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FL TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS: COGNITIVE AND LINGUOCULTURAL APPROACHES

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Abstract. Textbooks are fundamental didactic tools employed in the foreign language (FL) classroom, even in the era of information technologies. FL textbooks contain relevant information about the target language (TL) and the TL culture, enhance levels of students' language proficiency and cultural literacy and should aim at developing students' skills of intercultural communication which goes in line with the main goal of modern FL education worldwide – developing intercultural competence. Intercultural competence is seen as the ability to conduct communication with representatives of the TL community with regard to the sociocultural background of the communicative situation. Thus, modern FL textbooks should be interculturally oriented and develop FL students' knowledge not only of the target language, but also knowledge and a better understanding of the TL culture.

The aim of the paper is to present the structure of the FL textbook analysis from the perspectives of the cognitive and linguocultural approaches in the teaching of foreign languages. The two approaches play an essential role for fostering students' intercultural competence, the first one aiming at activating students' intellectual processes, developing their cognitive skills in mastering a foreign language and culture, and the latter – at expanding their linguocultural literacy, enhancing their ability to contrast, compare cultures, find similarities and differences across cultures, and respect these.

Keywords: textbook, textbook analysis, foreign language education, intercultural competence, intercultural communication, cognitive approach, linguocultural approach, structure

Introduction

The textbook, being the fundamental didactic tool, represents the core of FL education and has a great impact on the educational process, as Z.Sandorova puts it, “on what is taught and how is taught in the FL classroom” [1, p.178]. The choice of the textbook relevant to the learning objectives is especially important because the quality of education depends on the content of the textbooks. In recent years, there can be traced an increasing interest in the elaboration of textbooks, particularly, for the field of foreign language education. According to the research findings, FL textbooks can contribute to the perceptions of the TL culture and attitudes towards it and influence the whole process of learning it.

Textbook analysis aims primarily at evaluating the quality of the analyzed textbook, at identifying its strengths and weaknesses, which can help the teacher select appropriate materials to fulfill students' needs. The importance of textbook

analysis has been highlighted by many researchers and educators. As defined by S.Antic, I.Ivic, and A.Pešikan, it is “a dynamic process that examines different aspects of the textbook to improve its quality” [2, p.200]. R. Kiely states that the textbook analysis provides for quality assurance and enhancement, thus allowing to improve learning opportunities [3]. According to B.Tomlinson, it measures learning materials and their effect on the learners [4].

Basic provisions

The textbook evaluation and analysis can be conducted both on theoretical and on empirical levels. Theoretical verification aims at evaluating the properties of a textbook, while empirical verification involves obtaining the results of the actual suitability of the textbook and testing its effectiveness in the educational process. The textbook evaluation is determined, primarily, by the objectives of the research, as well as by its subject, which can imply the content of a textbook, its structure, methodological approaches, its printing characteristics.

Currently, there stand out more than 300 schemes for the textbook analysis which all represent various approaches and recommendations for evaluating the textbook in general and its individual aspects in particular. The framework of the present research does not aim at considering the aspects of each of the schemes. From a variety of schemes for the FL textbook evaluation, there can be singled out several works that formed the basis for the FL textbook evaluation, namely the works of I.L.Bim, M.N. Vyatyutnev, A.R. Arutyunov, M.V. Yakushev, and N. Heffernan.

Methods

One of the first attempts to systemize the methodological requirements for FL textbook elaboration is made by I.L.Bim in the work “Methods of teaching foreign languages as a science and problems of the school textbook”. The researcher builds the FL textbook evaluation on a set of the didactic and methodological features of the FL textbook and identifies the fundamental principles of its elaboration with the focus on the goals, content, and its methodological structure [5, p. 270].

The provisions put forward by I.L. Bim, found further development in the works of M.N. Vyatyutnev [6] and A.R. Arutyunov [7]. The researchers have developed a number of requirements for the FL textbook:

- 1) the goals are determined by the communicative minimum;
- 2) the number of texts and educational materials is sufficient to verbalize the communicative minimum;
- 3) the main unit of teaching is a speech action;
- 4) lessons are organized in cycles;
- 5) the content includes facts of the target language culture and students’ native culture, as well as topical international issues;
- 6) the structure of the lesson is determined by the following model: the goal – presentation of the material – training exercises – communication practice – communicative activities;
- 7) the textbook is based on a student-centered approach;
- 8) all components of the textbook are interconnected [7, p. 65].

N.Heffernan puts the material-based approach in the center of his model of the FL textbook evaluation. This approach highlights the importance of the content component of the textbook, the selection and organization of the learning material, as well as the competences this material develops [8]. The author claims that each section of the textbook should be aimed at enhancing a set of competences that will help students in their further educational and professional fields.

