

## Developing Creative Thinking in Foreign Language Classes

Lyutviyeva Yaroslava

*Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics*

*E-mail address: [yaroslava.liutviieva@hneu.net](mailto:yaroslava.liutviieva@hneu.net)*

**Keywords:** creative thinking, methods, language, training, innovative approach.

**Abstract.** The aim of this study is to get an insight into modern approaches to the concept of “creative thinking” and define the conditions for the development of creative thinking of students of non-language specialties in the process of teaching a foreign language. It is also noted that there are main factors, which are important for the development of a creative personality. And the most effective teaching methods that contribute to the development of creative thinking in the classroom in a foreign language are described.

### 1. Introduction

In the didactics of higher education, a dogmatic type of training has developed over the centuries. Its product, as a rule, is formal knowledge. At the same time, an explanatory type of teaching has developed, the advantage of which is that the students develop not only memory, but also thinking, watchfulness. They also pay considerable attention to the practice of knowledge, using exercises and practical work extensively. However, among all exercises, the execution of tasks according to the instructions or the sample is dominated. Thus, explanatory teaching, widely used in modern higher education, has many undeniable advantages, but it focuses on reproducing (reproductive) and does not contribute to the improvement of creative (productive) thinking of students. Of course, reproductive thinking should not be opposed to creative. However, if only explanatory training will prevail, there will be specialists who are able to absorb the knowledge and reproduce scientific truths, but who are unable to face difficulties in situations requiring independent thinking or

independently acquire knowledge and be creative in their work. Such specialists need instructions to solve any problem, which will require constant use of expert services. Thus, in higher education dogmatic explanatory teaching is being replaced by a system, the basis of which is not informational knowledge transfer, but the direction of an independent search of the knowledge by students. As physicist Mac Laue said, "Acquiring the knowledge is not as important as developing the ability to learn. Education is such kind of education that remains after everything learned is forgotten."

## **2. Methods and forms of training**

For the education system, the development of the creative thinking of a modern specialist is fundamental importance. The main didactic problem, facing a teacher in organizing the educational process at the university, is teaching methods and skills of creative activity, which means the presence of special tools.

Among the existing methods and forms of training, the most productive in the development of students' creative thinking are problem-search, research, and group trainings. Great opportunities in the development of creative thinking are opened by the wide and early involving students in research activity. It provides training for creatively thinking specialists with the skills of scientific activity and an independent analysis of the possibilities of using scientific achievements and best practices, and the skills of practical participation in the work of scientific teams.

Thinking as a process of intellectual activity has a complex structure, depending on many factors, considering which it is necessary to develop the creative component of intellectual abilities.

Individual achievements, including creative ones, are determined by the level of general intelligence, i.e. high intelligence is a prerequisite, but not sufficient, for creative achievement. Reaching the creative limit will depend on a number of other personality traits (motivation, competence, performance).

The development of creative thinking requires high intellectual development, a certain amount of knowledge, the level of intellectual and inherited abilities and inborn potential. Consequently, the focus of training on the development of

intellectual abilities, an increase in the volume of knowledge (acquired as independently as possible) is an essential task of higher education.

In solving the problem of developing creative thinking of students in the process of language training, we rely on the definition of Zharikov E.S., which gives the following characteristics of creative thinking:

heuristicity - the ability to solve problems requiring the discovery of patterns, properties, relationships;

creativity - the ability to create new things and new methods;

mobility - the ability to move into related fields of science, solve complex problems;

independence - the ability to confront the established traditions and views in science, which prevent the acquisition of fundamentally new knowledge;

expertness - the ability to see the perspective of the studied object on the basis of limited information about the subject, consideration, predict its future state, build hypotheses about its past states;

systematicity - the ability to perceive an object as a whole;

rationality - the ability to dialectically deny old knowledge systems that impede the qualitative change in science;

openness - the ability to accept and transform any ideas;

antinomy - to see the unity of opposites or mutually exclusive definitions of an object; the ability to generalize the material, which allows to rise from empirical concreteness to conclusions about general properties [5].

Innovative approaches that are most fully integrated into creative educational technology are gained particular importance in the educational process. The main goal of such approaches is to activate the creative potential of each subject of the educational process with its subsequent development through the active involvement of students in solving educational and sociocultural problems. [1].

Consider the understanding of creative foreign language thinking, based on a combination of elements: creative thinking and a foreign language [2]. For us, this is not just a serial connection of one and the other component, but a complex integration in the human mind, where a foreign language plays a special role. On the one hand, a

foreign language is a structured system with internal laws, on the other hand, it is a powerful incentive for the development and transformation of the personality's linguistic consciousness, aimed at revealing the process of incorporating the thought object of the original knowledge system into new connections. A foreign language has significant potential in developing the creative potential of an individual. When learning a foreign language, the process of forming a hybrid structure takes place, one of those is more recent and is built into the existing structure changing qualitatively the linguistic consciousness. Foreign-language consciousness serves as the basis for mastering foreign-language speech activity as the main condition for the formation of communicative competence in a dialogue.

