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Learner-centered Approach in Teaching Foreign Language: Psychological and Pedagogical Conditions

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Abstract

The paper dwells on the psychological and pedagogical conditions of implementing learner-centered approach in teaching foreign language to engineering students at the Tomsk Polytechnic University. The concept of learner-centered approach in teaching foreign language was in detail pedagogically, psychologically and methodologically studied, foreign language teaching regulatory documents in the technical university were analyzed, teaching methods and learning outcomes in accordance with the existing English language teaching methodology were presented, results of the engineering students' questionnairing and key techniques to improve teaching foreign language based on the learner-centered approach were proposed.

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1. Introduction

Theoretical and methodological research of the domestic and international scholars, concerned with philosophical, psychological, linguistic, general pedagogical and methodological issues of foreign language teaching, has shown that implementation of learner-centered approach in teaching of foreign language at the higher educational institution is a complex and under-researched psychological and educational problem.

Language, with its multiple and complex functions, has long been considered in isolation from humans. As a result, foreign language learning does not involve the language of science as a means of communication and a factor

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of formation and development of personality, influence of multilingualism on the development of society, and specific features of the foreign language learning. Kapretev (2006) states that language can't be taught, you can only create conditions for its learning and if you can't learn foreign language well, then smattering and poor knowledge of it is useless.

As noted by Brown (2000), starting point of the modern theory of learner-centered teaching is the idea of an individual as a purpose and factor of the educational process; the main objective of an educator is to create the conditions necessary for harmonious development of student's personality in the learning process.

The concept of 'condition' as a philosophical category expresses the ratio of the subject to the surrounding phenomena, without which it can't exist. The subject as something conditional and the condition as relatively external to the subject diversity of the objective world ... The condition makes up the environment in which the latter (subjects) occur, exist and develop (Philosophical Dictionary, 2001).

As for conditions of the foreign language teaching organization in our country, it is necessary to note their 'artificial' nature, that is, foreign language learning is a specially organized, guided process in isolation from the language environment.

The fact that target language in the natural environment is both a means of communication and understanding between people in everyday life reinforces the importance of a pragmatic process of language acquisition and motivates people's foreign language communication activity. However, foreign language in isolated conditions is only an instructional medium which mainly exists as a means of communication in the process of in-class activities.

However, according to Galskova (2008) mastering of foreign language outside the country of the target language and without immediate contact with native speakers will be efficient, if it gains all the possible characteristics of the natural process of language acquisition, and as close as possible approaches with its main parameters to the conditions of facilitated language acquisition in the natural language environment.

According to such scholars as Crystal (2003), Rubin (2007), White (2006) and Lin (2002), frustration and inefficiency in foreign language learning are directly related to teaching methodology. However, according to our survey, the reasons for this dissatisfaction are more profound. They are caused by poor elaboration of the theory of foreign language teaching as an integration of knowledge in the field of linguistics, psychology and pedagogy. Different methods of teaching foreign languages, arising from time to time, often have some success among the creators only and don't have theoretical basis and scientific-methodological generalizations for the common use in foreign language teaching at the higher educational institution (Matukhin & Gorkaltseva, 2015).

Thus, this paper, contributing to the process of the English language teaching individualization, will identify psychological and pedagogical conditions of the learner-centeredness, analyze current state of the foreign language teaching to engineering students, perform the processing and analysis of the survey, propose crucial methods to enhance foreign language teaching based on the learner-centered approach.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Theoretical study

There aren't sufficiently developed systemic issues, targets, and didactic support of the foreign language teaching in educational theory at the moment. However, study of the foreign language teaching problems can be approached based on the modern theory of learning which is an essential part of humanistic approaches to learning of foreign languages: cultural, learner-centered, individual creativity, etc. (Obskov, et al., 2015).

One of the features of foreign language teaching is integration of professional and educational activities of teachers with learning and cognitive activities of students. The main functions of a teacher in this process are organization and management of foreign language activities and the objective of a student is mastery of different types of speech activity in the foreign language, continuous development of skills and vocabulary that is mastering 'foreign language experience' (Frei, 2007).

The basis of successful activity as a teacher and a student, according to Yakimanskaya (2004), may be only subject-subject relationship. The greatest progress in the foreign language teaching is achieved due to a large number of training hours for the graduates who major in linguistics. Even in the closed society of the Soviet education, system provided a high level of linguistic, social and cultural training for the graduates majoring in

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