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FACILITATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES AS A METHOD FOR BOOSTING LEARNING PRODUCTIVITY

ФАСИЛІТАЦІЯ НА УРОКАХ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ ЯК МЕТОД ПІДВИЩЕННЯ ПРОДУКТИВНОСТІ НАВЧАННЯ

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses a key issue in contemporary educational science: implementing an innovative approach to foreign language teaching that includes the teacher's facilitative role. The relevance of this topic stems from current requirements for language education in Ukraine. According to the State Standard of Secondary Education, graduates must be able to communicate in foreign languages, which supports their spiritual, cultural, and national self-expression, enriches their emotional experience, aids in creative self-realization, shapes value orientations, and fosters intercultural dialogue. Therefore, the foreign language teacher's personality plays a crucial role in developing students' foreign language competence.

Referring to the research of respected foreign and domestic scholars, the authors analyze the concept of «facilitation», highlighting its core characteristic: the teacher's involvement in a language-based (emotional) interaction with students during the learning process. The article outlines facilitative principles, including learner-centered education, trust, acceptance and encouragement, empathy, congruence, emotional balance,

a non-competitive environment, active listening, proactivity, partnership, nonviolent communication, effective behavior management, and dialogue, each described in terms of the professional competencies of a foreign language teacher.

The authors convincingly argue for the role of the teacher-facilitator, who teaches foreign languages by enabling students to think critically and independently, express their ideas, and justify their views and decisions. The publication emphasizes that language interaction resulting from facilitative activities in foreign language education fosters the development of both speaking and thinking skills, indicating the formation of foreign language communicative competence in secondary school students.

This article will be useful for teachers working within the New Ukrainian School, who actively implement educational innovations in foreign language lessons, and for instructors in pedagogical institutions who train future foreign language teachers.

Key words: *facilitation, learning productivity, teacher-facilitator, foreign language, lesson.*

Introduction. In modern education, several emerging challenges require new approaches, especially in foreign language teaching. One of these key challenges involves enhancing the relationship between teachers and students in foreign language learning environments. At first glance, fostering communication (both between students and between students and teachers) in a foreign language class may seem like a straightforward task. However, achieving this goal in practice demands more than just improving communicative functions during lessons. The primary objective of a language teacher who seeks to enhance interaction with students – and among students themselves – is to create a psychologically comfortable atmosphere in the classroom and to establish the teacher's role as a partner to the students. When applied effectively, these factors can help reduce or even eliminate psychological barriers to communication, greatly improving the productivity of teacher-student interactions. Facilitation is a way of educational interaction in which all participants in the process, which includes facilitation, feel comfortable, lead naturally, and actively accept others. To use another terminology, facilitation that is incorporated into the learning process facilitates interaction within a group (student-student; teacher-student). The process of facilitation contributes not only to the efficiency of work in the group (class), but also to the full involvement, activity, and interest of students. Thus, facilitation serves as a valuable tool to not only encourage but also enrich language interactions between teachers and students.

Researchers and educators explore facilitation from multiple perspectives, including the preparation of future teachers for facilitative roles, facilitative approaches to teaching specific subjects, and the psychological aspects of group facilitation. The theoretical foundations of facilitation have been explored by scholars such as G. Batyshchev, V. Bieber, L. Buyeva, L. Vysheslavitsev and others. Research into the phenomenon of facilitation, the development of facilitation skills among future psychologists, as well as

methods for assessing facilitation abilities in future educators and psychologists, has been conducted by prominent national psychologists, including S. Berezka, O. Galitsan, M. Kazanzhi, O. Kondrashykhina, L. Petrovska, T. Sorochan, among others.

Several studies address the concept of pedagogical facilitation, elaborating on the term itself, its characteristics, content, structure, as well as the methods and techniques for applying it in teacher training and higher education instruction. Scholars contributing to this field include H. Voloshko, E. Vrublevska, O. Dymova, I. Zhyzhyna, I. Kubareva, M. Polishchuk-Ba, O. Fisun, S. Khilko, K. Shevchenko, and others.

