

SVETIMŲJŲ KALBŲ STUDIJOS/ STUDIES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Social and Cultural Aspects in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

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Abstract. This article discusses information on foreign language learning and teaching (strategies, principles, pedagogy and objectives) from documents of the EU and Republican bodies, decision making on it by informed and responsible professionals, research data on the alignment of an academic course with the students' needs in foreign language teaching, reliable references and pedagogy, which amount to culture in execution in foreign language learning and teaching. The research aspect encompasses analysis of selected documents, which is followed by the author's insights and generalizations, and data on classroom research into the development of an academic course, in which the teacher's aspirations are trimmed and the students' inclinations are satisfied. Analysis of the documents (their volume, the number of languages learnt and taught in the EU, the age of young learners) features as a quantitative aspect in foreign language education, while research into the development of an academic course and near-native proficiency as a measure of competence in foreign language learning feature as a qualitative aspect in EFL. The role of social attitudes and of individual culture are highlighted in the treatment of errors and in the selection of language standard in EFL, which are minor questions and feature as premises rather than as objectives in the discussion. The article promotes a harmony and moderation in aligning administrative and pedagogic requirements with educational goals and information, technological achievements and perfected instruction.

Key words: *foreign language learning and teaching, lifelong learning, multilingualism, plurilingualism, early language learning, near-native proficiency, memory and context in foreign language competence.*

Culture-bound aspirations and problems in education

The paper addresses the following questions:

- 1) information on foreign language teaching and professionalism in decision making,
- 2) pedagogy and culture in successful foreign language learning/teaching, and
- 3) research data on the development of an academic course in EFL.*

Defining culture as a mode of life and being in a locally and ethnically identifiable community (cf.: Hall, 1959), on the one hand, as well as a mode of behaviour and a discipline of thinking (cf.: Post, 1992), on the other, I would tend to believe that the culture of a small community indicates concern with tendencies in major cultures and with authorities, an inclination to meet challenges with the utmost endeavour and often timidity in offering reasonable solutions and in making adaptations. Hence is the concern with the EU documents. Challenges to foreign language teachers in Lithuania have been enormous in recent years, especially minding the country's adequate placement in the EU, the information they have to process and apply and the

problems they have to solve. The problems have been many and some of them universal. They generalize as problems of culture and involve numbers of factors:

- 1) the focus on technologies has obscured the balance between the input and intake and progress in school, distorted the functions of the teacher and the lesson and has neglected the uses of the book;
- 2) the emphasis on novelty has helped forget the wisdom of the authors who published when people wrote less and thought more;
- 3) care for the opinion, rights and comfort of the student has distorted the very idea of learning.

Participants in relevant online discussions plainly refer to the age of discipline in schools by way of a resolution.

Preconditions in the discussion

A resolution, if sought, is likely to depend on the culture of the people involved and on their desire to have the best result without bypassing mutual pleasure. This aspect of the resolution places the problems between the teachers and administrators. There is much that is missing in top-down concern in foreign language teaching in Lithuania. A desire voiced by the Director of the Vilnius Lycée to have the support of the system in instilling discipline in school means that destructive contemporary culture is on the increase and that the culture and efforts of individual teachers are not effective in the circumstances. The joint

* I should like to make a grateful acknowledgment of the help given by Miss Vilma Bačkūtė, of the British Council, Lithuania, and Mr Jonas Morkus, of the European Commission for Translation, Lithuania, to me in providing a ready information on the access to the documents of the EC, which were essential in writing the present article.

efforts of the teachers and those of the disciplined administration are required to stimulate positive developments in education. The system should proclaim respective values and put them into practice instead of the customary speculation on democratic liberties and rights.

The resolution would also depend on the breadth of vision of those called to make decisions. Therefore it ultimately matters how we understand the exemplary, the superior and how we treat discipline.

Another aspect of the resolution places the problems in the classroom and challenges the teacher. In considering a way of the restoration of the culture of learning, it matters how well we know to what achievement we aspire, what we can do and what guidance we accept with full awareness of the intended meaning. Hence is the attempt to analyse documents of the EU in the first instance. I should like to discuss the quantitative aspect of the sensitive questions in language teaching, the qualitative aspect in EFL and the professional aspect in decision making. The former aspects feature in the design of this article, while the latter is integrated all along in it.