To conduct the FL textbook evaluation M.Yakushev introduces the concept of pedagogical norm which reflects the most significant requirements for the FL textbook and determines its efficacy in the educational process. According to M.Yakushev, the pedagogical norm includes 15 requirements, which are grouped for the convenience of the textbook evaluation [9]. Thus, the researcher proposes to analyze the textbook following such aspects as:

1 *Relevance* to the learning context, that is, conformity of the FL textbook content with the curriculum.

2 *Motivation for learning*, that is, the formation of positive attitudes to language and culture learning.

3 *Authenticity*, that is, evaluating the authentic nature of the textual material included in the textbook.

4 *Inclusion of the information about the TL country and its people*, which helps to develop students' cultural literacy in regards to the TL country;

5 *The system of exercises*, that is, to what extent this system serves the formation of target skills and abilities in four types of speech activity.

6 *The methodological concept* of the authors which determines the content and structural organization of the textbook material. The analysis of the methodological concept presupposes the analysis of texts, grammar, the progression of educational material, exercises and the design of the textbook.

Furthermore, the textbook evaluation should include evaluation of its printing properties: the use of various fonts and colors, the quality and format of the paper, the location of the material.

Results and discussion

As the review of research literature has shown, none of the existing models for the FL textbook evaluation concentrates on cognitive and linguocultural approaches and the degree of their implementation in the textbook material. In this regard, below there will be proposed the model for the FL textbook evaluation from the perspectives of cognitive and linguocultural approaches, which, to our mind, should be included in the system of fundamental criteria for the FL textbook analysis. The following questions are in the center of our attention, which lay the basis for the proposed model of the FL textbook evaluation:

1. Do cultural activities contribute to the development of cognitive skills not only of the lower order (memorization, understanding, application), but also of the higher order (analysis, synthesis, evaluation)?

2. What types of visual-cognitive technologies of presenting cultural and linguocultural information are used in the FL textbook? Is their number sufficient for the development of students' cognitive skills?

3. Is the FL textbook effective in terms of developing students' reflection in relation to the native culture and the TL culture?

4. What levels of culture, surface or deep, are presented in the FL textbook to a greater extent?

5. What type of linguocultural elements prevail in the FL textbook (material-factual, axiological or speech-behavioral)?

6. Is the way of representing linguocultural elements adequate for students' understanding of the TL culture?

7. Does the FL textbook implement the principle of the dialogue of cultures? Is there a connection between the TL culture and students' native culture?

8. Is the 'linguocultural content' of textbooks, that is, inclusion of linguocultural units, sufficient to form a conceptual picture of the world of native speakers?

The theoretical framework of the proposed cognitive-linguocultural analysis of FL textbooks builds on the ideas put forward by B. Bloom, T. Buzan, G. Askarova, E. Hall, Z.K. Akhmetzhanova, L.F. Gomez Rodriguez, J. Xiao, K. Chapelle. Cognitive-linguocultural evaluation of the FL textbook consists of cognitive and linguocultural aspects which include several components.

Table 1 presents the scheme for cognitive-linguocultural analysis of the FL textbook.

Table 1 – Cognitive-linguocultural analysis of the FL textbook (scheme)

Aspect	Type of analysis
1	2
Cognitive aspect	Analysis of exercises by levels of cognitive skills (Bloom's taxonomy) Evaluation of the use of cognitive-visual technologies employed in the FL textbook Evaluation of exercises aimed at enhancing students' skills of reflection in regards to the target language and the TL culture
Linguocultural aspect	1. Analysis of the textual material by topics which reflect the 'surface' and 'deep' levels of culture 2. Analysis of linguocultural elements included in the textual material of the FL textbook 3. Analysis of linguocultural elements by ways of their representation

Cognitive aspect of the FL textbook analysis. The analysis of the FL textbook from the perspective of cognitive approach is based on the classification of educational objectives developed by B. Bloom. Bloom's taxonomy helps teachers to assess students' knowledge or cognitive skills by asking them to demonstrate these skills when completing a certain task. A widely used classification within the cognitive domain is a hierarchical structure consisting of six levels: knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

Cognitive analysis of exercises helps to see what level of cognitive skills (knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) and,

accordingly, what order (lower / higher) the FL textbooks aims at developing, as well as to determine the proportion of exercises enhancing ‘lower-order’ and ‘higher-order’ thinking.

