English Teaching Methods in Bukovina (1918–1930)

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Abstract: The article deals with the English teaching methods in Bukovina (1918-1930). It has been investigated the features of the direct method implementation in teaching English. We have shown the learning prerequisites of the direct method and carried out an analysis of the aspects of language learning (phonetics, vocabulary, grammar) and types of speech activity (speaking, reading, writing) according to the curricula and textbooks of that period. We have singled out the approaches and principles of teaching English and proved the basic principles of implementing the direct method of teaching English in the region. It has been discovered the teaching of phonetics and speaking at the initial stage, the lack of native language use, inductive learning of grammar. We have outlined the prospects of further research on the methods of teaching foreign languages in the territory of Bukovina.

Keywords: *Teaching method; direct method; teaching English; foreign language teaching.*

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1. Introduction

The investigation in the sphere of foreign language teaching (FLT) methodology is necessary for understanding and selecting the best and most effective teaching method. The international relevance of the article consists in studying the English language teaching history and its culture to avoid making mistakes in up-to-date teaching. Teaching English usually requires the use of at least a few methods, combining their approaches, principles, and techniques. What is positive and efficient for some conditions, for others may be completely unacceptable.

The research of the education in Bukovina and English language teaching methods in the period of Romanization is an essential component of our regional history. We can realize this fact through the study of the history of FLT methods, the development of contiguous sciences and their impact on the choice of approaches, methods, principles of FLT, public demand of a foreign language.

2. Literature overview

A lot of pedagogues were interested in the history of FLT methods. It was described and characterized by G. Ye. Vedel, from the Middle Ages to the XX century. He revealed the history of the emergence of methods and highlighted the methodical concepts of the most famous representatives. Particular attention was paid to the description of methodological principles that are the basis of the method. Consciously-practical, suggestopedic methods of FLT were first mentioned and described (Vedel, 1979). S. M. Nikonova analyzed the FLT methods from 1900 to 1923 (Nikonova, 1969). N. I. Gez and G. M. Frolova investigated the foreign teaching methods from the XIX to the XX century, describing the social situation, linguistic and psychological grounds (Gez, Frolova, 2008). V. M. Karpova, A. V. Krasulia studied the history of FLT methods development from the XV to XX centuries (Karpova, Krasulia, 1999). A significant step in the development of method theory was the scientific and systematic description of the evolution of FLT methods from I to XX centuries made by V. Ye. Rauschenbach, who revealed the main methodological directions in the FLT system. He showed fragments of original documents, in particular, the times of Empress Catherine I and Catherine II, analyzed the FLT methods in the Russian Empire and Europe, demonstrated the conceptual ideas of both Russian and European Methodists (Rauschenbach, 1971). I. V. Rakhmanov analyzed the methods, highlighted their main characteristics, proposed their classification on various grounds, streamlined the terminology. This study had all the

necessary features of the methodological theory because it was a system of generalized knowledge, explanations of the regular relations existing in the process of FLT (Rakhmanov, 1947). O. O. Myroliubov determined the criteria for the allocation of certain periods of FLT methods development and made a thorough analysis of each of the stages of development of the Russian and Soviet education systems (Myroliubov, 2002). O. M. Tumak described historical-social, national-ethnic and educational-organizational factors that both directly and indirectly influenced the development of the English language teaching methodology in Bukovyna (Tumak, 2018).

The foreign scientists also studied the problem of FLT methods. Their works reflect the history of FLT techniques used in Europe, England, and the USA. The authors proved that the emergence of a new concept of FLT was facilitated by many factors - social ordering of society, economic conditions, research in the field of teaching theory, related sciences, the status of a foreign language course, the level of professional training of teachers, the technical equipment of premises, modern approaches to the organization process (Brown, 2001; Celke-Murica, 1991; Larsen-Freeman, 1986; Neuner, Hunfeld, 1993; Richards, Rodgers, 1991).

B. I. Labinska discovered the history of FLT methods in Western Ukraine; characterized the influence of administrative-territorial, national-ethnic and educational-organizational foundations on the development of FLT methods in the second half of the XIX – the first half of the XX centuries; analyzed curricula, textbooks, scientific articles for different types of schools in order to establish methods, approaches, principles of FLT; revealed the conceptual and methodological foundations of FLT methods and described the peculiarities of their implementation in different types of schools. (Labinska, 2013).

However, the implementation of the direct method of teaching English in Bukovina in the chronological framework has not been the subject of separate scientific research.

The purpose of the research is to investigate the implementation of the direct method of teaching English in Bukovina in 1918–1930; to analyze the prerequisites of the direct method and describe the aspects of language learning and types of speech activity in different kinds of schools in Bukovina.

