* Близнюк Т. О. Methods of teaching English in primary school (notes of lectures): [Конспект лекцій з методики викладання англійської мови як іноземної у початковій школі / упоряд. Т.О. Близнюк]. – Івано-Франківськ: Видавець Кушнір Г.М., 2010. – 115 с.

**METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SCIENCE**

**AND ITS RELATIONS TO OTHER SCIENCES**

1. **Methods of teaching English: its aims and content**

Gradual introduction of early studying of one of the foreign languages into a primary school is one of the characteristic features of contemporary comprehensive schooling. New approaches to educational problems solution and teaching foreign languages in particular, draw to the foreground new demands to teachers training. It is perfectly known that knowledge, skills, and abilities of a teacher cannot be easily transmitted to a pupil if she/he doesn’t possess a range of theoretical information which depicts scientific investigations and achievements.

To make foreign language teaching in primary schools efficient a would-be teacher should study Methods of teaching English in primary school which must take an essential place in the system of a primary school teacher professional training.

The word ***method*** comes from the Greek word “methodos” where “meta” means “after” and “hodos” – “a way”. We understand the word ***method*** (or methodology) in the following three meanings:

* **methods** as a pedagogical science which combines general features of any other science (theoretical background, experimental base, objects of checking the hypothesis) and specific features connected with peculiarities of a certain subject;
* **methods** as a combinations of forms, methods, and techniques of the teacher’s job;
* **methods** as a university discipline.

Methodology in language teaching has been characterized in a variety of ways. A more or less classical formulation suggests that methodology is that which links theory and practice. Methods of foreign language teaching is understood as a body of scientifically tested theory concerning the process of foreign language teaching at schools and other educational establishments. It covers three main problems:

* aims of teaching a foreign language;
* content of teaching;
* methods and techniques of teaching.

**Aims** are the first and the most important consideration in any teaching. Hence, the teacher should know exactly what his pupils are expected to achieve in learning the subject, what changes it is possible to bring about in pupils at the end of the course, year, term, month, week, or lesson, i.e. the teacher should know the aims and objectives of foreign language teaching in schools (“aims” are treated as long-term goals, and “objectives” – short-term goals). Today Methods of teaching a foreign language suggests three aims: practical, educational, and cultural.

**Practical aims –** pupils acquire habits and skills in using a foreign language. The teaching of the mother tongue leads to the mastery of the language as a system so that pupils will be able to use it more effectively in oral and written language. The foreign language teaching should result in the pupils’ gaining one more code of receiving and conveying information; that is acquiring a second language for the same purpose as the native one – to use it as a means of communication. Here, all forms of work must be in close interrelation. However, attention should be given mainly to practice in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Each of these has its own particular objectives.

**Educational aims** – learning a second language is of great educational value. Since language is connected with thinking, through foreign language study we can develop pupils’ intellect, develop their voluntary and involuntary memory his imaginative abilities and will power. Indeed, while learning a new language pupils memorize words, idioms, sentence patterns, grammar structures and keep them in long-term memory ready to use whenever it is necessary. Besides, in the process of learning a foreign language pupils acquire their own learning habits and strategies, they learn to study.

**Cultural aims** – pupils extend their knowledge of the world in which they and the speakers of the target language live. Learning a foreign language makes pupils acquainted with the life, customs and traditions of the people whose language they study through visual and reading material. Foreign language teaching should promote pupils’ general education and cultural growth by increasing their knowledge about foreign countries and by acquainting them with progressive traditions of the people whose language they study. Through learning a foreign language pupils gain a deeper insight into the nature and functioning of language as a social phenomenon.

In conclusion, it is necessary to understand that all these aims are closely related and form an inseparable unity. The leading pole belongs to practical aims, for the others can be achieved only through practical command of the foreign language.

**Content of foreign language teaching** answers the question what to teach to achieve the aims. Its structure contains three components:

1. Psychological component. Sphere of communication, topic, and situation.
2. Linguistic component. Language and linguistic material which should be assimilated.
3. Methodological component. Techniques, skills and abilities which pupils should acquire.

