POLYMODOAL COMMUNICATIVE GESTALT SITUATIONS AS A TOOL FOR INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT A NON-LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITY

Research article

Liakhova Y.G.1,*

1 ORCID: 0000-0002-0729-4414;
1 Russian University of Transport, Moscow, Russian Federation

* Corresponding author (liakhova[at]mail.ru)

Abstract

These papers aim to study how to improve the effectiveness of teaching a foreign language at a non-linguistic university by constructing a learning gestalt situation. The author highlights the features of the communicative gestalt. Based on the analysis of scientific data, it is concluded that teachers should take into account eight modalities of perception of their students when organizing educational gestalt situations. The author comes to the conclusion that this approach helps to overcome the language barrier and makes learning more effective when teaching a foreign language at a non-linguistic university. An example of organizing training based on a communicative gestalt situation is given, and recommendations are suggested on the lexical and grammatical minimum for such training.

Keywords: communicative gestalt situation, teaching a foreign language oral speech, non-linguistic university, polimodality of perception, intelligent transport systems of Russia.

Introduction

Recently, specialists in the field of transport linguistic education and technology of teaching foreign languages in the context of training innovative personnel have been paying great attention to issues related to the implementation of intelligent systems into the process of teaching foreign languages at a non-linguistic university [9]. The transition to digitalization of education, including with the help of intelligent systems, is largely associated with the risks of a decrease in the cognitive activity of students, with the formation of the effect of clip thinking, etc. In this regard, there is an increasing interest in various psychological and linguistic approaches to teaching a foreign language of a specialty, designed to compensate for possible risks of digitalization and increase the efficiency of mastering a foreign language at a non-linguistic university.

Teaching a foreign language at a university is considered to be a process of meeting two pictures of the world that are the student's picture of the world and the picture of the world reflected in the foreign language being studied. The picture of the world is the initial global image of the world, representing the essential properties of the world in the understanding of the subject and being the result of all spiritual activity of a person [7]. The communicative competence of a university student in the native language has already been formed, which gives the student the opportunity to use the native language as the main means of understanding the world and forming the student's picture of the world. At the same time, both the cognitive and linguistic levels of the student's picture of the world turn out to be nationally specific and under the constant influence of the system of the native language [5], [7], [10].

The picture of the world reflected in the foreign language being studied, in turn, both at the cognitive and linguistic levels, reflects the laws of the foreign language system and the culture of the people speaking this language [8]. A foreign language teacher at a university is called upon to organize training in such a way that the student understands the national and cultural specificity of the foreign language being studied, comparing the features of this system with the system of the native language and culture. In this case, it becomes possible to neutralize the interference of the two language systems and ensure the
successful integration of the foreign language picture of the world of the foreign language being studied into the student’s picture of the world [7].

**Research methods and principles**

An individual’s picture of the world is formed and expanded through the assimilation of new knowledge. This process begins with the work of the senses, which collect information and transmit it to the brain for processing at the neurophysiological level. At this stage, there is a tendency towards generalization, which triggers a categorization mechanism, leading to certain packaging of received signals and to finding a place for new information in the individual’s categorization system [5]. Let’s consider the most common forms of packaging new information using psychological mechanisms for constructing a picture of the world, which are concepts and gestalts. Information that can be presented as a set of features and connections between them, for example, a grammatical category, is packaged in the individual’s worldview in the form of a corresponding concept. Information that is perceived as a whole is correlated with existing gestalts or is involved in the construction of a new gestalt [3], [4].

According to research by linguists, gestalt is a cognitive representation of a linguistic phenomenon, manifested in the picture of the world in the form of an operational unit of its perception, that is, a means of perceiving, understanding and assimilating linguistic units by the individual’s consciousness in a real communication situation. The structure of gestalt consists of linguistic and speech levels. The linguistic level of gestalt is represented by lexical, morphological and syntactic information, which, combined with information coming from other organs of perception, is manifested at the level of speech in the form of a body of semantic, pragmatic and communicative knowledge [6], [8]. The gestalt concept realizes the universal ability of the languages being studied, which is expressed in the ability to activate the process of forming ideas and thoughts. The most typical example of gestalt is a communicative situation. A communicative situation is a set of linguistic and extralinguistic factors against the background of which the speech activity of participants occurs. The communicative gestalt, which manifests itself in the communicative gestalt situation and controls it, should be considered a certain mental structure which is a holistic image of the linguistic consciousness of the communicant. It stores knowledge about past stereotypical communicative situations, conditions for successful or unsuccessful communication, rules of communication, along with the emotions that the communicator experienced [2]. All the signals from the senses that the communicator received in communicative situations fit into the same picture of communication. All together forms communicative behavior typical for a given individual.

Statements based on communicative gestalt perform the basic functions of communication, namely: - determination of the speech behavior of all participants in communication; - determination of motor behavior of communication participants; - determination of the mental activity of all participants in communication; - definition of other types of modal activity; - formation of a verbal-activity structure of communication, taking into account both one’s own behavior and the behavior of other participants in communication [2].

