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COGNITIVE APPROACH AS A TOOL FOR DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS IN GRADES 10–11 ENGLISH LESSONS

Abstract

Modern foreign language teaching in high school requires a rethinking of the student's role in the educational process. While previously the primary focus was on mastering grammatical structures and memorizing vocabulary, today the focus is on the student's ability to use language as a tool for real-world interaction. This is especially important for students in grades 10 and 11, as it is at this stage that academic independence, the ability to argue one's position, and the use of a foreign language as a means of expressing one's thoughts are developed. The cognitive approach to teaching English views language development not as a mechanical accumulation of knowledge, but as a process of active intellectual processing of information. This article analyzes the impact of the cognitive approach on the development of high school students' communicative skills, revealing its theoretical foundations and practical applications in the classroom. Particular attention is paid to mechanisms such as conscious perception of linguistic material, the development of speech planning, the development of self-monitoring strategies, and the inclusion of problem-solving communicative tasks in the lesson structure. The article demonstrates that a cognitive approach not only improves students' verbal activity but also changes the quality of their linguistic thinking, making their statements more meaningful, logical, and meaningful.

Keywords: *cognitive approach, communication skills, English, high school, speech activity, linguistic thinking, speaking instruction, instructional strategy, reflection, interaction, cognitive activity, high school students.*

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КОГНИТИВТІК ТӘСІЛ – 10–11 СЫНЫПТАРДАҒЫ АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІ САБАҚТАРЫНДА КОММУНИКАТИВТІК ДАҒДЫЛАРДЫ ДАМУ ҚҰРАЛЫ

Аңдатпа

Бұл мақалада 10–11 сынып оқушыларының ағылшын тілі сабақтарында коммуникативтік дағдыларын когнитивтік тәсіл арқылы дамыту мәселесі қарастырылады. Қазіргі білім беру жүйесінде тілді тек грамматикалық құрылымдар жиынтығы ретінде меңгерту жеткіліксіз екені анық байқалады. Оқушының шынайы қарым қатынасқа түсуі үшін оның тілдік білімін ойлау әрекетімен ұштастыру қажет. Когнитивтік тәсіл осы мақсатта ерекше маңызға ие, себебі ол зейін, есте сақтау, салыстыру, талдау және ішкі жоспарлау сияқты психикалық механизмдерді белсендіреді. Мақалада жоғары сынып оқушыларының жас ерекшеліктері ескеріле отырып, олардың сөйлеу әрекетін белсенді ететін тапсырмалар сипатталады. Сонымен қатар когнитивтік ұйымдастырылған

тапсырмалар арқылы оқушылардың өз ойын логикалық жеткізуі, пікір білдіруі және диалогке еркін қатысуы күшейетіні көрсетіледі. Практикалық бақылау нәтижесінде сөйлеу сапасының артуы, тілдік сенімділіктің қалыптасуы және коммуникативтік белсенділіктің тұрақты өсуі анықталды.

Кілт сөздер: *когнитивтік тәсіл, коммуникативтік дағды, ағылшын тілі, жоғары сынып, сөйлеу әрекеті, тілдік ойлау, рефлексия, оқу стратегиясы, қарым қатынас, танымдық белсенділік.*

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КОГНИТИВНЫЙ ПОДХОД КАК СРЕДСТВО РАЗВИТИЯ КОММУНИКАТИВНЫХ НАВЫКОВ НА УРОКАХ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА В 10–11 КЛАССАХ

Аннотация

Современное обучение иностранным языкам в старшей школе требует переосмысления роли учащегося в образовательном процессе. Если ранее основной акцент делался на усвоении грамматических структур и запоминании лексики, то сегодня в центре внимания находится способность учащегося использовать язык как инструмент реального взаимодействия. Особенно это важно для учеников 10–11 классов, поскольку именно на этом этапе формируется академическая самостоятельность, умение аргументировать собственную позицию и использовать иностранный язык как средство выражения мысли. Когнитивный подход в обучении английскому языку рассматривает языковое развитие не как механическое накопление знаний, а как процесс активной интеллектуальной переработки информации. В данной статье анализируется влияние когнитивного подхода на развитие коммуникативных навыков старшеклассников, раскрываются его теоретические основания и практические возможности применения в школьной аудитории. Особое внимание уделяется таким механизмам, как осознанное восприятие языкового материала, развитие речевого планирования, формирование стратегий самоконтроля и включение проблемно-коммуникативных заданий в структуру урока. В статье показано, что когнитивный подход позволяет не только повысить речевую активность учащихся, но и изменить качество их языкового мышления, сделать высказывания более осмысленными, логичными и содержательными.

