LEARNING AUTONOMY AND ITS FORMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

НАВЧАЛЬНА АВТОНОМІЯ ТА ЇЇ ФОРМУВАННЯ У КОНТЕКСТІ НАВЧАННЯ МОВИ

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The article is devoted to one of the urgent issues of modern pedagogy – learning autonomy and its formation in the context of language teaching. The article reveals the essence of learning autonomy and emphasises that it implies a certain level of students' educational and cognitive competence, which is defined as the ability to effectively manage learning activities independently. At the same time, such strategies as goal setting, planning of learning activities and reflective self-assessment are essential. The prerequisites for the effectiveness of the development of learning autonomy are analysed.

In the light of the person-centred paradigm, which is the basis of the concept of lifelong learning, autonomy is considered as a characteristic of a person's individual position and is closely related to the individualization of the learning process through the development of students' creative activity. Various forms of individualization of the educational process are proposed, such as differentiation of the level of difficulty of tasks for students with different backgrounds, differentiation of the content of educational materials depending on the interests of students, differentiation of task performance modes taking into account individual characteristics.

It is noted that learning autonomy assumes that students have the skills of self-control, i.e. the skills to independently determine the purpose of learning, organise it and structure the learning process itself, adequately evaluate the results obtained using various learning strategies.

Autonomous learning activities allow for the fullest development of the personality qualities and learning and cognitive skills necessary for modern specialists, increase motivation and establish conditions for self-realisation in creative search. Autonomous activity makes the learning process individualised, personality-oriented, i.e. aimed at developing creative abilities and self-realisation in the learning process of each individual. In the context of the modern concept of professional education, which sets the task for higher education to teach students to acquire and replenish their knowledge and skills independently, the organisation of autonomous learning activities is one of the effective measures to improve the learning process.

Key words: learning autonomy, lifelong learning, reflection, individualization, differentiation, independence, creativity, responsibility.

Стаття присвячена одній з актуальних проблем сучасної педагогіки – навчальної автономії та її формуванню у контексті навчання мови. Розкривається суть навчальної автономії та підкреслюється, що вона передбачає певний рівень навчально-пізнавальної компетенції студентів, що визначається як здатність до ефективного самостійного управління навчальною діяльністю. При цьому істотне значення мають такі стратегії, як ставлення мети, планування навчальної діяльності та рефлексивна самооцінка. Проаналізовано передумови ефективності розвитку навчальної автономії.

У світлі особистісно-орієнтованої парадигми, що лежить в основі концепції безперервної освіти, автономія розглядається як характеристика індивідуальної позиції людини і тісно пов'язана з індивідуалізацією процесу навчання через розвиток творчої активності студентів. Пропонуються різні форми індивідуалізації навчального процесу, такі як диференціація рівня складності завдань для студентів з різною підготовкою, диференціація змісту навчальних матеріалів залежно від інтересів студентів, диференціація режимів виконання завдань з урахуванням індивідуальних особливостей.

Зазначається, що навчальна автономія передбачає володіння студентами навичками самоконтролю, тобто навичками самостійно визначати мету навчання, організовувати його і структурувати сам процес навчання, адекватно оцінювати здобуті результати, використовуючи різноманітні стратегії навчання.

Автономна навчальна діяльність дозволяє найбільш повно розвивати необхідні сучасним фахівцям якості особистості і навчально-пізнавальні уміння, підвищувати рівень мотивації і створювати умови для самореалізації у творчому пошуку. Автономна діяльність дозволяє зробити процес навчання індивідуалізованим, особистісно-орієнтованим, тобто спрямованим на розвиток творчих здібностей і на самореалізацію в навчальному процесі кожної конкретної особистості. У контексті сучасної концепції професійної освіти, що ставить перед вищою школою завдання навчити студентів самостійно одержувати і поповнювати свої знання й уміння, організація автономної навчальної діяльності є одним з ефективних заходів вдосконалення навчального процесу.

Ключові слова: навчальна автономія, навчання протягом життя, рефлексія, індивідуалізація, диференціація, самостійність, творчість, відповідальність.

Problem statement. The modern development of higher education is characterised by two main trends: continuity as a conceptual basis for education policy and quality improvement through the activation of students' personal potential. The personality-oriented educational paradigm is the basis of the continuing education concept, and serves as a prerequisite for the development of such an important quality of future specialists as the ability to conduct independent educational activities to master special knowledge and skills.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Nowadays, a lot of attention is given to studying different aspects of learning autonomy. It is necessary to distinguish between the concepts of autonomous work as a form of organising the educational process and autonomy as an ability of students.