In addition, particular functions of the communicative gestalt are highlighted: - communication partners are offered a certain model of behavior; - impact on the motivation of partners (inducement to abandon one or another speech strategy and tactics; encouragement to perform non-verbal actions; encouragement for further efforts, etc.); - the dynamics of understanding are corrected; - the topic of the statement is determined; - the terms of communication are determined; - impact on the manner of speech behavior, - participants are encouraged to provide information of a certain nature; - focus on certain fragments of the message; - impact on the form of communication and the duration of the message; - spatial conditions of communication change; - communication can be cancelled or rescheduled; - psychological formation of the participants’ readiness for the subsequent message; - psychological aggression and defense, etc. [2]. The successful organization of a communicative situation when teaching a foreign language leads to an increase in the effectiveness of developing oral speech skills in a foreign language. In order to be assimilated without distortion, the communicative situation must be organized and worked out, taking into account all the features of the communicative gestalt. In this case, the mechanisms for constructing the individual’s picture of the world will perceive this new knowledge as a gestalt, which will organically fit into the individual’s general system of knowledge.

In order to increase the effectiveness of teaching oral speech in a foreign language, the author of this article considers the communicative situation as a communicative gestalt situation, thereby emphasizing the need to plan and organize such situations as a single whole. Speaking about the integrity of the communicative situation, the author means the need to take into account all factors related to the multimodality of perception of the participants in communication. Taking into account the current research on this topic, it is considered that the communicative gestalt situation is a structure that unites eight modalities: visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, haptic (active touch), kinesthetic (perception of motor activity), visceral (perception of internal organs, systemic feelings, physical pain), energy perception [1]. All these eight modalities provide the content of the communicative gestalt situation. Participants in communication in their native language in the process of communication use the knowledge acquired by these eight systems on a subconscious level, only when necessary, consciously describing their state during communication. At the same time, all senses provide the necessary background, the frame within which communication takes place. Imagine that you are discussing an important business issue, closing your eyes and ears, without experiencing any feelings. Without the background information we are used to, decision-making will become impossible.

When communicating in a foreign language, the less information is perceived by the people, the worse they speak the foreign language. This leads to significant difficulties in oral speech, since the human brain is always looking for its usual support in the form of signals from the senses, in the absence of which cognitive failure is inevitable. In a situation of communication in a foreign language, these signals are often interpreted by us in our native language, which leads to semantic and linguistic interference or the inability to continue communication. The author believes it is the unpreparedness of communicants for the adequate response of all signalling systems and for the correct interpretation of their signals in a foreign language that leads to the so-called language barrier, when communication in a foreign language becomes impossible.
Main results

The organization of a communicative gestalt situation should be based on preliminary work to bring into the sphere of consciousness of students all possible subconscious reactions of multimodality. Regardless of the topic of communication itself, it is first advisable to master the lexical and grammatical topics of describing the eight signalling systems of the human body.

**Visual modality of perception.** It is necessary to be able to describe the colors, shape, size and position in space of objects, and people’s faces. As exercises, you can use descriptions of pictures on a given topic. When a person explains something, you need to ask him or her to imagine and describe his or her explanations as visual pictures. Present visual pictures when reading or listening to texts.

**Auditory modality of perception.** Students should be able to describe the sounds of nature; sounds that a person can make; lexical units to describe silence; manner of speaking (loud, unclear, eloquent, etc.). The following exercises can be used as exercises for training such lexical units: listen to a story and reproduce it in the form of a brief retelling; talk about a person by listening to the voice; one student imitates various sounds, and the other guesses what those sounds are; listening with repetition of each phrase, first silently, and then out loud, etc.

**Taste modality of perception.** It is necessary to master the description of the tastes of basic food products and the most popular dishes. Exercises to be done: tell what is most important for a person in food; how a person reacts to spicy or very bland food; ask the questions: Does a person enjoy tasting delicious, unusual, exotic food? Does the water taste different? Can any food preferences bring people together? etc.

**Olfactory modality of perception.** The students should give the description of natural sources of odor and artificial flavors, the smells of nature, people, cities. Exercises to be done: tell about the smells of flowers; reaction to the smell of acetone, gasoline; describe the smells of cooking food; determine by smell what is burning; describe the smells in the classroom, odors to which there is a negative reaction, what smells people prefer.

**Active touch.** The students describe and simultaneously experience tactile sensations: objects made of various materials (wood, rubber, metal) and with different textures — ribbed, rough, fluffy. Exercises to be done: wrap yourself in a blanket and describe your feelings; give a massage and describe your feelings; apply cream to your hands with a description of the texture of the cream; brush over the body with a soft brush. Prepare the description of bulk materials which are cereals, beans, buckwheat, etc.; description of different temperatures and how the body reacts to them. Describe how a person feels when he puts his foot in the water or walks barefoot on the ground, asphalt, sand, or grass.