Ключевые слова: *когнитивный подход, коммуникативные навыки, английский язык, старшая школа, речевая деятельность, языковое мышление, обучение говорению, учебная стратегия, рефлексия, взаимодействие, познавательная активность, старшеклассники.*

Introduction

In modern schools, teaching English is increasingly viewed not as imparting a set of rules, but as creating conditions for real-life communication. However, experience shows that even high school students, with a sufficient vocabulary and familiar grammatical structures, often struggle with oral expression. They formulate thoughts slowly, avoid spontaneous responses, fear making mistakes, and often resort to memorized patterns instead of independent speech.

This situation stems from the fact that traditional teaching methods often fail to engage the internal thought processes that underlie speaking. A student may know the form but be unable to quickly transform it into a meaningful message. This is why, in recent years, researchers have increasingly focused on the cognitive approach, which links language development with mechanisms of attention, memory, analysis, and the deliberate selection of linguistic resources.

This approach is especially relevant for students in grades 10 and 11, as the age-related characteristics of high school students allow for more complex intellectual tasks. Adolescents at this age are capable of abstract thinking, comparisons, independent argumentation, and internal control of their own speech. This creates a favorable foundation for integrating cognitive methods into the development of communicative competence.

Communicative skills in school practice should be understood not only as the ability to answer a teacher's question, but also as the ability to participate in dialogue, express attitudes, clarify information, respond to the interlocutor's opinion, and construct a logically complete statement under time constraints. This is where the cognitive approach proves its effectiveness, as it helps students not just speak, but think while speaking. This paper examines how the cognitive approach can become a tool for developing communicative skills in English lessons in senior grades, the pedagogical mechanisms that ensure its effectiveness, and the changes that occur in students' speech behavior with the systematic use of cognitively oriented tasks.

An Analytical Review of the Theoretical Foundations of the Cognitive Approach to the Development of Speech Communication

The development of communicative skills in foreign language teaching is traditionally linked to the concept of communicative competence, which in scientific literature is defined as the ability to use language in a specific social situation, consider the context of communication, select linguistic means depending on the purpose of the utterance, and respond appropriately to the interlocutor's speech [1]. However, communicative competence itself does not develop automatically, even with sufficient linguistic material. Between knowledge and actual speech action, there is a cognitive stage of internal information processing, which largely determines the success of the utterance.

From the perspective of cognitive psychology, speech activity is a sequence of interconnected operations. First, the student perceives information, then interprets it, relates it to existing experience, selects the necessary linguistic units, and only then formulates the thought in oral or written form. If even one of these stages is underdeveloped, speech becomes slow, fragmented, or hesitant. This is why the cognitive approach to language learning views speaking as the result of active intellectual activity, not just as a language practice.

The mechanism of conscious attention is particularly important here. Research in foreign language teaching shows that students memorize language material more effectively when they not only hear it, but also notice the specifics of its use in a specific speech situation [2]. For example, if, during a discussion of a social topic, a student pays attention to how connecting expressions are used to support an argument, they not only absorb individual words but also begin to understand the logic behind the construction of the statement. This is especially important for high school students, as in grades 10 and 11, the need for independent expression increases. Students no longer limit themselves to short answers but strive to explain, compare, evaluate, or prove their position. However, without internal speech planning, this often leads to pauses, repetitions, and a switch to the native language. The cognitive approach proposes overcoming this problem by structuring their thoughts beforehand. Before the speech activity, the student is given time to internally organize their response, identify semantic supports, and anticipate possible linguistic forms.