The quantitative aspect in foreign language learning and teaching concerns the volume of advisory and regulating documents (EU policies, documents of the EC and those of the Ministry of Education and Science of Lithuania as well as methodological guides for teachers adapted and issued by teachers themselves). My references here and further have basically been to the documents of the EU. It would make no sense to discuss how the avalanche of documents should be managed. First, it would make more sense to say that the original rather than the adapted documents should be studied unless adaptation is considerable and specifically designed for Lithuanian schools. Second, it might be useful to remember the uses of joint efforts: most documents of the EC (cf. documents on Language Teaching and Learning and others) are not contradictory. They rather reiterate core concepts throughout so that familiarisation with them may be selective, and teachers may gain from group study.

The question of quantity in language learning and teaching has more sensitive aspects. I mean the questions of how many languages should be taught and learnt, at what ages and by what means. Judging by what one hears in schools and at different meetings, there is some confusion on these questions, appearing obviously from a lack of familiarity with the documents or from inattention.

The EU policy document contains a clear and general statement on this account:

“The EU ambitious goal is to enable citizens to be fluent in two languages in addition to their mother tongue.” (EU Policy Document)

This statement appears rephrased further in the same document and in documents of the European Commission (EC) but there is no statement that two languages are to be started simultaneously, (which would overrule pedagogy and psychology), or that two languages are to be learned at an early age. On the contrary, the EU and EC documents support the idea of two languages as a person's gain in life.

But to learn two foreign languages and to gain from them, the person has to be able to use them in his prime and therefore he has to start early. There are further statements on this account in the documents of the EC. Apart from general statements of the advantages of the person who has learnt two foreign languages¹, the Council of Europe and the European Commission emphasise the integrity of the stages of learning, lifelong learning and the provision of the teaching of languages to adults, where appropriate.

There are other concepts of quantitative character in the documents of the Council of Europe and of the European Commission related to language learning. They are multilingualism and plurilingualism. Multilingualism basically appears in the concept ‘multilingual comprehension’, which “is about being able to understand a language if you speak one that is similar” (EC Language Teaching – Multilingualism) and about the uses of this ability for the teacher or adviser and policy maker. Plurilingualism is about being able to verbalise civil behaviour, to find a way around, to satisfy the basic needs and to show other elementary-level skills in communication in a foreign language in case of need. None of these feature as objectives in education. Both multilingualism and plurilingualism are used as concepts in language learning rather than teaching and, supposedly, apply to individual learning. This is useful to know in language teaching and promotes linguistic diversity which is encouraged in the EU.

One other sensitive point in the quantitative aspect in language education is the age at which languages are learnt. To my knowledge, the concept of “very young learners” is used as a contextual factor rather than as a target in the documents of the EC. In a description of pedagogical principles in early language learning, this concept appears in the title of the document:

“The main pedagogical principles underlying the teaching of languages to very young learners” (EC Language Teaching – ELL),

but ‘very young learners’ here are children of the kindergarten age rather than those of a nursery school². Finally, there is an appealing use of the concept of young learners and foreign language learning in the documents of the European Commission:

“Introducing foreign languages at a young age, preferably before the age of 12, can result in faster language learning, improved mother tongue literary skills, and better performance in other areas.” (EC Language Learning)

¹ “By encouraging students to learn other languages from an early age, language teachers are helping young Europeans to become more open to other cultures, to move freely and across borders and to compete effectively in the global economy.” (EC Language Teaching)

² Documents which record the Italian project of English for 5-8 year olds (<www.hocus-lotus.edu>) with reference to 2-3 year olds have a misprint or an error. First, as indicated, this project is for 5-8 year olds. Second, it is about the age of two that linguistic structures begin forming in the child's mother tongue. Up to two years of age, the child does not differentiate between structures and lexis. This means that his conceptual awareness is not developed. An introduction of a foreign language instruction at such an early age would be ruinous to the child's intellectual and verbal development. So young a child can learn a foreign language only *naturally*, i.e. from a parent (or a nurse) who is a native speaker of the foreign language. (cf.: Halliday, 1975, pp.67-68)