The aim of this article is to explore the specifics of implementing facilitation activities by teachers in foreign language lessons to enhance the productivity of students' learning outcomes. Objectives: to determine the current state of the issue in scientific theory and practice and to outline the principles guiding teachers' facilitation activities in foreign language lessons, which will ensure improved learning outcomes for general secondary education students.

Research methods and techniques. Efforts to identify ways to enhance the productivity of learning outcomes in foreign language lessons involved studying contemporary foreign and domestic sources. Analysis of these sources indicated that facilitation is an innovative activity for modern educators, enabling not only a diversification of collaborative interactions among participants in the educational process but also fostering positive advancements in the development of foreign language competence among general secondary education students.

Findings and discussions. It's essential to define the term «facilitation» more precisely. Exploring the term «facilitation», we encounter several definitions across different sources. A psychological encyclopedia defines facilitation as a process that supports the effective organization of language interactions in the classroom, enabling collaborative discussions on complex topics or conflict resolution [6].

In a concise psychological dictionary, facilitation is defined as «a person's increased productivity resulting from the psychological presence or mental image of another person» [7]. This highlights facilitation's strong ties to group dynamics and its dependence on both linguistic and emotional interactions within a group.

In the Ukrainian language explanatory dictionary, facilitation is described as «a form of group work for developing solutions of heightened complexity or importance, aimed at solving any operational or business issue, creating a company strategy, etc. // Facilitating group interactions involves both a process and a skill set that enables effective discussions on complex or contentious topics without wasting time, ensuring all agenda items are covered» [8].

A short glossary on professional teacher language defines facilitation in education as: «Facilitate means structuring the learning process for group-based problem-solving, led by a facilitator (andragogist, teacher). It combines a process and a skill set that enable productive discussions on complex issues, minimizing time loss while fully involving all participants in the learning process» [5].

An analysis of research on psychological and pedagogical facilitation shows varied terminology surrounding «facilitation» derivatives. Terms like «facilitative», «facilitated», «facilitating» and «facilitator» reflect nuances in meaning, influenced by translations from different languages. M. Kazanži's work clarifies these distinctions: «facilitated» describes the object of facilitation, while «facilitator» refers to the individual skilled in facilitation. «Facilitation» denotes the application process of these skills [3].

Researcher N. Koshechko characterizes «pedagogical facilitation» as a crucial factor in effective teaching, personal growth, and positive educational outcomes, shaped by a teacher's distinctive communication style and personal qualities [4]. Scientist O. Husakova defines pedagogical facilitation for future foreign language teachers as «a specialized activity that enriches the language learning process, promoting autonomous, creative learning and communication, led by a teacher skilled in facilitation» [1]. Particularly noteworthy is her perspective that these skills «develop through varied activities during the professional training of future foreign language teachers, influenced by learning environments, educational structure, and individual attributes» [1].

The teacher is one of the most important figures in the nation-building process. Competent, knowledgeable, and educated students are a valuable asset for our country. Educational reform in Ukraine has broadened the teacher's role, adding new functions alongside traditional ones such as organizer of educational activities, mentor, and guide. These new roles include tutor, moderator, and facilitator. These changes call for a new type of educator, one who not only fulfills educational and developmental functions but can also respond promptly to changes in the labor market and societal demands. The New Ukrainian School requires a diversification of teacher roles to ensure high-quality education, making the issue of shifting subject-subject relationships in the educational process both relevant and important.

In society, there exists a stereotypical view of relationships within secondary education institutions: students are expected to be well-behaved, actively engaged in learning, cooperative, and respectful toward teachers and peers. Teachers, in turn, are seen as responsible for maintaining classroom order, delivering lessons, and providing guidance. Some experts argue that teachers even have the authority to direct and make decisions for students. However, a teacher's most critical role may be to foster and sustain high-quality education.