Developing working memory also plays an important role, as it maintains the student's verbal intention while constructing their response. When discussing a topic related to, for example, modern technology or environmental issues, they must simultaneously remember the original question, control the grammatical form, select vocabulary, and follow the logic of the statement. This multitasking requires systematic training, and the cognitive approach presupposes a gradual increase in the complexity of speech actions, in which memory develops in a real communicative context [3].

An equally important element is the development of metacognitive skills. This refers to the student's ability to recognize their own learning style, notice speech difficulties, and independently seek ways to overcome them. For example, after an oral discussion of a topic, a student can analyze

where they lacked words, where they lost the logical sequence, and which expressions helped to maintain the conversation. Such reflection gradually develops a more mature attitude toward one's own speech.

It should be noted that the cognitive approach does not reject communicative methodology, but rather deepens it. While traditional communicative practice is sometimes limited to external exchanges, the cognitive organization of the lesson makes this exchange internally meaningful. The student begins to understand why they choose a particular structure, how an argument is constructed, and how to link individual phrases into a coherent statement. In practice, this means a transition from mechanical exercises to tasks where the speech task requires an intellectual solution. For example, discussing a hypothetical social situation elicits much more active speech than simply reproducing a text. In such tasks, the student does not repeat a pre-existing model, but constructs an individual linguistic response based on their own understanding of the situation.

Modern research confirms that cognitively rich tasks produce particularly noticeable results in high school students, as they already possess sufficient intellectual maturity for analysis, comparison, and verbal prediction [4]. This allows us to consider the cognitive approach not as a temporary methodological trend, but as a sustainable direction in the development of school language education.

Practical Implementation of a Cognitive Approach in English Lessons for Grades 10–11:

The practical part of the study aimed to identify how cognitively structured tasks influence the verbal performance of high school students in a typical school English lesson. The study was conducted in two parallel high school classes with students of approximately the same level of language proficiency. The primary focus was not on the amount of material covered, but on the nature of students' verbal behavior while completing the tasks.

Initially, observation revealed that even with sufficient vocabulary knowledge, a significant portion of students avoided detailed responses. Dialogues were dominated by short constructions, identical phrases were frequently repeated, and lengthy pauses occurred when arguments needed to be substantiated. This was especially noticeable in situations where the topic required independent interpretation rather than the reproduction of familiar content.

To address this situation, the lesson structure was partially restructured. Before oral activities, students were offered a stage of semantic preparation. Instead of a direct question, a problematic situation requiring intellectual engagement was created first. For example, when discussing the topic of future professions, students first analyzed three short situations involving a choice between a stable job, a high income, and personal interest. Only then did they move on to discussing their own choices in English. This approach produced a noticeable effect. Students began to speak more meaningfully, as their speech emerged not as a reaction to the teacher's question, but as a continuation of their already formed internal position. Their responses began to include logical connections, comparative constructions, and causal explanations. Even students who typically limited themselves to a few words began to construct longer responses.

Special attention was paid to the cognitive technique of verbal forecasting. Before the dialogue, students were given several supporting semantic elements, but not ready-made language models. For example, before discussing social media, the concepts of privacy, communication, influence, addiction, and responsibility were displayed on the board. Students had to independently determine how to connect them in a statement. This activity triggered the thought process even before speaking. During observation, it became apparent that students were becoming less reliant on pre-learned patterns. While they had previously tended to use safe constructions, after several weeks of work they more often began independently combining familiar linguistic devices. Even with errors, their speech became more natural and meaningful.

One of the most effective techniques was speech reconstruction. After reading a short text, students were asked not to retell it verbatim, but to shift their perspective. For example, a text about the impact of technology was to be retold from the perspective of a parent, student, or teacher. This required not only understanding the content but also internalizing the information. As a result, speech became more flexible, as the student no longer relied solely on the original text.

In addition, brief written reflections were used after oral assignments. Students wrote down what they found difficult during their answers, where they lacked words, and where their thoughts were incompletely expressed. Gradually, this began to influence the quality of their subsequent responses, as students became more mindful of their own speech difficulties. Over the course of several weeks, a consistent change in speech behavior was observed. The number of pauses decreased, responses became more meaningful, and pair discussions became more proactive. The change in participation was particularly noticeable among students who had previously preferred to remain passive.