**Perception of motor activity.** It includes description of the external organs of the human body, various movements and muscle sensations of a person. Exercises to be done: describe how a person walks; how people dance; how you can actively relax or exercise; why is it hard to sit for a long time; active and sedentary lifestyle; one student makes a movement and the other describes it; one student commands in a foreign language, and the other performs these movements in a pantomime; why a person writes down information to remember.

**Visceral modality of perception.** Description of the internal organs of a person, his emotions, sensations and feelings. Exercises to be done: tell how a person reacts to pain, hunger, thirst, etc.; describe suffering or euphoria; give the description of situations and events in which a person begins to experience certain feelings and emotions; what feelings and emotions can hinder or help a person; what sights, sounds, tastes can evoke certain emotions and why.

**Perception of your own energy and the energy of the environment.** Students master the description of the environment, a particular atmosphere and feelings of their own energy and the energy of other people. Exercises to be done: describe the energy of the apartment into which the person enters; describe a favorable or unfavorable atmosphere of an institution or home; describe the impression of the energy of your relative or friend; describe all previous modalities of sensations such as the atmosphere of a room or the energy of a person.

A list of basic sensory concepts that need to be learned by students at level A1 in order to increase the effectiveness of developing speaking skills in English in communicative gestalt situations:

- мягкий-колючий (soft-prickly)
- гладкий-щершавый (smooth-rough)
- пушистый-колючий (fluffy-prickly)
- сухой-мокрый (dry-wet)
- гибкий-жесткий (flexible-rigid)
- теплый-холодный (warm-cold)
- легкий-тяжелый (light-heavy)
- пустой-полный (empty-full)
- большой-маленький (big-small)
- высокий-низкий (high-low)
- приятный запах-неприятный запах (pleasant (nice) smell – unpleasant (bad) smell)

A list of basic sensory concepts that need to be mastered by students at level A2 in order to increase the effectiveness of developing speaking skills in English in gestalt communicative situations:

- длинный-короткий (long-short)
- толстый-тонкий (thick-thin)
- широкий-узкий (wide-narrow)
- глубокий-мелкий (deep-shallow)
- громкий-тихий (loud-quiet)
- яркий-бледный (bright-pale)
- кислый-сладкий (sweet-sour)
- сладкий-соленый (sweet-salty)
- яркий-бледный (bright-pale)
цвета — основные цвета (white, black, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, dark blue, violet)
gеометрические фигуры — треугольник, круг, квадрат, ромб, овал, куб, шар, пирамида (a triangle, a circle, a square, a rhombus, an oval, a cube, a ball, a pyramid)

List of basic lexical and grammatical topics that need to be mastered by students at level B1 in order to increase the effectiveness of developing speaking skills in English in communicative gestalt situations: comparative degrees of adjectives; shades of colors; dimensions, volume, shape and number of geometric shapes; smells and tastes; sounds, including musical instruments; compound nominal predicate (verbs: seem, look, sound, smell, feel, etc.).

Organization of foreign language teaching using a communicative gestalt situation. The goal is to form in students a verbal response to awareness and description in English of the operation of their signalling systems during communication, so that they can associate their sensations with what is happening during communication. For every phrase that their interlocutor or they themselves utter, it is necessary to track and describe the reaction of the senses, emotions, sensations. These reactions should be described aloud in English.

Stage 1. Organization of mastering vocabulary and grammar for describing eight systems of modality of perception.
Stage 2. Organization of mastering lexical and grammatical material on the topic of communication.
Stage 3. Organization of a communicative gestalt situation: activation of the body’s signalling systems and description of the state of communicants. Participants describe their own emotions, what they see, hear, feel and question their interlocutors. - during the communication, the teacher periodically asks the communicants questions about how they interpret their reactions to the questions and answers of their interlocutors. - the process of the communication between communicants on a given topic and their answers to the teacher’s questions. - when the communication is finished, participants describe their emotions during the communication, what they saw, heard, what emotions they experienced and how their emotions changed after the communication.

Conclusion
The communicative gestalt situation has its own characteristics, the consideration of which when teaching a foreign language leads to an increase in the efficiency of mastering lexical and grammatical material. These features primarily include polimodality of perception, which forms the very situation of communication in the form of a holistic gestalt. When communicating in one’s native language, these processes occur naturally at the subconscious level of the communicants’ picture of the world. When learning to communicate in a foreign language, all significant signals from the perception systems must be displayed in the window of consciousness, so that students can describe by the means of a foreign language what and how they feel, hear, see, what emotions they experience in relation to other participants, etc. Only in this case does it become possible to organize the communicative situation as a holistic gestalt and, thus, ensure the assimilation of the foreign language new material as a single whole system without distortion. Such an approach to teaching foreign languages allows teachers to use all the resources of students’ psychological mechanisms and activate their cognitive abilities, which is especially important during the digitalization of education.

Список литературы / References

Conflict of Interest
None declared.

Review
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