Autonomous work is understood as a self-directed learning activity carried out by a student without direct guidance from a teacher. This implies, on the one hand, a certain psychological attitude of students to the learning process, namely: an active position in relation to their education, a desire and readiness to take responsibility for its outcome, rather than relying on the experience of the teacher, and an aspiration to acquire knowledge and skills independently. Autonomous work also implies a students' creative approach to this activity, the search for independent ways to overcome emerging difficulties, independent solution of certain educational tasks, rather than passive following of established stereotypes, the ambition to create an individual educational product. Autonomous work requires a high level of student motivation and personal interest in learning outcomes [1, p. 78].

Independent work assumes a certain level of student learning and cognitive competence. Educational and cognitive competence is defined as the ability and readiness for conscious and effective independent management of learning activities – from goal setting to self-control and self-evaluation of its results, which is based on the fundamental component – mastery of strategies and methods of learning activities, general and special in relation to a particular subject. In the process of independent work, the following strategies are essential: goal setting, i.e. the ability to set learning goals and objectives independently, correlating them with one's individual needs; planning of learning activities, i.e. the ability to determine ways to achieve these goals and objectives; reflective self-assessment. These features determine the students' creative approach to learning, orientation towards finding independent solutions. Self-relient students should be able to choose learning materials and methods of working with them in accordance with the tasks set [2, p. 97].

Special attention is paid to the students' ability to carry out a reflective self-assessment of their learning activities, i.e. to correlate the result obtained with the task set and evaluate it in terms of its success in mastering the subject being studied. Learning and cognitive competence involves the ability to adjust one's learning activities if the chosen strategy does not lead to the desired result. On the basis of a reflective self-assessment of strategies and means of educational activities chosen by students, they make appropriate adjustments to them and learn from their mistakes for the future. In essence, this ability means constant critical reflection on one's educational experience, the search for more effective ways and methods of working with the material being studied [3, p.56].

Thus, the students' autonomous learning activity implies the maximum degree of their involvement in the learning process. The student is no longer a passive object of pedagogical influence, but acts as an active subject of the educational process, a full partner who, along with the teacher, participates in the organisation of this process and is responsible for its outcome.

Autonomous learning activity is actually a productive process, as opposed to reproductive, creative activity aimed at creating one's own educational product. In such activities, the students are in a state of increased creative activity, continuously searching for ways and means of solving the educational tasks facing them, relying on reflective analysis, finding their own solution to the problems that arise. Students learn to manage their learning activities independently, and as a result, they develop their own individual style of work, a set of individual means and ways to improve their level of knowledge, skills and abilities. Thus, in the conditions of autonomous learning activities, the formation of an autonomous creative personality of a future specialist takes place [4, p. 85].

Autonomy is a certain property of a personality that characterises his/her subjective qualities. It is considered as a characteristic of the individual position of a person and is a background for independence, independence in choosing motives, goals and activities, and the formation of an individual style of behaviour. In the context of educational activity, student autonomy can be defined as the ability to take responsibility for the process and result of this activity.

The aim of the article is to consider the essence of the concept of autonomy and analyse the main strategies and techniques of autonomous learning activities that will contribute to the effectiveness of educational process through its individualization.

Presenting the main research. The problem of autonomy and autonomous learning activities is closely related to the problem of individualization of the learning process.

Earlier, individualization was viewed exclusively as the adaptation of the educational process to a particular student, assuming his or her individual characteristics. However, as rightly noted by a number of researchers [5, p. 47], this did not imply the need to teach students to learn, to improve their level of mastery of the subject on their own. All responsibility for the process and outcome of learning rested with the teacher, who had to find an individual approach to each student and organise their independent work so that it met the individual characteristics of the latter. The student remained a passive object of pedagogical influence.

In the light of the person-centred paradigm underlying the concept of lifelong learning, researchers' views on what goals individualization should pursue have changed. Nowadays, it is seen not only as a teacher's consideration of students' individual characteristics, interests, needs, level of training, etc., but also in terms of developing students' independent creative activity. The task of individualization of learning in a modern university

involves the development of the intellectual culture of the individual, and the individual independent learning activity of the students should be aimed at developing their ability to think creatively, at developing the need for constant replenishment of knowledge, self-education, and at acquiring skills of creative independent work.

It seems that the formation of autonomous learning activities creates favourable conditions for the individualization of the educational process as a whole, and autonomous learning activities can be considered as a form of individualization of student's independent work.