The ability to think creatively in a foreign language is not only the ability to preserve the existing system of knowledge, but the ability to disassociate ourselves from it and be able to interpret, transform a fundamentally new system, depending on the established conditions. We do not distinguish it as a special kind of thinking, but as thinking with some components of productive and divergent thinking, where a foreign language plays a special role, expressed in a high level of foreign language abilities. The internal components of creative foreign language thinking are the mechanisms of the productive process as a synonym for the creative: inversion, combination and alignment of the native and foreign language.

### **3. The development of creative thinking in the learning process**

When planning training sessions aimed at developing creative thinking, it is necessary to take into account the fact that students are ready to learn only that knowledge in which they realise personal meaning, practical significance. The development of creative thinking is fostered only by motivated cognitive activity, and it is the internal motivation of students that is important. It should also be borne in mind that in order to increase their creative potential, students need certain knowledge and skills. Analyzing the approaches of various researchers (R. Sternberg, P. Torrens, R. Crachfield, E. de Bono, etc.) [4], the following strategies for the development of creative thinking of students in the learning process are emphasized:

- encourage doubts in relation to generally accepted assumptions, cognitive interest;

- allow to make mistakes;
- provide time for creative thinking;
- be open to discussion;
- abandon the usual forms and methods of activities;
- provide students with a choice;
- encourage internal assessment of achievements, reflection;
- develop the ability to see the multifunctionality of objects;
- to form the ability to combine controversial ideas from different fields of knowledge and use such combinations to solve problems;
- establish the subject-subject interaction of a teacher and students;
- provide students with the opportunity to become co-authors of educational activities.

Creative thinking means a willingness to abandon stereotypes, the ability to generate new ideas and implement them, to successfully realize themselves in the profession and in society.

Minds of students are reservoirs of ideas. However, all the ideas inside will never be tapped without the proper mental attitude and approach. Examples of tasks provided below are for the development of dialogic foreign language communication.

The best way to master Business English speaking skills is through simulation of real-life situations. This method works great when it comes to improving speaking skills, learning situation-specific vocabulary, and finding out more about cultural behaviors.

- Job interview

It is an exercise where candidates act out a scenario with a group to determine how suitable the candidate is for a particular vacancy. The exercise tests how candidates might approach difficult situations that frequently occur in the business world. Interviewers frequently ask candidates to assume the role of a specific company employee and ask them how they would approach a hypothetical or real-life situation. The interviews are one of the best ways of testing a candidate on their suitability for a specific position. This is not only because the scenarios reflect common work

situations, but also because it allows a candidate to demonstrate their ability to perform under pressure.

- What's the problem?

MacCrimmon and Taylor's definition of a problem is "a gap between a current and a desired state of affairs – that is, a gap where you are and where you would like to be"[3].

It is an exercise where management is dissatisfied with the brand position of one of a company's product and wishes the product were more competitive. For this activity, students need to talk about some of your company's products or services, using original materials (leaflets, brochures, or any other type of promotional materials) as a starting point or web pages that describe the company's services/products can be also printed.

For instance, suppose the company currently possesses 12 percent market share of a product line and the objective is to capture a 15 percent share. So the students will need options to reduce the 3 percent gap. The more ideas they can spew out, the easier it will be to resolve the problem.

- Who to promote?

It is an exercise where the family company would like to promote one of its employees to run it on a day-to-day basis while the owners focus on other business concerns. They have shortlisted two people for the promotion. For this activity, students need to discuss the candidates using the given information. For example: Alice works hard every day and often goes home late. She speaks well and is knowledgeable about the company. Her weak areas are that she can be moody and stubborn. And Steve is a natural leader and everyone seems to respect him. He is especially capable with financial matters and he rarely makes mistakes in his work. His weak areas are that he is not a fast worker and often comes to work late.

As people learn best through experience, it is best to create a virtual environment that is highly immersive, and engaging. Depending on the task, a student will also need to demonstrate other competencies which will be related to the task such as leadership

and communication skills. It is extremely useful to the student to be assessed and given feedback in relation to the performance after the exercise.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Thus, it can be concluded that a foreign language as an academic discipline has an unlimited resource for the development of students' creative thinking, if the teaching method is aimed to this goal. The system of communicative exercises, role-plays, creative tasks allows ensuring effective practical knowledge of a foreign language. Modern teaching methods and techniques allow making the lesson as useful, rich and interesting as possible, bringing it closer to real communication. The high self-motivation of students, the increase of students interest in learning a foreign language and learning activities generally stimulate students' creative activity, the need for self-education encourage the development of their creative thinking in such ways.

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