The content of teaching in schools is laid down in the syllabus and embodied in teaching material and teacher’s speech.

1. **Methods and its relations to other sciences**

Methods of foreign language teaching is closely related to such sciences as Linguistics, Pedagogics, Psychology, Physiology, Philosophy and others.

The direct connection of Methods with **Linguistics** is obvious as any language, no matter native or foreign, is the object of investigation for Linguistics. Linguistic data is widely used for solving problems dealing with important components of Methods: aims, content, techniques and others. These sciences investigate such issues as relations between language and speech, grammar and vocabulary; they successfully use each other’s results of investigation in the selection and arrangement of language material for teaching.

**Pedagogics** is the science connected with general teaching and education. One branch of Pedagogics is called Didactics which studies general ways of teaching in schools. Methods, as compared to Didactics, studies specific ways of teaching a definite subject. In foreign language teaching, as well as in teaching of other school subjects, general principles of Didactics are applied. Some of them were first introduced and used in other sciences and later in Didactics.

We consider it impossible to develop language habits and speaking skills of pupils not knowing information about ways of forming them. The influence of formerly acquired habits on the formation of new ones is supplied and explained by **Psychology**. Effective learning a foreign language mostly depends upon pupils’ memory. That is why any teacher must know how to help pupils to successfully memorize and retain in memory the language material they learn. Here, many psychological investigations are of great importance. So if a teacher wants the pupils to master a foreign language she/he must seek every opportunity to make them hear, understand and speak it. Consequently, in teaching English teachers should take into consideration many psychological factors and create favorable conditions for memorizing. We may come to the conclusion that Psychology helps Methods to determine: the role of mother tongue at different stages of teaching; the amount of the material for pupils to assimilate at every stage of instruction; sequence and ways in which various habits and skills should be developed; methods and techniques which are more suitable for presenting material and for acquiring it by pupils.

Methods has a definite relations to **Physiology** of the pupils’ higher nervous system. Pavlov’s theory of “conditioned reflexes” is a perfect example. According to Pavlov habits are conditioned reflexes, and a conditioned reflex is an action performed automatically in response to a definite stimulus as a result of previous frequent repetitions of the same action. If we study this theory closely we’ll be able to see that it explains and confirms the necessity for frequent repetitions and revision of material the pupils study as one of the means of habit formation.

1. **The Principles of teaching English**

Many scientists and among them eminent philosophers state that a foreign language is acquired through mental perception that involves both thinking and guessing. Of course Methods as every science must be based on some principles. A principle is defined as a guide to an action, to teaching in our case. Principles of teaching answer the question how to effectively organize the teaching process. Methods is based on the fundamental principles of Didactics. Except them here are used some specific principles which are applied for teaching a foreign language. Let’s consider some of them.

***The principle of a scientific approach.*** It implies careful determination of what and how to teach to achieve the aims set in the syllabus. Pupils are suggested practiced in modern science statements which introduce the closest to the subject under study methods. Teaching English process must be based on data of modern sciences.

***The principle of the communicative approach***. This is one of the most important principles in Methodology as the aim of teaching English is to teach pupils how to use the target language for communicative needs. It means that pupils should be involved in oral and written communication throughout the whole course of study.

***The principle of a differential approach***. Each language activity requires special attention on the part of the teacher. As there are four types of language activities to be developed in pupils (listening, speaking, reading and writing), each of them has its own set of actions and exercises to be done. So in teaching a particular activity the teacher should choose the most appropriate techniques and exercises.

***The principle of an integrated approach***. Pupils do not assimilate sounds, grammar rules, lexical items as separate components of the language, but they acquire them in sentence-patterns, grammar constructions. Pupils should use their skills in the four language activities as independent parts of language experience.