It should be noted that in the modern theory of learning, various forms of individualization of the learning process can be distinguished. These include differentiation of learning at different levels, for example, differentiation of the level of difficulty of tasks for students with different backgrounds or experiencing different difficulties in the learning process; differentiation of the content of educational materials depending on the individual interests of students; differentiation of task performance modes regarding individual characteristics, etc. As a form of individualization, one can distinguish between independent work of students organised by the teacher, considering their individual characteristics and needs, and independent work with materials specially developed for this purpose. In the first case, the initiator and organiser of independent work is the teacher, while in the second case, the role of the organising factor is played by the teaching aids that regulate all the student's learning activities. Another form of individualization is the individual work of a student with a teacher, for example, additional classes or individual consultations [6, p. 68].

Each of these forms of individualization is effective in its own way. In the context of autonomous learning activities, a student takes on the role of a teacher and draws up an individual work programme. Many people see autonomous learning activities, which involve students taking responsibility for the process of acquiring knowledge and making decisions related to its implementation, as a form that allows students to develop the personality traits and learning and cognitive skills necessary for a modern specialist to the fullest extent possible, increase their motivation and create conditions for self-realisation in creative search. Autonomous learning activities allow to make the learning process individualised, personality-oriented, i.e. aimed at the development of creative abilities and self-actualization in the learning process of each individual [7, p. 131].

All of the above confirms the position that the autonomous learning activity of a university student can be considered as a form of individualization of the educational process in general, and independent work on the material studied, in particular.

In the context of autonomous learning activities, individualisation can, in our opinion, be viewed in a new aspect: as the implementation of independent learning activities by students in an individual mode, in accordance with individual needs, learning objectives, specific training and style of learning activities.

In our opinion, today's students are generally characterised by a conscious and responsible attitude to learning and a high level of motivation. At the same time, they have a very different level of initial training, different abilities, individual psychological characteristics, and difficulties they face in the learning process. This causes a differentiated approach to students. However, with the restrictions imposed by the programme, the teacher is not always able to take into account the individual needs of each student. The requirements of an individual approach should not conflict with the requirements of the mandatory programme and the teacher's capabilities. The conditions for individual work are fully developed in the process of the student's autonomous learning activities.

Let's take a brief look at the student's autonomous learning activity in mastering foreign language listening as an example.

Listening is one of the most difficult types of language communication to master, especially when working on it independently. Traditionally, the limited amount of time allocated to work on this aspect in the classroom and the lack of communication with native speakers leads to the fact that the level of students' competence in listening is insufficient. All this requires a significant amount of independent additional listening practice.

On the other hand, this type of language communication is the most accessible for organising independent work on it. As a rule, most modern students nowadays have individual technical means. They can create their own audio library at home, a kind of home laboratory for working on listening in order to improve their listening skills on their own.

In the context of autonomous learning activities, students work on foreign language listening individually. They independently determine their needs based on the difficulties they encounter in the process of listening to a foreign language and their own preferences regarding the listening material. The students set themselves learning objectives according to the analysis of their needs and thus outline ways to overcome these difficulties. In relation to the task at hand and following individual interests, the students can select appropriate listening materials: authentic or adapted to their level of training. In the process of practising with the material, the students learn various means and methods of training with audio texts, which allow them to develop the skills necessary for successful listening, such as the ability to navigate the text by keywords, the ability to make

contextual guesses, the ability to judge the content of the text by the surrounding visual cues, for example, the features of the communication situation, the tone, the mood of the speaker and the other. Moreover, these methods and means of educational activities are chosen by the students from their personal practice of learning, drawn from the experience of communication with the teacher, from their group mates, and also discovered by themselves in the course of independent creative work. In the process of autonomous work on listening, students learn to evaluate the results of their activities, their success, critically reflect on their speech and learning experience and use it to set further learning tasks. Working on listening in the context of autonomous learning activities allows the students to monitor and evaluate their progress individually. Thus, a foreign language learner develops both his/her own listening skills and a certain style of individual learning activity in this area.

Conclusion. Summarising the above, we can draw the following conclusion. In the context of the modern concept of professional education, which sets the task for higher education to teach students to independently acquire and replenish their knowledge and skills, the organisation of autonomous learning activities of students is one of the effective measures of individualization of the educational process. It allows solving the problem of differentiated approach to students, improving learning outcomes, making the work on the material being studied personally meaningful for everyone, forming the level of educational and cognitive competence necessary for further work, developing such qualities as responsibility, independence and creative activity necessary for a modern specialist.

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