Peculiarities of Setting Aims in EFL Classes

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Abstract
There are a lot of important components of teaching English as a foreign language, one of which is setting aim in EFL classes. This article discusses main theoretical review of the notion of setting aims as an inseparable part of an English lesson at present time. Moreover, certain practical ideas about setting aims in practical English lessons have been discussed in this research.

Key words: EFL, Structural properties, objective, immediate lesson goal, upbringing and communication, comprehension, practical aim, educational aim; cultural aim

Teaching foreign languages, namely the English language has become one of the most essential and important issues in our country recent years. State government pays attention at language teaching very much. Enhancing the quality of the lesson is one of the main priorities of the present time foreign language methodology. Developing the structural properties of the lesson mainly depends on the type of the lesson, its aims and objectives, content, etc.

Aims are the first and most important consideration in any teaching. Teaching process deals with transference of learners from one stage to the other one, the task of which is that to take learners from the initial point to a certain level where the learners acquire certain knowledge, skills and ability.

Hence the teacher should know exactly what his pupils are expected to achieve in learning his subject, what changes he can bring about in his pupils at the end of the course, at the end of the year, term, month, week, and each particular lesson, i. e., they should know the aims and objectives of foreign language teaching in schools.

First of all, the terms “aim” and “objectives” should be distinguished from each other. In the investigation devoted to teaching methodology of foreign languages R. Roberts tries to define these terms as follows: “The term ‘aims’ be reserved for long-term goals such as provide the justification or reason for teaching second languages ... the term ‘objectives’ be used only for short-term goals (immediate lesson goal), such as may reasonably be achieved in a classroom lesson or sequence of lessons.” In this article we will deal with long-term goals, that is, with the aims of foreign language teaching which dictate the teacher’s approach to this subject. [1]

According to U. Hoshimov and I. Yokubov: “The main aim of teaching foreign language is to use the foreign language in practice. The aim of teaching foreign language is to form a secondary school education, upbringing and communication, and to apply the formed language skills in different purposes. By communicative or practical aim we understand teaching pupils to receive others’ opinion in oral and written form comprehensively and teaching pupils how to explain their opinion in written and spoken form. Taking all these into account and improving this opinion, we can define this as receiving and sending information by new device – a language in oral, written and comprehensive form.”[2]

The changes the teacher must bring about in his pupils may be threefold: practical — pupils acquire habits, and skills in using a foreign language; educational — they develop their mental abilities and intelligence in the process of learning he foreign language; cultural — pupils extend their knowledge of the world in which they live. Therefore there are three aims, at least, which should be achieved in foreign language teaching: practical, educational, and cultural.

Practical aims deals with acquiring a foreign language for the same purpose as the native language which means using the language as a means of communication. In this connection we want to cite from G. Perren, who puts forward the following ideas: “Whatever a new language is being taught as a curricular extra ... or as an essential medium for education it will be learned by the young child only if it obviously makes possible some purposeful activity other than language learning. If it does not do this, attempts to teach it may be largely a waste of time.” [3]
In modern society language is used in two ways: directly or orally, and indirectly or in written form. So, we distinguish spoken language and written language. Direct communication implies a speaker and a hearer, indirect communication implies a writer and a reader. Hence the practical aims in teaching a foreign language are the following four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

When adopting the practical aims for teaching English as a foreign language the following factors are frequently taken into consideration: the economic and political conditions of society, the requirements of the state; the general goals of secondary school education; the nature of the subject, and the conditions for instruction.

At the present time, however, foreign language teaching in school does not quite meet the demands of our society; better results are desirable. In this connection we should welcome O.I. Moskalskaya’s proposal to investigate the aims of foreign language teaching to be able to establish what can really be achieved under school conditions.[4]

Here, it should be mentioned that the achievement of practical aims in foreign language teaching, namely the English language makes possible the achievement of educational and cultural aims.

The next type of aim of teaching English as a foreign language is educational aims which play an essential role in enhancing the quality of the practical lesson at present time. Learning a foreign language has great educational value. Through a new language we can gain an insight into the way in which words express thoughts, and so achieve greater clarity and precision in our own communications. Even at the beginning stages of learning a foreign language, specifically in our case the English language teachers try to teach their pupils to understand meaning of words, which can be helpful in the comparison of the two language with which the learner is dealing with. When learning a foreign language the pupil understands better how language functions and this brings them to a greater awareness of the functioning of his own language that means the comparison of mother tongue and target language can make the learning process of foreign language easier.

As language is connected with thinking, through foreign language study we can develop the pupil’s intellect. Teaching a foreign language helps the teacher to develop their pupils’ voluntary and involuntary memory, his imaginative abilities, will power and especially critical thinking. While learning a new language the learners learn the new words by heart which helps them to memorize words, idioms, sentence patterns, structures, and keep them in long-term memory ready to be used whenever they need them in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teaching the English language as a foreign language under conditions when this is the only foreign language environment, is practically impossible without relying on the pupils’ thinking and imagination.

Teaching a foreign language, especially the English language contributes to the learners’ linguistic education, the latter extends the pupils’ knowledge of vocabulary, phonetic, graphic, structural and semantic aspects of language as it is through contrastive analysis of language phenomena.

The last type of the aim which can be set according to most methodologists who work in the field of teaching English as a foreign language is called cultural aims. By learning a foreign language, specifically the English language the learners get acquainted with different features of the people whose language the pupils are studying such as their everyday life, history, customs and traditions by means of visual material such as post cards with the views of towns, and famous people; video - materials, and reading authentic material which deal with the countries where the target language is spoken. General educational and cultural growth by increasing their knowledge about foreign countries, and by acquainting them with progressive traditions of the people whose language they study. At present time this type of aim of teaching English as a foreign language plays the most essential role as vast majority of linguists and teachers dealing with teaching English as a foreign language repeatedly state “teach not only the language, but also the culture of the people whose language is being taught”.

Summarizing all above mentioned, it is possible to draw a conclusion that practical, educational and cultural aims are closely connected with each other, form an inseparable unity and they complete one another during English lessons.

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