To achieve quality education, teachers must harness their «professional attitude, energy, and motivation, combined with their own teaching skills» [10]. Researcher Harmer highlights that a teacher should adapt to various roles based on personal perception, methodology, and preferences. These roles include manager, organizer, evaluator, initiator, leader, controller, lecturer, informant, stimulator, moderator, assistant, provider, psychologist, performer, entertainer, presenter, advisor, consultant, and facilitator, among others [10].

Teachers play a variety of roles in everyday life, shaped by the circumstances and environments in which they work. According to Hedge, the term «role» has become central in education to describe the actions of teachers and students during lessons or across subjects. In a lesson setting, both teachers and students often have preconceived ideas about appropriate actions, defining the role each will fulfill [11].

As educational reform progresses, more institutions are encouraging teachers to transition from traditional instructional roles to roles that support student self-management, specifically the role of a teacher-facilitator. A facilitator differs from conventional teaching by guiding students in their learning journey – helping them choose ideas, develop opinions, and take ownership of material through independent exploration. Before discussing how a teacher can serve as a facilitator, it's essential to clarify what this concept entails. A facilitator is someone who helps a group work toward shared goals without directly imposing control. Therefore, when we refer to a teacher as a classroom facilitator, it means they should avoid exerting authoritative control over students' activities. Instead, the teacher should create an environment that encourages creativity and innovation by giving students space to explore. This involves engaging students in active participation, such as reasoned discussions and teamwork, making the learning process more holistic.

According to O. Husakova, a teacher-facilitator encourages students' independence and responsibility in selecting courses, setting educational objectives, determining methods to achieve them, and evaluating their results [1]. This role involves creating favorable conditions for independent, meaningful learning, motivating students, and fostering active collaboration in the learning process. The teacher-facilitator enhances educational outcomes and personal growth within the professional-pedagogical process through a unique communication style and personal influence and dialogue.

A teacher focused on achieving effective results while fostering a comfortable and trusting classroom environment serves not only as the organizer of the learning process but also as a coordinator for the student group. In this capacity, a teacher-facilitator may assume several key roles to support student learning:

A teacher-facilitator should be empathetic and exhibit strong self-control, showing acceptance of all participants' feelings in the educational process.

The teacher-facilitator should engage continuously with the student group, monitoring reactions, listening attentively, and valuing students' ideas.

They should encourage active class discussions, incorporating a dynamic exchange of questions and answers to simplify and enhance the learning process.

The teacher-facilitator should clarify unfamiliar terms and phrases for students by demonstrating and providing examples.

The responsibility of structuring language interaction between teachers and students in foreign language classes naturally falls to the teacher. This role requires skills such as tailoring instruction to students' individual traits while maintaining a communicative focus. A teacher who incorporates facilitation techniques in his/her approach can be regarded as a teacher-facilitator. The primary goal of a teacher-facilitator is to enhance group interaction, foster harmony within the classroom, and support individual students throughout their foreign language learning journey.

A facilitator's skills shape a distinct role for the teacher, where the focus is on creating conditions that enable students to acquire knowledge through exploration and real-life applications in their learning activities. Thus, understanding the facilitative function in teaching becomes essential. In this context, the works of M. Hutsol are noteworthy, as they uncover the facilitative role within the teacher's communicative interaction with the entire class. Hutsol's contributions have influenced pedagogy and the methodology of teaching foreign languages. She describes «facilitation» as easing the learning process, whether for groups or individuals. According to Hutsol, the primary goal of a teacher-facilitator is to motivate students by fostering «meaningful learning» [2].

Examining M. Hutsol's work, it becomes clear that she often references the American psychologist C. Rogers, who argued: «The main flaw in education is the overemphasis on the teacher's role and, conversely, the severe undervaluation of meaningful learning». Rogers introduced the concept of «facilitation», viewing it as «a true educational reform» [12]. He believed that achieving meaningful learning goes beyond merely enhancing teachers' skills or creating new experimental programs. Instead, Rogers emphasized that teachers must engage in linguistic (or emotional) interaction with students throughout the learning process [12].