This statement clarifies both the aspect of quantity and, partly, that of quality in foreign language learning in the documents of the EC. It is true, the European Commissioner's for Multilingualism, Leonard Orban's speech at the Conference on Early Language learning in 2009 was quite radical in the sense that it proclaimed the necessity and usefulness of early language learning and recommended to start at about the age of 3 (Orban, 2009). However, facts and figures about the standards in different European countries show that the age of children at which they are taught foreign languages vary: children begin learning foreign languages in kindergarten in Poland, Ireland and Latvia. But in Estonia, they begin at the age of 5, in the Czech Republic at 6, in Greece at 8, while, in the UK, the educators "offer every pupil from the age 7–11 the opportunity to study foreign languages" (Early LL in Europe...). There is obviously no compulsory prescription what to do and when, and this is right. There is all evidence to believe that, even though children can be clever and articulate even at the age of 2 in their mother tongue, they are *not mature enough* to start learning a foreign language *through instruction* between 3–5 years of age.

The introduction of foreign languages to children before the age of 12 is absolutely the minimum. The ability to learn other foreign languages faster, in fact, develops considerably if a child learns at least one foreign language before the age of puberty (cf.: Stone, 1961). The above statements are also in line with the traditional practice in Lithuanian schools. If a child starts learning a foreign language at the age of 7, i.e. in a second class, he can credibly learn to use survival level foreign language and read it before he is 12. He can become an average user of a foreign language before the age of puberty. This would be a desirable achievement in accord with psychology and pedagogy, with the goals and sentiments of the community and with those of the EU.

When such a young child masters a foreign language at the elementary level, he can be encouraged to teach his parents or neighbours for them to learn survival level foreign language. The adults' aim may be plurilingualism, which means minimum knowledge, but this opportunity to teach would be an encouragement for the child. He can really be useful, and this can surely add up to his motivation in language learning. Though this aspect of the exploitation of a child to promote plurilingualism is not mentioned in the documents of the EC, strategic objectives³, pedagogical principles in the teaching of languages to young learners, requirements to anchor "education and training... in a broader strategy" and to work towards European cooperation "in education and training... (while) making effective use of the open method of coordination (OMC) and developing synergies between the different education and training sectors" (EU Policy Document) outlined in the policy of the EU merit appreciation. Such a broader

strategy may give a wider perspective to the pupils and students of the Republic, to the efforts of the teachers and to the economic effect of the schools.

A contribution of leading professionals and professional bodies to keeping the system of education up to date

The achievement of concrete goals in education within the outlined strategies is considerably a cultural issue. Success in education depends on the individual teacher's culture no less than on the culture of the administering bodies. Representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, of the Seimas Committee on Education and Science, Rectors of the Universities, cultural activists and active citizens in the Lithuanian Republic contribute almost equally to the productive functioning of the education system⁴. The 2008 Conference in the Seimas focused on the reform in education. The former Minister of education and Science called for the liberation of the human potential, a reduction of social division and for the economical reform in the system of education while involving the maximum number of the intellectuals of the republic. Professor Rimantas Vaitkus, Prorector of the University of Vilnius, explained the concept of quality in education in accord with the provisions of the documents of the EU. Mr Domarkas, Chairman of the Seimas Committee of Education and Science, amplified on the question of quality and of the rights of the Republic to implement the standards that are acceptable for the Republic and the schools. Professor Algirdas Gaižutis, Rector of the Pedagogical University, criticised the reform for a lack of a hypothesis, of a project and financing. They all called for the ensuring of accessibility, quality and effectiveness of the system of education in the reform.

Professional bodies such as The Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian Republic, Society of the Classicists (Societas Classica), The Lithuanian Congress of Culture, The Lithuanian Association of Language Teachers (LALT) and other organizations, as well as individual scholars contribute variously to keep educationists informed and enlightened. The classicist Doctor Naglis Kardelis has drawn attention to the classical culture of Greece and Rome, its fundamental heritage even in Lithuanian culture, to the ideas of the state and challenges in politics as reflected in the works of Plato that have drawn interest even from members of the Seimas of the Lithuanian Republic. Dr Krescencijus Stoškus's interpretation of the idea of sustainable development has merited attention from

³ Strategic objectives include the following: 1) lifelong learning and mobility, 2) improving quality and efficiency in education and training, 3) promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship and 4) enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training (EU Policy Document).

