

Кадырова Шарипа Кадыровна

профессор

Кыргызский государственный университет им. И. Арабаева

г. Бишкек, Кыргызстан

THE ROLE OF THE NATIVE LANGUAGE IN LEARNING ENGLISH

***Аннотация:** статья посвящена использованию родного языка в изучении английского языка. В статье автор предлагает заострить внимание на двух главных принципах при обучении. Первый принцип предусматривает применение больше педагогического опыта, чем административных действий. Вторым принципом предусматривается применение различных подходов при решении проблем, чем одно возможное решение.*

***Ключевые слова:** Ученик, родной язык, второй язык, обучение, навыки устной речи, навыки письменной речи, обсуждение, презентация.*

***Abstract:** this article is devoted to the using the first language in learning English. In the article, the author suggests two principles that should be considered whenever teachers face a problem in teaching English. The first principle is that, as a matter of professional pride, teachers should try to solve classroom problems through the application of pedagogical skills rather than through administrative or disciplinary procedures. The second principle is that most problems have a variety of causes, which to some degree reflect the variety of individuals in a class. There is, thus, likely to be a variety of solutions, and so a teacher may need to put together a package of complementary solutions rather than just try one possible solution.*

***Keywords:** learner, first language, second language, teaching, speaking and listening skills, discussion, presentation.*

With the continuous development of economic and political reforms in Kyrgyzstan and also the present policy of the state opening the doors to the outside world, that's why studying English is becoming more and more important and popular, especially at secondary schools, colleges and universities in Kyrgyz Republic. Presently teachers and students pay more attention to developing four skills of language learning,

among them the skills of listening, speaking, writing in English studies and with the facilities for teaching them becoming updated and greatly improving.

Speaking activities, such as ranking, information gap and problem-solving tasks, can meet several language-learning goals. They can be used to learn vocabulary and grammatical structures, to develop the skill of speaking, and developing fluency in listening and speaking. But most of these goals will not be reached if the learners spend a large part of the time during an activity speaking their first (Kyrgyz or Russian) language to each other. In Kyrgyzstan, where English is a foreign language and where learners share the same first language, teachers are often reluctant to use small group speaking activities because the learners do the ranking, bridge the information gap, or find an answer using their first (native) language. This article looks at this problem and suggests a range of solutions.

At a more general level, the article suggests two principles that should be considered whenever teachers face a problem in their teaching. The first principle is that, as a matter of professional pride, teachers should try to solve classroom problems through the application of pedagogical skills rather than through administrative or disciplinary procedures. The second principle is that most problems have a variety of causes, which to some degree reflect the variety of individuals in a class. There is, thus, likely to be a variety of solutions, and so a teacher may need to put together a package of complementary solutions rather than just try one possible solution.

Let us look at ways of encouraging the use of the second language by considering causes of first language use under the major categories of learner proficiency and task difficulty, circumstances of the task, and learner attitude.

Kyrgyz learners may be reluctant to use English because they feel shy, because the task does not engage or motivate them, or because they see no point in it. They may wish simply to get the job done as quickly as possible even using the first language. In general, the ways of dealing with the lack of a positive attitude toward the use of English involve getting learners to see the benefits of using English during the tasks. The discussion and presentation of information, which can be used to help learners change their attitude towards the use of English, can be done using the L1 if necessary.

Kyrgyz or (Russian) learners may be using their first language when completing the task because they are doing things, which are normally done in the first language, for example, negotiating a procedure for doing a job, or clarifying misunderstandings. The teacher needs to change the circumstances of the task so that it seems just as natural to use the second language.

For example, one might have learners pretend to be someone else during a task, making the use of English seems more natural. This may mean introducing a role-play element to a task.

Kyrgyz (Russian) learners may be willing enough to speak English during activities but they forget and fall back on the first language. In some tasks it may be possible to have a member of each group whose job it is to keep reminding the others to speak English and to point out when English is not being spoken. This monitoring may be accompanied by a penalty-and-reward system. This may be something like the systems that family members or colleagues set up to reduce swearing. Whenever a person swears, they have to put a certain amount of money in the pot. Token systems have often been used in schools and they have their supporters and opponents.