The issue of using cognitive-visual technologies is a fairly new direction in teaching foreign languages. A number of researchers highlight the importance of integrating graphic blocks into the educational process (G.K. Askarova, N.I. Almazova, T.A. Syrina). Cognitive-visual technologies can be employed in various activities (reading, listening, brainstorming, etc.) and their use in the educational process enhances students’ ability to quickly and efficiently process information and generate new ideas which is important nowadays for personal and professional development. Mind maps, fishbones, Venn diagrams, pyramids, tables, diagrams, graphs are examples of cognitive organizers. They all require a deeper understanding of information through its systematization and critical analysis. Undoubtedly, a modern FL textbook should integrate cognitive technologies of working with educational information. The effectiveness of such technologies in teaching has been proven by the results of many studies conducted in this area.

Reflection is an important phase in foreign language learning, and learning materials can also play an important role in providing students with the opportunity to self-assess acquisition of foreign language skills. Reflection is the ability to reflect about and self-assess the results of one’s activity. Through reflection, the role of the learner changes from a passive consumer of information to an active person who is aware of the responsibility for the success of his/her own academic performance. Exercises and tasks of the FL textbook aimed at developing reflection contribute to the students’ awareness of the material they have studied, as well as to self-assessment of the acquired skills and outcomes.

Linguocultural aspect of the FL textbook analysis. Linguocultural aspect of the FL textbook analysis is based on the ideas of such researchers as L.F. Gómez-Rodríguez [10], K. Sadeghi and Zh. Sepahi [11], M. Hollenback [12] who claim that teaching a foreign language should not be limited only to students’ acquaintance with the ‘surface’ culture, which can bring to superficial understanding of the TL culture. Examples of surface culture elements include national costumes, music, literature, specific holidays. These surface forms only accumulate the general information which is fixed and static, and the knowledge of such is not sufficient for students to understand the new culture they are entering. To become really interculturally competent students should be aware of values, ideas, stereotypes, features of the communicative behavior of the native speakers which constitute the ‘deep’ level of culture. The deep forms of culture may be the most difficult for language learners to identify because they are hidden and do not necessarily reflect the fixed social and cultural standards. The examples of deep culture relate to the concepts of food, friendship and love, lie and truth, the nature of family relations, etc. Thus, the FL textbook should concentrate on the topics of both ‘surface’ and ‘deep’ cultures which will help learners develop a better understanding of the TL culture.

The next important aspect of the FL textbook analysis is the analysis of linguocultural elements which is based on the classification of linguocultural

elements proposed by Z.K. Akhmetzhanova [13]. The researcher divides linguocultural elements into: 1) material-factual; 2) axiological; 3) speech-behavioral. The first group includes elements which describe the material culture of a particular community. Such linguocultural elements are characterized by its relevance to the language, and their cultural component is explicit in nature, that is, it is easily isolated and clearly felt by the native speakers. Linguocultural elements of the “material” type belong to the “surface” culture and include household items, the names of national dishes, musical instruments, national types of clothing, numerical symbols, color symbols, etc. The second group of linguocultural elements is designated as axiological. It includes units which reflect value orientations of representatives of a particular sociolinguistic society. This type of linguocultural elements belong to the deep level of culture and they are the most difficult for language learners to identify. The third group is made up of speech-behavioral linguocultural elements, which relate to specificities of the communicative culture of the TL community. This group includes forms of address, speech clichés which reflect the peculiarities of speech behavior of native speakers in everyday communication. Linguocultural elements of this type also belong to the ‘deep’ level of culture. When choosing a FL textbook, the teacher needs to analyze it in order to establish what type of linguocultural elements prevails. If the textbook material includes a large number of ‘material’ linguocultural elements, it is necessary to refer to the additional material that reveals the peculiarities of the spiritual culture of the TL community.

The analysis of linguocultural elements by means of their representation in the FL textbook is based on the classification proposed by C. Chapelle [14]. The researcher proposes to distribute cultural elements contained in the FL textbook material according to the following ways of representation: 1) a simple mention; 2) description (a depiction); 3) visual demonstration (a display). ‘A simple mention’ represents a word or phrase that is present in the text, but the meaning of which is not disclosed in this text. With a descriptive method, the meaning of a linguocultural element is revealed, either immediately in the sentence in which it is used, or further in the text. In other words, a linguocultural commentary is provided, either short or a longer one, which provides a clearer understanding of the concept expressed by a particular linguocultural element. The third way of representation - visual demonstration - involves the explanation of a linguocultural element through illustrations, photographs, maps, pictures.

Conclusion

The proposed structure of FL textbook analysis from the perspectives of cognitive and linguocultural approaches can help to conduct a more detailed and vigorous analysis of how culture is integrated in its content and whether the textbook material can help activate not only low-order thinking skills of students but their higher-order thinking skills as well. Analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the FL textbook, the FL teacher may clearly see if any additional material is needed to supplement the gap and bring the TL culture closer to students, what technologies to

use to facilitate language and culture acquisition in a more productive and efficient way.

