

COMMUNICATIVE-ANALYTIC APPROACH TO INTENSIVE TEACHING/LEARNING OF ENGLISH IN THE UKRAINE

Tarnopolsky Oleg

*The Foreign Language Department
Technical University of Railway Transport
Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine*

Summary : The theoretical foundations of an intensive programme developed for teaching everyday and business communication to Russian (Ukrainian)-speaking students learning English in the Ukraine are described. An attempt was made to combine in this programme the communicative, or synthetic, approach and the analytic one (based on language structure consciousness-raising and training discrete language forms). This combination has been reflected in weekly learning units designed according to the pattern "primary synthesis - analysis - communicative synthesis" - the analysis phase gradually reduced and finally totally eliminated with learners' progress. Great advantages of this approach as to learning outcomes were demonstrated.

Keywords : Intensive English programmes ; communicative-analytic ; cognition

Modern foreign/second language teaching more and more tends towards what Kumaravadivelu (1994) calls the "principled pragmatism". It presupposes designing the teaching/learning process not on the basis of one approach but on combining several of them. When teaching English as a foreign language in the countries of the former USSR, such as the Ukraine, "principled pragmatism" means combining communication and cognition, i.e. the communicative, or synthetic, approach, when a new language is taught for communication, in communication, and through communication, with a cognitive, or analytic, approach (O'Malley & Uhl Chamot, 1990) presupposing some focusing on language forms for students' consciousness-raising (Rutherford, 1987) as to language structure. It is absolutely

indispensable because of inevitable scarcity of comprehensible input in the target language that students can get only in the classroom but rarely, often never, outside it. Since classes of English are always more or less limited in number and allocated time, the deficiency of comprehensible input volume is unavoidable - so, equally unavoidable is the deficiency of opportunities for students to hypothesise on language structures and gradually develop their interlanguage on the basis of linguistic experience.

Such deficiencies can be compensated for only if students get their insight into the language structure not by a trial-and-error method but through consciously analysing relevant linguistic phenomena and training them in communication. But this analytic approach will serve the purpose of learning language for communication only if communication absolutely dominates analysis, so that analysis, language forms focusing and training are nothing more than a support for accelerating the development of communicative competence. Such a kind of combination of communication and cognition (communicative-analytic approach) is possible if the pattern of "primary synthesis - analysis - communicative synthesis" is followed in learning units, each including several language classes.

According to this pattern, the first phase (class) in a learning unit is devoted to students' receiving the greatest possible amount of comprehensible input in the target language and to their attempts to use this input in their own communication without analysing new language forms (synthetically) - just on the basis of input models. It can be done only with different speech supports that make interaction a guided quasi-communication, i.e. a controlled (primary) approach to genuine uncontrolled communication. The holistically communicative orientation at the start of every learning unit permits to make the second phase in it a class of analysis where students' conscious attention is focused on new language forms (already used in previous quasi-communication), and these forms are deliberately trained in a special set of language-oriented exercises that at the same time simulate some features of communication. Such activities create opportunities for accelerated learning of language forms for free and fluent use in further communication. The achievement of this goal directly leads to the crowning phase (class) in a learning unit - that of communicative synthesis where all the previous work makes possible fluent learners' comprehensible output (Swain, 1985) guided not by artificial speech supports, as in the primary synthesis phase, but by negotiation of meaning in students' interaction (uncontrolled communication). Such an approach ensures dropping out of the middle link (analysis) in the "primary synthesis - analysis - communicative synthesis" pattern as soon as learners master a sufficient minimum of language forms. It means that the communicative-analytic approach presupposes its own gradual transformation into a purely communicative one.

The communicative-analytic approach can be most efficient in intensive English programmes when learning, although short in duration (not longer than one year), is structured so that the weekly concentration of classes is rather great (12 academic hours per week or more). It also necessitates students' learning and communicative activities to be as intensive as possible during every class.

It was following the theoretical notions set above that an intensive programme of English has been developed for teaching oral everyday and business communication to Russian (Ukrainian)-speaking students learning English in the Ukraine. Four-year experience of teaching this two-stage 7-month long course (12 hours of classes every week) has shown its great success as to students' learning outcomes. It was demonstrated in experimental testing

that learners had achieved high levels of proficiency in speaking and listening comparing most favourably in fluency and linguistic accuracy of communication with the results achieved in other English programmes - a proof of the communicative-analytic approach advantages when teaching English in a non-English speaking country.

REFERENCES

- Kumaravadivelu, B. (1994). The postmethod condition: (E)merging strategies for second/foreign language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28, 27-48.
- O'Malley, M. & Uhl Chamot, A. (1990). *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rutherford, W. (1987). *Second Language Grammar Learning and Teaching*. London: Longman.
- Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S.M. Gass & C.G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 235-253). Rowley, MA: Newbury House Publishers.