Kyrgyz learners may be reluctant to use English because they feel that the task is threatening or embarrassing. There are several ways to deal with this. One way is by letting learners choose the groups that they will work in, so that they feel comfortable with the members of the group. Another way is for the teacher to stay out of the groups, as the teacher may be the cause of the embarrassment. Yet another way is to give careful attention to the choice of the topic of the activity, as learners may be reluctant to talk about some issues. Allowing the learners to prepare for the task may be another way of reducing the threat of the task. If the learners come to the task well prepared, they may feel much more confident and positive about it.

The range of solutions suggested here have covered language proficiency, the nature of the task, and learners' attitudes. They should not be seen as alternatives but mainly as complementary ways of dealing with the problem. That is, it may be more effective to try an integrated set of various ways of dealing with the problems. The

problem can be approached by a combination of proficiency, attitude and circumstances-based solutions.

Using the first (native) language, in our case it is Kyrgyz (Russian), the teacher should explain to the learners the benefits of using English in activities. This explanation can be more convincing if the teacher is able to show examples of how using English in a task helps learners. The examples could include instances of effective negotiation of the meaning of words taken from previous uses of the task, before and after examples of individual learners' improvement in speaking as a result of using English, and for older learners some of the experimental evidence. Learners may also be encouraged to contribute to the discussion by suggesting benefits that may occur.

With regard to specific language skills, the activity has proven to be an asset in developing listening, oral production, and written production since all are practiced throughout the process. A number of language functions such as describing people, habits, and behaviors, expressing opinions, asking for more exact information, clarifying, criticizing, responding to criticism and, contrasting and comparing, are present in the different stages of the activity, which means that the students are given plenty of opportunities for using appropriate language. Other language functions such as predicting and explaining cause-effect relationships are also realized in the written homework assignments. This means that the activity can be easily incorporated into programs based on the communicative approach. It is also important to mention that both the oral and written components of the activity contribute towards increasing vocabulary.

In this case the students work together in small groups, exchange and discuss information with the intention of forming a more complete picture of the situation. The students may consult with one another with regard to customs, national characteristics, the meaning of specific words, and grammatical points, and they may also change the form of the word (e.g., verb tenses or pluralization). It is important to circulate in the classroom in order to clarify points and answer questions and encourage students to be spontaneous and creative in their responses while composing the story. Assure them that they will not be penalized for mistakes in grammar or spelling. When each group

has finished writing down their story, collect them and save them for the next class period.

Observation of learners performing speaking activities shows that foreign language vocabulary learning can occur when learners negotiate in L1 the meaning of L2 words in the written input to the activity.

When learners use the first language in speaking activities, the teacher should observe this carefully to see what opportunities for learning are occurring. Are the learners usefully negotiating and clarifying the procedure that they will follow to complete the activity? Are they explaining unknown L2 items to each other? Are they gaining a good understanding of the idea content of the activity so that they can then do it with full understanding? Looking for answers to questions like these may lead a teacher to consider encouraging learners to complete a part of the activity in their native language.

A secondary goal of this article has been to find ways of dealing with classroom issues in a systematic way. In this article, this has been done by approaching the problem of getting learners to speak English from four directions, from a proficiency viewpoint (Does the learner know enough?), from a circumstances viewpoint (Is the situation helping to create the problem?), from an attitude viewpoint (Does the learner need to feel differently about the problem?), and finally by seeing it not always as a problem and turning the seeming disadvantage to an advantage.

There are other ways of systematically approaching classroom issues. One way is to see problems as a symptom of the need for change and innovation.

Thus Kyrgyz (Russian) students with limited English proficiency must also learn standard language forms such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics and others through speaking, listening, reading and writing. Their experiences must include acquiring social/cultural understandings as even greetings in different cultures take on different meanings. Instruction needs to be authentic and include doing, practicing, participating, and discovering language forms in meaningful interactions. Communication is a by-product of doing authentic activities together. Shared experiences are a springboard for developing both spoken and written language. New vocabulary is acquired readily because the students have a need to talk to one another

in order to participate in the activity. Vocabulary that is acquired through shared experiences must be practiced in order to be maintained. Whole language activities provide students opportunities to experience comprehension in authentic ways. Because of the interactive nature of communication and the multiple interpretations possible, it has been suggested that learners participate in collaborative text encounters with both teachers and peers. Because of the instructional need for both speech and reading, ESL students benefit from collaborative efforts of both their speech instructors and their reading teachers. Instruction centered on allowing diversity of responses to printed material and engaging in authentic experiences which promote communication in small group settings has been used successfully.