⁴ Conferences, meetings and discussion in the Seimas of the Lithuanian Republic (11 June 2008, 22 February 2010), in the Discussions Club of the Scientists' Hall of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (11 February 2009), in the Municipality of Vilnius (18 December 2008) and in the Academy of Music and Theatrical Arts (4 March 2009) have been held regularly. Questions of the Law of Science and Learning, of the Strategy of the development of culture in the Republic, of the policy of culture and its priorities and of the sustainable development and conservation have been discussed. The Lithuanian Congress of Culture, which has held conferences in the Seimas (22 February 2010), in the Academy of Sciences (6 October 2008, 5 October 2009) and in the Academy of Music and Theatrical Arts (4 March 2009) on the questions of language, culture and conservation has passed decisions and delivered them to the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Chairman of the Seimas and to the Ministers of Culture, Science and Education. Their response has been adequate and favourable.

the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Seimas. Professor Juozas Anatanvičius, Prorektor of the Academy of Music and Theatrical Arts, enlightened cultural activists, educationists and politicians on the fundamentals in musical education, the value of the heritage of the musical schools and of the detrimental role of the student's financial pack in developing musical education. Mrs Eglė Šleinotienė summarized on success in language teaching while emphasizing the effect of the dream related to language learning and literature and the need to cooperate for the teachers of all languages. She put forward the idea of investment in learning and of cultural sharing in intercultural communication. Finally, a contribution of Miss Vilma Bačkiūtė and Mr Jonas Morkus while interpreting the provisions of the documents of the EU to teachers deserves a grateful mentioning.

The qualitative aspect in foreign language teaching and learning concerns the quality of academic courses which, with technologies on the rise, is a shrinking sphere and therefore have to be perfect. Another qualitative component in foreign language teaching/learning is an achievement of competence which ideally measures as near-native proficiency in EFL.

Data on the development and innovation of an academic course

The teacher's individual culture⁵ and his role, although very important (EC Language Teaching – Multilingualism), is not a decisive factor at present. Liberal attitude to youth cultures and the popularization of the question of rights have given unruly classrooms. Violent pupils who are reluctant to learn have been called a contemporary problem of Europe (cf.: Bamber, 2009). Although this educationist has said that elitist education, which pursues the ideal of Standard English, is no problem, teaching today is no simple matter. The teacher cannot be sure what level is high enough for the school and what level really satisfies the students. The technical execution is also a variable. I have done classroom research with university undergraduates on two aspects in teaching English grammar – the quality of information provided in the course and its technical presentation. I have used *The Cambridge Grammar of English* (Carter, McCarthy, 2007) as the basic resource material. It provides an up-to-date description of English and very rich material primarily from spoken English. I had to select carefully while working on lecture notes. As some of the illustrative examples given in this Grammar are too long to be quoted in a lecture, I supplemented the material of my course with apt and interesting examples from my research material, mainly from realistic fiction. I also made references to and borrowed examples from teaching grammars (Thomson and Martinet, 1997; Crystal, 1993; Alexander, 1992; Quirk, et al., 1982). I thought I had improved the course considerably. I noticed, though, that the students would listen to my quotations and keep mentally stripping them down or discarding my examples until they traced the very core grammatical patterns of a particular kind in the most

primitive examples⁶. I would respond while reiterating the core patterns and they used to react smiling. It appeared, I had to conclude, that the interesting quotations I used to attract the students and embellish the material had been superfluous for my students. It was easier and more important for them to memorise the simplest examples and they instinctively kept making their choice simple.

The technical presentation of the material at the lesson was similarly received. On the surface, the students were happy and relaxed and participated while listening attentively. However, the Power Point presentation exhausted its influence the moment it was finished. When I asked the students to answer ten questions of a usual standardized test at the end of the class checking how well they memorised the basic information, they protested. They said they could not answer the usual ten questions referring them to the content of the lecture because they had memorised nothing. They said they would prefer familiarizing themselves with a paper version of the content of the lecture in advance to Power Point presentation. Only then would they manage test questions at the end of the class.