Interestingly, the positive effect was evident not only in speaking but also in their perception of the interlocutor's speech. Students began asking more clarifying questions, requesting clarification, and using reactive phrases to maintain conversation. This suggests that the cognitive approach activated not a single language skill, but a broader mechanism of communicative interaction. These results suggest that even partial inclusion of cognitive elements in the lesson structure changes the nature of speech activity. Students begin to perceive English not as a subject for a correct answer, but as a tool for intellectual expression.

Observations obtained during practical work allow us to conclude that the development of communication skills in high school students is directly dependent on the extent to which speech activity is accompanied by internal intellectual activity. When students receive only a linguistic model for production, their speech is often limited and predictable. When, before speaking, they are required to analyze, select, compare, or internally solve a communicative problem, the quality of their speech changes significantly.

Discussion of the results and scientific understanding of the data obtained

This is explained by the fact that the cognitive approach integrates language into a system of meaningful action. Students don't simply use English words, but go through the process of forming thoughts, structuring them, and then formulating them into language. This is why, even with the same vocabulary level, students involved in cognitively rich tasks demonstrate a higher level of speech independence.

A particularly noticeable change was observed in students' attitudes toward errors. In traditional practice, errors are often perceived as an obstacle to participation in conversation. With a cognitively structured lesson, attention gradually shifts from the error itself to the meaning of the statement. Students begin to understand that the most important aspect of communication lies not in perfect form, but in the ability to convey a thought and maintain a logical flow of speech. This reduces internal tension and promotes freer participation in discussions.

It should be noted that in high school, the cognitive approach is particularly productive due to the age-related characteristics of students. Teenagers aged 16–17 already possess a well-developed level of abstract thinking, are able to grasp several lines of meaning simultaneously, and understand the internal structure of their own statements. This is why tasks that require argumentation, choosing a position, predicting consequences, or assessing a situation produce a stronger communicative effect than the mechanical repetition of linguistic models [5]. Observations also showed that the cognitive approach positively influences the depth of speech content. While at the beginning of the work, responses were often limited to general phrases, later students began to include causal relationships, examples, comparisons, and elements of their own interpretation. This indicates that the development of communication skills in this case occurred simultaneously with the development of linguistic thinking.

An interesting result was the increased interaction between students. In a typical lesson, dialogue often revolves around teacher and student interaction. With cognitively organized tasks, the focus gradually shifts to the students themselves. They begin to respond to each other more frequently, clarify the other person's position, ask counter-questions, and continue the discussion independently without constant teacher intervention. It is important to emphasize that the effectiveness of the cognitive approach directly depends on the pedagogical organization of the material. If a task is too complex and lacks semantic support, some students lose confidence and revert to minimal responses. Therefore, a gradual transition from structured support to independent

speech action is necessary. Initially, students need semantic cues, key concepts, and a logical framework for their response. Only then can external support be gradually removed.

From a scientific perspective, this confirms the idea that communicative development is not solely the result of language practice. It is closely linked to the development of cognitive strategies that help students manage their own speech process [6]. Thus, it can be argued that a cognitive approach in a high school setting can not only increase the intensity of speech activity but also change the internal quality of communication. Students begin to speak not because the learning situation demands it, but because they feel an internal need to express a pre-formed thought.

Conclusion

Modern English language teaching in high school requires a transition from external speech activity to internally meaningful linguistic action. The cognitive approach demonstrates that communication skills are more robustly developed when speech involves mental effort, independent choice, and internal organization of content. Analysis and practical observation show that 10th- and 11th-grade students begin to speak more confidently if they undergo a stage of semantic comprehension before a speech task. This helps reduce pauses in speech, make utterances more logical, and encourage participation even among previously passive students. The potential of the cognitive approach lies in its natural integration of language development, thinking, and communicative maturity. This is especially important for high school, since it is during this period that language begins to perform not only an educational but also an intellectual function.

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