At different learning stages with Kyrgyz students, the training should be conducted in the form of intensive and extensive listening. Intensive listening, to be conducted at the early stage of the training, consists of catching the general idea of a news story, correctly answering the questions raised by the teacher, and being able to understand and repeat each sentence. Care must be taken in the intensive listening stage, however, not to wrongly lead the students into putting their listening emphasis on individual words or sentences instead of the main idea of the news. In the extensive stage students should be able to retell the news story in their own words. They can retell the news once together as a class, with everyone orally contributing main ideas and details of the news story in an organized fashion. Then they can retell the news stories in groups of two or three. Finally, they can each write down the news story individually for their instructor. For example, after having gained some experience in listening to the Special English program, the students will have both a stronger desire and a better ability to challenge the more advanced Standard English program, a program delivered at normal speed with a larger vocabulary and more complicated grammatical structures, whereby similar learning strategies are applied. Once a student can follow this program, s/he will have little difficulty in understanding other English programs on radio stations throughout the world and can thus comprehend up-to-date knowledge, impossible to gather from dated textbooks, but readily available from English radio programs for example, Voice of America.

It is reasonable to deduce that other forms of redundancy and elaboration may likewise aid in listening comprehension, and effective listening in the classroom can itself act as a marker or advance organizer for comprehending later reading passages. The use of video can, therefore, potentially aid language students is not only listening comprehension, but also reading comprehension. Furthermore, acquired cultural and contextual cues provided by video learning may enhance an ESL student's comprehension of class lectures in the target language.

Depending on the class level and content, the video could run from one to thirty minutes. From the prepared video tape, the teacher would then prepare an advance organizer consisting of three segments. The first is a casual class discussion to lower the affective filter. Such a discussion, familiar to ESL and EFL teachers, would introduce the video topic along with two or three relevant vocabulary words. The second (introduced or not, depending on the teacher's philosophy) is a more complete vocabulary list, introduced verbally and in written form, including flash cards, pictures, or any other instructional aids. The third segment would include any new grammatical forms which the teacher wants to introduce through the video.

If the grammar lesson concludes the first day's class, the next class would begin with a short review of the vocabulary and topic. Depending on the nature of the course, this can include journal writing. The teacher then shows the video for the first time. Allow students to work in small groups following the video. Encourage students to use the new vocabulary as they respond to pictures, realia, or discussion questions relevant to the material covered in the video. A general class discussion can follow.

The next class segment begins with a second viewing of the video, followed by a first silent reading of the accompanying text and a multiple choice or true/false comprehension check (or the comprehension check alone if the class focuses on conversation). After the individual work, pair students or sit them in small groups. Have them discuss their answers orally, with the teacher moving from group to group. Students should be encouraged to reread confusing parts, model how they arrived at their answers, and discuss vocabulary, etcetera. The segment can conclude with a third viewing for lower levels and then the teacher's preferred assessment tool.

Student interest and comprehension should both rise significantly with the addition of the videotape to the lesson; however, a videotape is not a complete lesson plan. Research results suggest that video would work well as a comprehension aid to augment-not replace-traditional classroom methodology within well-defined parameters. The video does not become culturally enhanced comprehensible input without a teacher's moderation and a good advance organizer.

References

1. Allen R.V. «Language Experiences in communication». – Boston, 1986.
2. Cheng L.L. «Beyond bilingualism». Topics in Language. – Disorders, 1996.
3. Freeman Y.S. & Freeman D.E. «Whole language for second language learners». – Portsmouth, 1992.
4. Fanselow J. «Contrasting conversations». – Longman, N.Y., 1992.
5. Krashen S. «The potential of the second language classroom.» Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1988.
6. Ruben L. «A review of second language listening comprehension research.» The Modern Language. Journal. – 1994.