The cognitive aspect of the proposed analysis structure can show whether textbook exercises and material presentation require either lower or higher cognitive demand levels, and what is the proportion between these. In case if the analysis results identify concentration on low-order cognitive skills, this should signal the necessity to integrate activities aimed at developing higher-order cognitive skills.

The linguocultural aspect of the FL textbook analysis can demonstrate what level of culture, 'surface' or 'deep', is presented to a greater extent in its content. If the FL textbook concentrates mainly around the topics of surface level culture and contain mainly linguocultural elements pertaining to the material culture of the TL community, this can signal the necessity to include 'axiological' linguocultural elements as well as more complicated cultural topics that reveal attitudes and perceptions of native speakers to various concepts.

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ШЕТ ТІЛІНДЕГІ ОҚУЛЫҚТАРДЫ ТАЛДАУ: КОГНИТИВТІК ЖӘНЕ ЛИНГВОМӘДЕНИ АСПЕКТІЛЕРІ

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Аңдатпа. Оқулық оқу-тәрбие үдерісінің ажырамас бөлігі және негізгі дидактикалық құралы ретінде бүкіл оқу үдерісінің мазмұнын анықтайды. Білім сапасы оқулықтардың мазмұнына тікелей байланысты болғандықтан оқулықты дұрыс таңдау өте маңызды. Соңғы кездері ғалымдардың, мұғалімдердің, әдіскерлердің жалпы оқулықтарды, оның ішінде шет тілі оқулықтарын жасауға деген қызығушылықтары артып отыр. Бұл, ең алдымен, оқулықтың жаңа ұрпақ бойына сіңіретін оқу материалы деңгейіндегі әлеуметтік тәжірибенің сақтаушысы екендігімен байланысты. Шетел тілі бойынша заманауи оқулық студенттердің мәдениетаралық қарым-қатынас дағдыларын дамытуға бағытталуы керек, ал бұл болса қазіргі шет тілін оқытудың басты мақсаты – мәдениетаралық құзыреттілікті дамытуға сәйкес келеді. Мәдениетаралық құзыреттілік – басқа мәдениет өкілдерімен сәтті және адекватты өзара әрекеттесу үшін қажетті қабілеттердің жиынтығы.

Мақалада шет тілдерін оқытудағы когнитивтік және лингвомәдени тәсілдер қағидаларын жүзеге асыру тұрғысынан шет тілі оқулықтарын талдау құрылымы берілген. Когнитивтік және лингвомәдени тәсілдердің бірлігі студенттерге әртүрлі лингвистикалық мәдениет өкілдерінің сана бейнелеріндегі айырмашылықтар туралы түсінік береді, олардың ұлттық қауымдастығының тілі мен мәдениетінің ерекшеліктерін тануға ықпал етеді, бұл мәдениетаралық қарым-қатынас дағдылары дамуының тиімділігін қамтамасыз етеді.

Тірек сөздер: оқулық, оқулық талдауы, шет тілін оқыту, мәдениетаралық құзыреттілік, мәдениетаралық коммуникация, когнитивтік тәсіл, лингвомәдениет тәсіл, құрылым

АНАЛИЗ УЧЕБНИКОВ ПО ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ: КОГНИТИВНЫЙ И ЛИНГВОКУЛЬТУРОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ АСПЕКТЫ

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Аннотация. Учебник, являясь неотъемлемым компонентом и главным дидактическим средством, определяет содержание образовательного процесса. Выбор подходящего учебника играет особенно важную роль, поскольку от содержания учебников зависит качество образования. В последнее время наблюдается рост интереса ученых, педагогов, методистов к созданию учебников в целом и учебников по иностранному языку в частности. Это объясняется в первую очередь тем, что учебник является хранителем социального опыта на уровне учебного материала, подлежащего усвоению новым поколением. Современный учебник по иностранному языку должен быть нацелен на развитие у обучающихся навыков межкультурного общения, что соответствует главной цели современного иноязычного образования – развитие межкультурной компетенции. Межкультурная компетенция представляет собой совокупность способностей, необходимых для успешного и адекватного взаимодействия с представителями иной культуры.

В статье представлена структура анализа учебников по иностранному языку с точки зрения реализации в них принципов когнитивного и лингвокультурологического подходов в обучении ИЯ. Единство когнитивного и лингвокультурологического подходов дает обучающимся представление о расхождениях в образах сознания представителей разных лингвокультур, способствует осознанию особенностей языка и культуры своего

национального сообщества, что обеспечивает эффективность развития навыков межкультурного общения.

Ключевые слова: учебник, анализ учебников, иноязычное образование, межкультурная компетенция, межкультурная коммуникация, когнитивный подход, лингвокультурологический подход, структура

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