3. The aim of FLT

The period of educational Romanization in Bukovina was characterized by significant changes in FLT. Therefore, it was necessary to

study a lot of documents to understand how the teaching took place, which approaches, principles, and methods were selected. According to the discovered curricula and textbooks, the FLT aimed to teach the pupils to express themselves both orally and in writing, to prepare them to self-read and understand the texts based on everyday life, to introduce learners to the basic grammatical aspects of morphology and syntax (State Archives of Chernivtsi Oblast, 1925-1926). Having inspected the curricula and textbooks in English, we concluded that the teachers used the direct method in the period under study. We take this fact as a basis for further analysis of teaching English methods. The direct method will be analyzed by the general criteria developed by S. Nikolaeva: actual data; scientific basis; Methodological characteristics; name; critical analysis (Nikolaeva, 2008).

4. The Direct method

The Representatives of the direct method were: in Germany – B. Eggert, H. Wendt, W. Vietor, F. Franke, M. Berlitz, M. Walter; in France – F. Gouin, P. Passy, Ch. Schweitzer, E. Simmonot, Y. Carre; in England – H. Sweet, K. Breul; in Belgium – S. Alge; in Danmark – O. Yespersen; in Sweden – M. Pilmgren etc.

The main principles of the direct method are as follows: the basis of FLT are the same processes as we use mastering our mother tongue; memory and feelings (not thinking) are crucial in speaking. (Nikolaeva, 2008).

We should note that the direct method representatives opposed:

- the primacy of the printed text;
- stale grammar rules not used while speaking;
- lack of attention to the study of phonetics;
- isolated studying of vocabulary;
- the use of translation (Gez, Frolova, 2008).

Consequently, the main goal was considered to be teaching speaking, which allowed learners to communicate at an early stage. Then they started to learn reading and writing. According to the proponents of this method, the pupils had to begin to study a foreign language as children do, that is, first learn to speak. They had to learn vocabulary and grammar while having a conversation, besides, to take an active part in the learning process. The main goal was to teach the learner to think in a new language. The complete exclusion of translation into native language was one of the main distinguishing features of the direct method. According to Maximilian Berlitz, consistent use of translation created the dangerous illusion that every

word and expression of the native language had an exact equivalent in the new language, that was a rarity. Removing translation allowed for *direct* access to new words and phrases, and the children could feel a different cultural environment. Thus, in the teaching process, it was necessary to use exclusively foreign language; the pupils didn't have to use their mother tongue because it could create a kind of barrier in speaking (Berlitz, 1922:3-5).

Having reviewed the main principles of the direct method, we are going to separate the approaches and principles of teaching English, which were singled out by B. I. Labinska.

5. The approaches and principles of teaching English

B. I. Labinska referred *the communicative approach* to FLT as a methodological guide, which led to consider teaching speaking as the way of formation and formulation of ideas with the help of mastering the language units in the communication process. The communicative approach was used during the reign of the direct method, taking into account the advantage of the intuitive over conscious. (Labinska, 2018).

Another methodical approach to FLT was *a cultural approach* based on information from a foreign-language culture. Obtaining information about the country as a whole, the social structure, description of the realities of life and culture in the form of literature or art gave some information about the system of values of the people, provided an understanding of others through personal (Labinska, 2016).

The didactic principles include the following:

- the principle of visualization (provided for the use of subject, visual and acting visualization);
- the principle of systematicity and consistency (was to choose the subject (starting with conversational topics), selecting lexical and grammatical material at lower and middle levels of training, expansion of vocabulary and revision of grammar at a higher level, which was carried out on the basis of simple to complex principle, from the known to the unknown);
- the principle of educational teaching (provided religious and moral education and the raising of national consciousness);
- the principle of reinforcing (young learners' mental development was taken into account in the selection of the educational material);
- the principle of durability (presupposed memorization and comparison of phenomena in two languages);

- the principle of consciousness (was based on the purposeful selection of language and speech material, which ensured the development of pupils' cognitive abilities) (Labinska, 2013).

The methodological principles were:

- the principle of native language effect (in the direct method itself was quite controversial, as its founders forbid the use of translation, but allowed the use of mother tongue at an early stage to explain unfamiliar lexical and grammatical phenomena);
- the principle of choral repetitions (was implemented by the teacher who read or transmitted the content of the text, then the pupils repeated it in a chorus, and asked questions concerning the content of what they heard, discussed unfamiliar vocabulary and grammar material) (Labinska, 2013).

6. English language teaching methods analysis

Having analyzed the approaches, didactic and methodological principles of FLT in Bukovina in the studied period, we are going to turn to the English language teaching methods analysis by the aspects of language and types of speech activity using the direct method of teaching English.