The evidence described indicates several things. First, human memory does not advance as fast as technology even in young minds. Second, the law which says that we understand what we know and memorise easier those things for which we have a ready reference is confirmed here. The students found the basic grammatical patterns in the simplest examples somewhat familiar to them and therefore clearest and easiest to memorise. Therefore they favoured the simplest illustrative material. The more elaborate and attractive examples were instinctively put aside or discarded. Third, technological equipment, such as a Power Point presentation of the material can be attractive and stimulating while it accompanies the speaker and when it entails no comprehension test, but it does not increase

⁶ While explaining the simplest patterns of verb complementation, for example, I used to give the following examples:

Verb + direct object (Monotransitive complementation): *I took the last piece of bread. Mary touched the salt cellar but drew her hand back. This charming answer quite disarmed me... If you said it and meant it, do you mean? ...and how deeply I felt my social loneliness. I'm just wandering what to say to you.*

Examples like these were a bit hazy to my students and too many. They were too intense while following to memorise them. I started simplifying and finished off with:

I bought a pen. I borrowed a book.

and stopped. Even that simple examples should not be too many. The process recurred with another pattern of verb complementation:

Verb + indirect object + direct object (Ditransitive complementation): *Mary told me the story of her broken marriage. I showed you his photo, remember? Surely you can spare me a few minutes.*

Taken as a segment of illustrations, these examples do not seem too long or difficult to remember, to an outsider. In a third lecture of the course, however, when other illustrative examples are numerous, the students start shaking their heads at these quotations when they appear to illustrate one of four other patterns of verb complementation. When I responded while simplifying them into the following:

I gave him my email address. I showed him the way. I couldn't find my handkerchief, so he lent me his.

and limited the number of the examples to two or three, they smiled and could rehearse all the four patterns of verb complementation with some ease.

⁵ Cf.: "Culture is the best possible education plus sensitive and discriminating appreciation of excellence" (Post, 1992).

the potential of human memory. Memorising requires focusing and allowing some time, a possibility to consult the text several times, to repeat and commit the facts to memory with this support. A Power Point presentation removes all these possibilities of repeated reference and the students, who were interested and desired to show good results, voiced their awareness that they had not achieved the result required in a memory test. Technology, obviously, should be employed with measure, if learning matters.

With this evidence in mind, I myself became critical of the requirements to give ample information from recent research to the students, to give a lot of interesting material to them and to apply unconditionally the newest technological equipment in one's lectures, which had been set by some administrators in some Lithuanian universities. I concluded that it was essential to match the input with the needs of the students and to harmonise the application of the equipment with the goals set by the teacher. Otherwise, the efforts, the information and the technology together with the time may be wasted on the students⁷. Finally, my conclusion was that new technological developments often become victimized by primitive popularization (cf. the excitement over tape recorders in the foreign language classroom some forty years ago) and that the requirements of some administrators are sometimes supported by their friends' interests rather than by the knowledge of science and by the needs of the students or by those of the school and the country.

Thinking of the key competences⁸ highlighted in the EU Policy Document and of the challenge "to ensure a fully functioning knowledge triangle of education-research-innovation" (EU Policy Document), it is hard to draw conclusions from the research just described. The readiest and reasonable conclusion would be that courses designed for classroom instruction should be developed through several stages, if learning and learning to learn matter. They may begin with a rough outline, continue through research into the perception and reaction of the audience and finish off with an accomplished design of the course. The theoretical background should be drawn from recent publications with reference to recent research, but illustrative material may not be the freshest and the most elaborate. It is important that the illustrative material suited the character of the course: the material is to be more voluminous and elaborate but contextualized in a course of stylistics, while it should be very carefully selected and less voluminous in a course of grammar. The development of a course may take several years with the same course being taught to different groups of students. It seems nevertheless that the best result may be an issue of an academic course which has an up-to-date technical

execution but which is also supplied with summary notes to the lectures that exploit research sources and textbooks. This many-sided design and development of an academic course is likely to have satisfactory results which may be a quality criterion in education.