From a facilitator's perspective, learning any foreign language is a complex, structured process in which the teacher effectively provides essential material and supports students in mastering it. A teacher-facilitator designs foreign language lessons to be engaging, focusing on language interaction – a crucial element for language acquisition. The facilitator's role involves fine-

tuning the lesson's content, goals, and objectives, aligning them with the desired level of language proficiency. This requires adaptive management skills, enabling students to recognize their progress in language mastery not only at the year's end but continuously throughout the course. Here, the teacher's guidance should be supportive and encouraging, rather than directive.

In interacting with students, a teacher's role should be reflected not only in effective management of learning activities but also in supporting students' adaptation to the foreign language learning system. It is essential that the language materials used are versatile and can be applied across various communicative situations. These materials should be introduced orally and reinforced through student repetition. Suitable language content includes short texts and dialogues that are easy for students to memorize and integrate into conversation. Memory retention can be enhanced with visual aids, gestures, or object-based actions.

O. Husakova has made significant contributions to understanding the study of language material in developing students' cognitive abilities. Her research includes analyzing lessons and teacher-student surveys to explore the role of classes in mastering grammatical concepts, such as adjective order in complex descriptive groups, to support cognitive development [1].

The author's research focused on exploring the role of language material in foreign language lessons to enhance students' cognitive development. The primary conclusion drawn from the study supports the effectiveness of fostering cognitive skills in students and highlights teachers' growing interest in applying new facilitative methods for teaching English grammar [1].

In her research on the pedagogical strategies for developing adaptive speech in future foreign language teachers, Oksana Husakova examined adaptive teacher speech as a key element of facilitative teaching. She identified three core qualities essential for foreign language teachers' speech: precision and correctness, logical structure and clarity, and expressiveness and accessibility. Husakova emphasized that professional speech standards are crucial for language teachers to help address common challenges in language instruction, such as psychological, linguistic, and didactic barriers in communication with students [1].

Teaching and learning are continuous processes, yet the teacher's role remains fundamentally the same, regardless of educational reforms: to educate, encourage independent thought, and allow students to express their own ideas and viewpoints on various issues. This task becomes even more challenging in foreign language education, as many students struggle not only to speak but also to think and express themselves fluently in a new language. Therefore, fostering language interaction should begin in primary school, with the teacher adopting a facilitator role.

A key component of successful foreign language teaching is engaging students and maintaining high motivation throughout the learning process. For a teacher-facilitator, it is essential to create a comfortable environment where all participants feel free to share their thoughts openly and confidently. As a facilitator, the teacher's role is less about direct instruction and more about guidance, supporting students in their journey toward independent language learning. The primary skill of a teacher-facilitator is the ability to craft a positive learning environment that mirrors students' social, intellectual, and linguistic experiences.

A prerequisite is also adherence to the basic principles of educational facilitation. Namely:

The Principle of Learner-Centered Education: Places the student at the heart of the learning process, recognizing their individuality, inherent worth, and unique experiences.

The Principle of Trust, Acceptance, and Affirmation: Entails confidence in each student's potential, respect for their chosen values and behaviors, and acceptance of each student as a whole, unique individual.

The Principle of Empathy: Requires teachers to view situations from students' perspectives, understanding their motivations and expressing that understanding openly.

The Principle of Congruence: Highlights the importance of teachers being genuine and honest, ensuring that their outward expressions align with their true inner feelings.

The Principle of Emotional Balance: Involves the teacher's ability to maintain a balance between life's positive and negative aspects, aiding students in overcoming challenges and achieving success.

The Principle of a Non-Competitive Environment: Ensures that all participants in the educational process support one another, viewing each other as partners rather than competitors.

The Principle of Active Listening: Calls for teachers to carefully listen and analyze students' words to fully grasp the meaning behind their messages.

The Principle of Proactivity: Emphasizes personal initiative and independence in responding to external influences.

The Principle of Partnership: Promotes equal rights for all participants in the educational process and respect for each other's perspectives.