Teaching Phonetics in Bukovina was based on the repetition of certain sounds and words after the teacher who drew the learners' attention to the correct pronunciation of letters and some points of English phonetics, such as stress and intonation. The textbooks had instructions, which said that the teacher should explain and repeat the verse during class with the learners until they know it by heart (Griffiths-Belbin & Mateiu, 1923a). It was a feature of the direct method, as its representatives promoted a phonetically correct speech. There was no phonetic transcription in textbooks. Instead, the authors used the footnotes, which explained the difficult rules of pronunciation, such as: 'To pronounce the sound th properly, the tongue should be pressed to the upper teeth, the lips are fixed and open (Griffiths-Belbin & Mateiu, 1923a). This explanation followed a phonetic exercise: Pronounce the words with "th" correctly. In the subsequent lessons, the children revised and consolidated the previously studied sounds. (Griffiths-Belbin & Mateiu, 1923a).

Thus teaching phonetics was carried out initially with the help of the teacher's explanations and some exercises to master auditory and oracy skills and abilities of the correct pronunciation of sounds.

Teaching Vocabulary took place basically on texts, poems, dialogues that contained the list of lexical items. In most cases, when a

learner first saw a new word or expression, its meaning was clear just from the context. Thus, they were able to understand and remember new words without translating. Then the teacher helped to practice and consolidate the new vocabulary with appropriate questions to encourage pupils to use it in context. Finally, the learners asked the questions taking on the role of the teacher and gave a brief summarizing of the material covered. (Griffiths-Belbin & Mateiu, 1923a).

New words for the juniors were usually allocated in italics in texts and had illustrations (drawings), which facilitated their perception and memory. For the seniors, there were definitions, including synonyms and antonyms, and sometimes comments in English that promoted the correct usage of words and phrases while speaking. The vocabulary items were usually taught by asking and answering questions. The learners also included an example of the word in a sentence to give it context. The level of lexical knowledge was evaluated with the use of dictations. Creative oral and written exercises were a kind of test and included making a composition, writing a letter or description (Griffiths-Belbin & Mateiu, 1923b).

So, teaching vocabulary in the territory of Bukovina was carried out by exploring new words using texts, poems, and dialogues, then preceded to oral and written exercises. The lexical units were taught applying figurative visualization for primary school children, and definitions, synonyms, antonyms, comments for seniors that aimed at a better remembering of the words. The ability to use new words in oral and written language was the main criterion for the evaluation of pupils. Reading, speaking and exercises were used for vocabulary practice and skill formation.

Teaching grammar. Having discovered the textbooks in English in the territory of Bukovina, we conclude that initially teaching grammar focused on the texts with grammatical constructions. Later they followed short rules in the footnotes, examples, and exercises which combined teaching vocabulary and grammar (Griffiths-Belbin & Mateiu, 1925:15).

Thus, the study of grammar took place while teaching speaking, that is, the gradual accumulation of grammatical structures, which subordinated the vocabulary. It confirmed the direct method representatives' theory that grammar should be studied in a natural conversational context and during discussions.

In textbooks for seniors, grammar material was better organized and served as a revision of the previously studied expressions and grammatical structures in the speech. It contributed to the consolidation of acquired knowledge. There was also grammar reference and the table of irregular verbs. Grammatical exercises included changing into the plural, declension,

and formation of sentences, changing the person, filling in the blanks, writing answers to questions (Griffiths-Belbin & Mateiu, 1925: 15).

So, while explaining the grammatical phenomena, the teacher used several examples and exercises. In the discovered textbooks, the grammatical material was in English and was an integral part of teaching speaking. The main goal of teaching grammar was to use it for proper writing and speaking.

Teaching speaking. One of the objectives of teaching English was to educate learners to express themselves in oral form. In the beginning, they were asked about the content to check how they got the key moments in the story, and then they gave their questions. The stories they used in class included the fragments of their everyday life at school and home and English versions of local cultural tales and fables. The remarkable thing was the appeal and interest they had for the children themselves (State Archives of Chernivtsi Oblast, 1925-1926).

Dialogues and monologues were an integral part in teaching speaking. The dialogic speech included conversations with a teacher (typically question-answer) and talks composed and recited by learners. Monologue examples were telling the poems by heart and retelling of the texts. The pupils' task was to express their opinion in oral form, according to the content of the read passages and to be able to communicate in everyday life topics (State Archives of Chernivtsi Oblast, 1925-1926).

So, the aim of teaching was speaking, though closely connected with reading, because the learners were able to improve both dialogic and monologue speech based on the texts read before. The goal of teaching speaking was to educate pupils to communicate on everyday topics.