Competence in a foreign language as a measure of quality

A quality criterion in foreign language learning is often associated with skills as competence. The student may achieve a certain level of competence in a higher school but it has to be kept up and further improved as part of what is known as lifelong learning. But competence in a foreign language is actually a near-native proficiency. It is the language based on immediate references which replace the native's linguistic instinct (Drazdauskiene, 2009). Quality criteria are stringent at this level of knowledge. The achievement of near-native proficiency in foreign language learning requires particular attendance to the student's efforts. This can be done through the support to his memory potential and through the provision of relevant contexts in learning until he develops a system in his memory store and until he becomes an independent language learner. This is the first stage in lifelong learning.

It has been known that competence as near-native proficiency in foreign language learning basically resorts to memory and context (Drazdauskiene, 2007, 2009). Context features both in the learning of vocabulary and grammar while learning is best when vocabulary and grammar are kept in a unity. But memory potential can be enhanced with a help rather than a test on it in listening comprehension and reading, in speaking and in writing. Much has been known of human memory (cf.: Sutton, 2010; Bruskiņa, 2009), although no digital device has been produced to rival it. It has been known that what is *unnecessary in foreign language learning* is a pressure for an answer when in difficulty, too many guessing tasks which include erroneous guesses, too difficult tasks, rote learning and general excessive pressure, for memory works best when relaxed. However, emphasis on correct forms and choices is not a superfluous pressure on memory. Language matter consists of micro elements and care for them supports the development of memory potential. A neglect of minor points for the sake of pleasure in language learning is a false step on the part of the teacher. With too liberal teachers, the student loses in terms of language and in terms of culture. If continuous, this can have ruinous effects for years. First, I mean a popular practice to ignore errors for the sake of fluency. Second, I mean the Internet communication which takes still greater liberties with errors. However, one has only to observe how sensitive native speakers are to errors even in the Internet communication and how they support one another in correcting them⁹ to know that correctness in EFL matters even today to the cultured. Rob Dean said and illustrated

⁷ I must admit that there is one other possible issue: the students may have desired a paper version of the text of the lecture to accompany the Power Point presentation for them to be able to consult it any time and crib during the test rather than strain themselves in an attempt to select and memorise the basic information. But even so they were learning.

⁸ Reviewing challenges in the achievement of strategic objectives, the EU Policy Document defines key competences, "such as digital competence, learning to learn, a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness" (EU Policy Document).

⁹ I mean an exchange of emails between David A. Hill and Chris Lima on 17 March 2010 with reference to an online discussion of Literature, Media and Cultural Studies Special Interest Group, in which David warned Chris of a few "typos" in her announcement to the Special Interest Group, which lasted only several minutes and in which David immediately approved of the corrections done, in fact, earlier than requested.

about culture in language at the 3rd international Conference of the LATL in 2009 (Dean, 2009) to convince the audience that native Anglo-Saxon British (and even American and Australian) speakers are sensitive to the standard of pronunciation and grammar as they are to the use of their names (Greenbaum, Whitcut, 1989, p.466).

Quality has been a by-word in recent years among the students and administrators in education. Quality in teaching is the result of the teacher's competence, intellectual discipline and responsibility. This builds up to quality in education in general and to the image of the school. This lengthy talk on quality has been relevant because quality is "the responsibility of the member States for their education systems" (EU Policy Document). This has also been the information from the Commissar on Multilingualism from the EC, Mr Leonard Orban, who spoke of it in the Vilnius Book Fair in 2008, has been known to the Rectors of the Lithuanian universities and to other administrators. But the concept of quality in education and training recurs regularly in all documents of the European Commission. If teachers, who are the most influential figures in education, accepted this responsibility, the content of syllabuses would acquire the wanted stability (cf. the teaching of Standard or international English: Farrell and Martin, 2009; Tsehelska, 2006; Drazdauskiene, 2009a) beyond doubt and would gain from innovation. There is a difference between systemic improvements, which are the result of culture, dedicated study and practice, and sporadic patching which is done for exterior attraction. The practice of teaching "politically correct language" or that of sticking to a stereotyped standard is part of the content and quality in language teaching. But our attitude to our language (cf. footnote 9) and to ourselves is the most obvious measure of culture.