In her work, Hanna Babicheva explains that to facilitate the foreign language learning process, a teacher-facilitator can apply a range of strategies and techniques. The author highlights the following methods: creating a sense of confidence and comfort for students who may feel less proficient; structuring the teacher's role to primarily support students in finding answers to their questions; enhancing students' motivation and drive to learn; setting expectations that align with students' developmental level, foreign language

proficiency, and individual characteristics; fostering a positive emotional atmosphere in the classroom; acting as an attentive listener, the teacher-facilitator accepts students' ideas and thoughts, guiding them in a non-directive manner; developing students' communication skills and abilities [9].

The teacher-facilitator provides students with the opportunity to use a variety of communication tools. These may include students finding their own answers and the teacher encouraging active verbal communication.

Conclusion. Thus, facilitation implies that students begin to love the language they are learning and enjoy being in a foreign language environment (classroom time). This becomes possible if the teacher loves the language and transmits his or her joy of immersion in a foreign language environment to students. Facilitative communication allows you to create positive motives for further language learning, which in turn encourages students to take a stand and be active. In conclusion, we can say that a teacher-facilitator is a teacher who, through his/her presence and influence, facilitates the students' manifestation of their own initiative and independence, as well as promotes the process of mental development and ensures positive interpersonal interaction.

As the education system evolves, a key aspect of its reform is for teachers to recognize the need to expand their roles within the learning process. First, teachers must adopt a new approach to teaching that goes beyond delivering information, incorporating resource provision, progress monitoring, and encouraging problem-solving. Second, teachers should work on building students' skills in managing their own learning, helping them become more creative, able to apply their knowledge in real-life situations, and ultimately more motivated.

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Статтю присвячено важливій ключовій проблемі сучасної педагогічної науки – впровадженню інноваційного підходу до викладання іноземної мови, що передбачає фасилітаційну діяльність педагога. Актуальність обраної проблеми визначається вимогами, які сьогодні висуваються до мовної освіти українців, оскільки, згідно з Державним стандартом загальної середньої освіти випускники ЗЗСО мають бути здатними спілкуватися іноземними мовами, що забезпечить їхнє духовне, культурне, національне самовираження, сприятиме збагаченню емоційно-чуттєвого досвіду, творчій самореалізації, формуванню ціннісних орієнтацій і ставлень та залученню до міжкультурного діалогу. Тому особистість учителя іноземних мов відіграє важливу роль у формуванні іншомовної компетентності сучасних школярів.

Посилаючись на результати досліджень авторитетних зарубіжних і вітчизняних учених, автори здійснили аналіз дефініції «фасилітація», визначивши її основну рису – включення педагога у процес мовної (емоційної) взаємодії зі здобувачами освіти у процесі навчання, та подали перелік принципів фасилітаційної діяльності (особистісно орієнтованого навчання; довіри, прийняття і схвалення; емпатії; когерентності; емоційного балансу; неконкурентного середовища; активного слухання; проактивності; партнерства; ненасильницького спілкування; грамотної регуляції поведінки; діалогу), схарактеризувавши кожен з них з точки зору фахових компетентностей учителя іноземної мови.

У пропонованій статті авторами переконливо обґрунтовано роль педагога-фасилітатора, яка полягає у навчанні школярів іноземної мови через надання можливості критично і самостійно мислити, висловлювати власні думки й аргументувати обрані позиції та прийняті рішення. У поданій публікації зроблено акцент на тому, що мовна взаємодія, яка є результатом фасилітаційної діяльності фахівця у галузі іншомовної освіти на уроках, продукує розвиток у здобувачів загальної середньої освіти як навичок говоріння, так і мислення – показника сформованості іншомовної комунікативної компетентності.

Стаття буде корисною педагогам, які працюють в Новій українській школі й активно впроваджують освітні інновації на уроках іноземної мови, та стане в нагоді викладачам педагогічних ЗВО, які здійснюють підготовку майбутніх учителів іноземних мов.

Ключові слова: фасилітація, продуктивність навчання, педагог-фасилітатор, іноземна мова, урок.