Teaching reading. Reading was a fundamental skill for learners. Reading itself built on oral language, and key factors that influenced reading skill development included the ability to comprehend and use both listening and speaking skills. The learning material included poems, proverbs, tales, and texts that reflected everyday life, culture, geography, and history of England. Many of the stories were related to a lexical theme, that helped to memorize thematic vocabulary, which was taught first. The knowledge of the plot was checked in the form of questions and answers. It served a kind of dialogue between a teacher and pupils (Griffiths-Belbin & Mateiu, 1925).

The purpose of teaching English in a commercial high school was to prepare learners for independent reading and understanding of the texts based on everyday life. They also studied literature, the main objective of which was to familiarize them with the greatest works of English literature. The descriptive passages (mostly from newspapers) such as Business Affairs,

Trade, Transportation, and Industry, were used for teaching reading. They helped to familiarize learners with the appropriate technical means of expression, in addition to which they learned many words and phrases concerning the business were. Each passage was thoroughly trained at a conversational level. At the higher level, teaching reading included large paragraphs, that described the culture, the customs, the trade, and the industry of England. These topics aimed at teaching new vocabulary, that was trained in detail with the help of questions-answers and retelling. The home reading included contemporary literature of the prominent writers (State Archives of Chernivtsi Oblast, 1925-1926).

Thus, teaching reading in Bukovina broadly reflected everyday life, culture, geography, and history of Great Britain. It was also closely connected with teaching grammar and lexical material. Reading comprehension was checked through retelling and answering the questions, i. e. reading was closely connected with teaching speaking.

Teaching writing. The purpose of the commercial school curriculum of English in Bukovina was to teach pupils to express themselves in written form. Initially, the common remarks to commercial correspondence and various trade agreements were discussed, which later were studied by heart (State Archives of Chernivtsi Oblast, 1925-1926).

Learning and mastering the technical terminology played an important role. The pupils learned how to fill in the forms and write the letters that dealt with ordering goods at their own expense that is the order forms, receipts, bills that occurred in business affairs. They also studied how to properly make money orders by letters, postal orders, bill payments by a third person. Written works included: short stories, business correspondence, translations of newspaper excerpts, correspondence exercises. Writing business letters was a crucial aspect of teaching English in a commercial high school. The pupils had to propose a wide range of products and reply to received contracts in written form, to be able to fill out templates for contracts of barter transactions, as well as to issue complaints, suggestions, and recommendations correctly. There were also short retellings of the texts, answering the questions, written works in commercial correspondence, dictations, conversion of the narrative poems into prose, translations into English, exercises (State Archives of Chernivtsi Oblast, 1925-1926).

According to the discovered Bukovina textbooks, there were such written exercises, as the dictations, grammar exercises and rewriting of words and verses. After that, the children had to re-read themselves, underline their own mistakes and write them on the board. At the end of

each lesson, there was homework, which consisted of several lexical and grammatical exercises such as changing singular into the plural, sentence conjugation, changing person and tense, filling the gaps, making simple and complex sentences. Vocabulary exercises were mostly creative: writing of an essay, or a letter, describing the house, classroom, and so on. Other types of activity were the answers to questions (in oral or written form), writing a poem by heart, matching antonyms (Griffiths-Belbin & Mateiu, 1923b).

So, teaching writing in Bukovina was an essential means of communication at the international level, especially in the trade area. Vocabulary and grammar consolidation was carried out using written exercises. Writing served as an effective means of training and testing vocabulary and grammar. The teachers focused on the independent work of learners, which included finding their own mistakes, the formation of sentences using some grammatical rules, writing letters, essays, and descriptions of various kinds.

7. Conclusions

Thus, the direct method focused on the practical knowledge of FL, although it involved all aspects of FL learning. Teaching phonetics in Bukovina was the initial step towards mastering English and was carried out by teachers through explanations and a set of exercises for the formation of auditory and oracy skills. In teaching vocabulary, they used allegorical visualization, synonyms, antonyms, definitions, and comments in English. Vocabulary practice was provided in reading and doing oral tasks and exercises, and vocabulary skills formation occurred while speaking. The main goal of teaching grammar was its practical use for the correct writing of letters. In Bukovina speaking was taught to be able to communicate in everyday life. The learners practiced it in questions and answers. Teaching reading broadly reflected everyday life, culture, and history of Great Britain. The texts were of intrinsic interest as well as useful in providing a particular grammar and vocabulary points in focus. Teaching writing was not only an essential way to consolidate vocabulary and grammar, but also a means of communication at the international level. The emphasis was on writing letters, essays, and different descriptions. Though the translation was missing, it was sometimes used to explain the complicated linguistic foreign language peculiarities. It was also involved in comparison some unknown lexical or grammatical constructions with the native tongue.

The paper concludes that the direct method of teaching English dominated in Bukovina from 1918–1930, and its aim was teaching speaking.

The perspective in this area can be a study of English vocabulary teaching methods in the territory of Bukovina from 1930–1933.

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