***The principle of a conscious approach***. Language material is acquired consciously (pupils understand what they learn). Such approach usually contrasts with the so called “mechanical” learning. So the pupils should acquire rules, study and follow them in the process of language practice and achieve proficiency through communication. So they should understand the material they are to learn to be able to transform and apply it in communication. Comprehension is achieved:

* through situation in which the material can be used (many of classroom expressions can be learned in this way);
* through context and other linguistic means ( synonyms, antonyms, definitions and etc.);
* through translation into the mother tongue;
* through visual presentation (cards, pictures, objects, facial expressions);
* through singling out some features which are characteristic of this material.

***The principle of durability.*** It implies pupils’ ability to keep in memory linguistic and language material ready to access, whenever they need them for oral and written communication. Durability is ensured: by vivid presentation of material, by frequent revision and drills, by systematic control, by constant supervision of pupils’ skills and habits on the part of the teacher.

***The principle of activity***. All pupils should be active participants in the process of learning. Activity can be achieved under certain conditions. The learner should feel the need to learn. So motivation, desire and interest in the language are the main sources of activity. We can recommend some ways of achievement of these tasks:

* work in unison, when pupils are told to pronounce a sound or a word, or a sentence, or to read something out aloud in chorus in imitation of the teacher, speaker or a CD player;
* mass work, when pupils are invited to listen to a text, to read it, to do some exercises in written form; in other words when they learn for themselves and each does the same work as the rest of the pupils;
* work in small groups, when pupils are divided into four-five groups and each group receives a special assignment, the work results in conversation between these groups;
* work in pairs, when pupils sitting at the same desk have an opportunity to discuss some problem or situation in the target language, doing an ask-and-answer exercise or making up a dialogue of their own;
* individual work in programmed instructions, when each pupil can work at the task he receives.

***The principle of visualization***. As language learning begins with sense perception this principle is extremely important at the primary stage. The use of visual aids makes the lessons emotionally coloured and draws pupils attention and interest to the materiel. It helps to create communicative situations as natural as possible and leads to successful mastering of the target language. Visualization implies an intensive use of audio-visual aids and materials throughout the whole course of foreign language teaching. Its use makes foreign language lessons emotionally coloured, makes the pupils interested in what they learn and awakens their thought.

***The principle of individualization***. It is realized in the teaching process by means of considering pupils’ individual and psychological peculiarities. The teacher has to evaluate progress of each individual in the class and find the way how to manage the classroom activity so that the slowest learners are not depressed being left behind and the fastest learners are not frustrated by being held back. This principle can be achieved by using individual kinds of activity; by specific selection of the material; by using additional material (individual cards, exercises, tasks); by vivid presentation of the material; by constant revision or drill; by systematic control and constant supervision of pupils’ language habits and skills on the part of the teacher.

***The principle of accessibility.*** This principle is closely connected with the selection of the material and its arrangement to provide accessibility for the language learning on the part of the pupils. Since pupils learn the target language for communicative needs, the material should be arranged in the most suitable way for this purpose. In modern Methodology various approaches to the arrangement of the material for teaching purposes may be observed. Some of them are:

\* *the linguistic approach*, when in teaching a foreign language a certain linguistic theory is applied (after Charles Fries, an American structuralist);

\* *the structural-functional approach*, when the material is arranged in structural groups (after A. P. Starkov, R. R. Dixon) or in sentence-patterns.

**Points for discussion:**

1. What is Methods of foreign language teaching as a science?
2. Speak on the origin and meaning of the word “method”.
3. Which are the main problems Methodology deals with?
4. Speak on aims of teaching a foreign language.
5. Speak on content of teaching a foreign language.
6. Speak on relations of Methods with other sciences:

* Linguistics;
* Pedagogics;
* Psychology;
* Physiology.

1. Which principles are applied for teaching a foreign language?
2. Speak on the principle of a scientific approach.
3. Speak on the principle of the communicative approach.
4. Speak on the principle of a differential approach.
5. Speak on the principle of an integrated approach.
6. Speak on the principle of a conscious approach.
7. Speak on the principle of durability.
8. Speak on the principle of activity.
9. Speak on the principle of visualization.
10. Speak on the principle of individualization.
11. Speak on the principle of accessibility.