Conclusion

The questions discussed in this article are both relevant to society merely by virtue of engaging people, their interest and activity. They are questions of culture in so much as they demand professional knowledge and responsibility, which make part of professional culture. But most of all, the questions discussed here refer directly or indirectly to informed reasoning, as well as to the discipline of behaviour and to intellectual discipline. They ultimately generalise as social and cultural aspects in a limited field of foreign language learning and teaching. In addition to the major observations made in this article, it is worth mentioning that foreign language learning thrives when fostered. Foreign language learning is a priority over foreign language teaching and so fostering it has a very favourable influence. This is part of pedagogical principles in foreign language teaching. It is a pity that Lithuanian as a foreign language is not always favoured with the like attitude.

The questions discussed in this article imply that authorities we respect matter in the teacher's culture and in our verbal culture. It is worthwhile remembering that reliable references do not date as fast as generations change (cf.: Thornbury, 2010, 2009, 2009a, 2006) or as youth cultures evolve. Even when the modern classroom

requires a resort to the strategy of the modern warfare, in which negotiations and information precede the action, reliable sources and the culture of the native speakers may well guide the teacher irrespective of their years. Every foreigner is more likely to speak with his own accent than to show a model pronunciation. Therefore there is no necessity to make allowances for faulty pronunciation, verbal errors or misconduct of the foreigner. These will be there of their own. It is only when we care, observe some standards and show at least the teacher's accuracy that we can hope for a tolerable result in our students who are functioning in the world in which "language standards are falling".

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Sociokultūriniai užsienio kalbų mokymo(si) aspektai

Santrauka

Straipsnio problemą sudaro technikos ir naujovių srautų gausa, degradavę mokymosi polinkiai, netgi nuvertėjusi knyga ir mokytojo autoritetas. Įvairūs užsienio kalbų mokymo(si) aspektai yra apžvelgiami tradicinių Respublikos nuostatų ir Europos Komisijos dokumentų kontekste, manant, kad kultūra kyla ne tik iš gyvenimo būdo, bet ir iš žmogaus mąstymo, jo intelektualinės disciplinos ir elgesio. Tai ypač ryšku mokytojo veikloje ir atsispindi mokyklos tikslų formavime, mokymo procese ir bendravime. Tai svarbu ir mėginant sukurti sąlygas mokymosi atgimimui. Straipsnyje svarstomi kiekybiniai ir kokybiniai užsienio kalbų mokymo(si) aspektai, skiriant dėmesį studijuojamų kalbų skaičiui ir mokinių amžiui, paliečiant jautrų klausimą dėl užsienio kalbos mokymo ankstyvame amžiuje. Kokybės klausimai minimi aptariant dabar populiarių tarptautinio standarto anglų kalbos mokymą, manant, kad studento kalba visada natūraliai suprastėja, todėl nėra reikalo ją niveliuoti mokymo procese. Gana plačiai apibrėžiama populiarinama ES daugiakalbiškumo sąvoka, daromas skirtumas tarp institucinio kalbų mokymo, kai siekiama apibrėžto lygmens žinių ir savarankiško pasimokymo, kai mokyti tokius vyresnius gali ir užsienio kalbos pramokę pradinukai. Svarbus klausimas straipsnyje yra ir pedagoginio tyrinėjimo duomenimis pagrįstas svarstymas apie daugiapusį mokomųjų kursų rengimą, jų techninį atlikimą ir harmonizuotą apipavidalinimą, kai ne visos naujausios techninės priemonės ir medžiagos gauna yra būtinos. Atkreipiamas dėmesys į tai, kad mokinių reikia remti užsienio kalbų studijose, kad lingvistinė pagalba nėra ydinga. Mokiniui reikėtų lengvinti atminties darbą, įvairinti prieinamus kontekstus, bet ignoruoti neatidumą sklandžios kalbos vardan nepatariama. Mokytojo kultūra reikalauja tam tikros mokymosi disciplinos, ji yra vertingas veiksnys. Mokinio pastangos ir kalbos įgūdžiai turėtų būti puoselėjami ir gimtąja, ir užsienio kalba. Paminėti svarbūs daugelio sričių klausimai užsienio kalbų mokyme(si) apibendrinami kaip bendrosios kultūros sudedamosios dalys. Patariama, kad kultūros požiūriu yra labai svarbus harmonizuotas švietimo klausimų ir mokomųjų dalykų problemų sprendimas.

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