodno, the Department of Translation and Intercultural Communication, specialty “Linguistic support of intercultural communications”, A. Bodrenkova, M. Sinashenko, as well as their friends, native speakers of American English, who readily agreed to read the texts for the thematic block “Hobbies”. Special thanks to L.M. Sereda, PhD in linguistics, working at the department mentioned above, who kindly agreed to take part in the training video for week 9. Thanks a lot to I.L. Kurbaeva, an excellent and tireless coordinator of many issues in the development of the entire English language course in the Republic of Belarus.

The linguocultural aspect of the addressee factor in the development of a DL language course

According to modern research by philosophers, logicians, linguists, cultural scientists, psychologists and other researchers of communication, especially those who study linguistic pragmatics, the speaker's ability to take into account the addressee's factor plays a key role in communication, since the content, form, nature of the message depends on the addressee, be it informal or formal communication, interview or book writing, learning situation, personal conversation or any form of

dialogue between entire cultures. N. D. Arutyunova justly notes: “*The addressee, like the speaker, enters into communication not as a global personality, but in a certain aspect, role or function corresponding to the aspect of the speaker*” [1981, pp. 357–358]. With a broad understanding of a dialogue, every consumer of distance learning is an addressee of the course developers. In the situation of learning a foreign language, the student acts, first of all, as a native speaker of a certain language and as a person belonging to a certain culture.

Taking into account the addressee factor, in our opinion, in order to increase the progress of learning when developing distance language courses, it is necessary to take into account the following important factors: 1) native languages of students; 2) the level of curricula complexity in secondary schools in the region of students; 3) the relative level of complexity of the terms used when explaining linguistic phenomena in a language course; 4) culture, customs and traditions of a learner’s country. Taking these factors into account will allow the authors to make the most of these peculiarities when developing distance language courses in different geographic regions.

Let us ponder on the importance of these factors in the development of distance language learning courses.

First of all, it is to be mentioned that in traditional, full-time education, these factors are taken into account a priori, as something that is self-evident, corresponding to the basic didactic principles of connecting the new with the known, taking into account background knowledge, reliance on logical operations of comparison and analysis, etc. In distance learning, data accounting factors acquires special significance due to the fact that ignoring them inevitably leads to efficiency decrease of the learning process.

1) It is obvious that the typological structure features of the students’ native language are in different proportions with the foreign language under consideration, which happens due to different degrees of the languages proximity. Therefore, distance language courses should not be designed in the same way for speakers of different languages. In a project

like ours, it is necessary to take into account the peculiarities of both English and Russian languages in the presentation, explanation, comparison, consolidation and application of the English language grammar, which cannot be done without using certain basic linguistic terms when explaining the grammatical phenomena. That is why, to my opinion, it is appropriate in certain aspects to be somewhat different from the presentation of the same material in Europe, since in Europe the listeners' native languages most often belong to the groups of Romano-Germanic languages, which makes English much closer to them genetically. That is why it is not always possible to simply use similar methods of introducing grammar, but it is necessary to adapt to distance language learning in Belarus some methodological approaches and techniques that have proven efficient in teaching English in the related regions where the native language of most students belongs to the group of Slavic languages. In particular, if we speak about Belarus, the native language of the vast majority is Russian.

Speaking about English and Russian, the grammar systems differ a lot. For example, to my mind, it is not quite efficient to explain the gerund without mentioning some basic part of speech terms, as well as the basic syntactic function terms, since it is the morphological features of a particular form that reflect the specifics of syntactic functioning in a sentence. Moreover, it should be taken into account that the gerund as a special morphological form in the Russian language is absent. As the syntax of a sentence reflects the logic of a statement, studying the main syntactic features of a particular phenomenon of a foreign language is closely related to the process of understanding and constructing specific statements when perceiving and generating speech.

Taking into account the fact that one of the guidelines in online courses development is the ease of presentation, we should ground the statement that one should not avoid using basic philological terminology when explaining foreign grammatical material, which corresponds to the level of an elementary general education school in the post-Soviet region. This is due to the fact that such terminology a priori does not

increase the level of complexity of presenting material for the students of our region, but at the same time it allows reflecting the essence of the phenomena presented. For example, in our opinion, when explaining the gerund to a Russian speaker, it is necessary to mention that this form has the properties of both a noun and a verb. This fact should be a starting point in explaining this phenomenon, which is absent in the Russian and Belarusian languages, and will also help to avoid cases of confusion with homonymous forms.

Factors 2) and 3) are closely related. It should be noted that when developing distance courses, to my mind, it is also necessary to take into account the differences in training programs in Belarusian and European schools. Perhaps the recommendation by European experts concerning the complete absence of terms when introducing grammatical structures is due to the relatively low level of complexity of educational programs in European schools comparing to Belarusian ones. It is common place that the curriculum of today's secondary school in Belarus can be characterized as a high level of complexity program, so the terms from primary school related to linguistics can by no means be perceived as causing difficulties. One can hardly imagine a high school graduate who does not know what a noun is, for example. In addition, such basic syntactic functions as subject, predicate, attribute, adverbial modifiers can also present no difficulty for a native Russian speaker, since he has encountered these terms since childhood when studying his native language at school. It means that the use of some basic linguistic terms is justified and expedient at all levels of teaching English, the significant similarities and differences with which students must be aware of.

4) As many researchers note, in the XXI century the time has come when the trends of globalization are complemented by the trends of de-globalization and regionalization. Today people do not so much want to merge into one common human civilization mass, which, as the experience of various social and political events in the international arena shows, is impossible, but today the peoples of the world are beginning

to realize the need and feel the value of preserving and expressing their cultural and historical identity.

The sphere of education today is considered by many researchers of humanity scholars as the sphere of spreading the influence of a certain culture, as a means of exporting certain values. Explaining the way of influencing personality through education, arguing the negative consequences of the presence of only the target language country culture in foreign language classes, E.G. Tareva (Moscow State University) remarks: *"The focus of teaching efforts solely on the culture of another country (...) sometimes leads to the fact that students (often involuntary) start thinking that the culture being mastered is not just unique in its own way, but exclusive and even superior in comparison with the culture of their native country"* [2016, p. 16]. This factor must be taken into account, including in distance learning. Consequently, when developing distance English courses, it is necessary to observe cross-cultural dialogue between different peoples having unique traditions and customs, emphasize their equal importance, their equality, and not follow the outdated monologue tendency of English textbooks to represent only the English-speaking culture, which today is considered a feature of the so-called "cultural imperialism". For example, when studying the topic of national traditions, the dialogue of cultures may be carried out through the presentation of one traditional English or American holiday and one of the traditional Belarusian or Russian holidays, because when communicating it is equally important not only to hear about what happens in another country, but also to learn how to talk about your native country that is unique in its way too.

Based on the results of the courses' first launch, it can be stated that some students are not too willing to do written assignments, communicate via forums and in chats. These circumstances are seen as points of growth when updating the content of the courses before their forthcoming launches. Perhaps a productive solution would be to use social networks, where communication is more personalized than via educational platforms.

Conclusions

The work on the project may be characterized as a successful, promising, interesting, and motivating event that gave all of its participants a fruitful experience, as well as the opportunity of contributing to the implementation of the lifelong education principle, to learning throughout life in the Republic of Belarus.

LIST OF REFERENCES

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