

IMPLEMENTING ON INDEPENDENT STUDY STRATEGIES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHING

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Abstract

The success of learning significantly depends on the conditions that the teacher provides for students to learn actively and independently. Therefore, independent study, particularly in the context of foreign language teaching, has been extensively explored by scholars across various linguistic and educational domains. Notably, English, Russian, and Uzbek scholars have made substantial contributions to understanding and improving the methodologies and technologies used in independent language learning. The purpose of this article is about implementing and reflecting on independent study strategies in foreign language teaching, the main approaches to improving the methodology of independent study in teaching foreign languages.

Keywords: independent work, cognitive activity, implementation, preparation, interdisciplinary connections, objectless, self-discipline, mediated, preceding, concurrent, anticipatory.

Despite the long history of the issue of independent work among students and the large number of studies dedicated to this problem, there is still no consensus on the definition of "independent work." For several specialists, independent work is a means of organizing and managing cognitive activity [1,21]. A thorough study of works dedicated to independent work allows us to identify the following key features of the concept of "independent work": 1) the presence of a specific task that requires completion; 2) the absence of direct participation by the teacher in completing this task; 3) the allocation of specific time for completing this task; 4) the presence of indirect management by the teacher of the student's cognitive activity; 5) the overall goal of the independent work. It is important to note that such characteristics of students' cognitive activity during independent work, such as the desire to achieve the set goal and, consequently, their maximum concentration of effort, are not so much features of independent work itself, but rather the result of its proper organization.

At the same time, specialists consider the main feature of independent work to be the nature of the interaction between the teacher and students in the process of educational and cognitive activity, namely, the indirect (mediated) guidance by the teacher of the student's activity, which

excludes the teacher's direct involvement in the course of this work. The following functions of participants in the process of independent work are typically distinguished:

- The teacher's function involves organizing, observing, analyzing, and assessing the quality of students' independent work.
- The students' function during independent work is characterized by purposeful, active, and cognitive activity, in which the leading role is played by analytical-synthetic thinking processes. This is a key feature of effective learning.

The implementation of independent work requires consideration of the following aspects:

- The content aspect of independent work is defined by the nature of the cognitive tasks, which serve as a means of organizing the students' independent activities.
- The procedural aspect of independent work involves the specification of students' activities during the completion of cognitive tasks and how the teacher manages these activities within the educational process.
- The organizational aspect of independent work determines the nature of the interaction between the teacher and students, which is expressed through indirect guidance of the educational and cognitive activities.

In other words, the content aspect is connected with the implementation of the didactic goals of education; the procedural aspect defines the nature of the student's cognitive activity and the manifestation of their cognitive independence; and the organizational aspect focuses on the selection of interaction forms between the teacher and students, depending on the specific didactic goal. So, what are the goals and objectives of students' independent work? It is well known that the goals of any educational system are divided into learning goals and educational goals. Some experts believe that the specific educational goal of independent work is to cultivate independence as a personal quality in future professionals. Regarding the learning goal, we find the position of those authors who view the general didactic goal of independent work as the formation of required knowledge, skills, and competencies to be more justified. The goals of independent work, in turn, determine its objectives, with the most important being those that ensure the conditions for the teacher to organize the most effective cognitive activities for students. Experience shows that independent work will fully perform its functions only if it is organized within a specific system. Independent work carried out sporadically is less effective. Most researchers believe that it is advisable to combine the organization of independent work with the main stages of students' mastery of subject knowledge. Thus, the following stages of working with educational material are distinguished:

1. Motivation for studying a new topic.
2. Preparation for studying new material.
3. Direct acquisition of new information.

4. Initial reinforcement of new knowledge.
5. Application of acquired knowledge and skills.
6. Intermediate assessment and correction of knowledge and skills.
7. Generalization and systematization of knowledge on the topic.
8. Final assessment.

The rational combination of various types of independent work, appropriate to different stages of knowledge acquisition, allows educators to design the most effective lessons. But what are the types of independent work? It is important to note that the types of independent work used in the educational process are quite diverse. Moreover, there is no single classification of these types that is universally accepted by all scholars. In our view, the classification should be functional, meaning it should provide clear guidelines for directing students' activities and serve as a foundation for the practical work of educators when organizing independent work systems. We follow the classification by E.L. Belkin, who identifies four types of independent work aimed at:

- 1) Creating conditions that ensure students accumulate known facts during the assimilation of the content of educational disciplines.
- 2) Creating conditions that ensure the transformative reproduction of educational information by students.
- 3) Creating conditions that ensure the reproduction of individual functional elements of knowledge in various forms.
- 4) Engaging students in the process of generating subjectively and objectively new information.

It should be noted that independent work, as a component of the entire university system, includes not only the mentioned types of independent work but also the organizational forms of its implementation; planning and accounting for time spent on independent work; and forms of control over independent work [2,123].

The main organizational forms of independent work generally include independent study sessions under the guidance of a teacher; work on lecture notes and academic literature; preparation for seminars and practical sessions; work during scheduled class hours on assignments; completion of homework; work on course projects; preparation for quizzes and exams; and work on the diploma project. The primary purpose of independent work for students in non-language fields is to learn how to delve into the essence of the problems being studied, establish connections and relationships between concepts from different disciplines, analyze the various components of a particular field of knowledge, and, as a result, make generalizations and conclusions. Regarding foreign language as an academic discipline, its specificity, according to I.A. Zimnyaya [3,53], lies in the fact that it is "objectless." In other words, a foreign language is studied as a means of communication, and the topics and situations for verbal interaction are brought in from outside. For this reason, a foreign language,

perhaps more than any other discipline, is open to using information from various fields of knowledge and the content of other academic subjects. Thus, we share the view of those specialists who argue that improving independent work for first-year university students in foreign language learning should be conducted on an interdisciplinary basis.

By the term "interdisciplinary connections," we mean a didactic principle, a specific structure of educational content, and conditions for enhancing the effectiveness of teaching a subject. Literature analysis shows that some researchers highlight and systematize interdisciplinary connections based on the content of various academic disciplines. Others primarily consider criteria such as the commonality of theories and concepts, as well as the commonality of using scientific methods. In didactics, specialists typically distinguish the following types of interdisciplinary connections:

1. Retrospective (preceding) connection: This type involves teaching foreign language reading and verbal communication based on previously acquired knowledge on the studied topic from other related disciplines.
2. Parallel (concurrent) connection: This type involves verbal foreign language communication using interdisciplinary knowledge that students acquire simultaneously on the same or related topics.
3. Prospective (anticipatory) connection: This type implies the use of foreign language information obtained from foreign sources on professionally oriented or related topics that will be studied later in the course of a specialized discipline.

Thus, the knowledge gained through the application and development of interdisciplinary connections helps students solve interdisciplinary tasks with the following goals: explaining cause-and-effect relationships in the phenomena being studied using knowledge from other disciplines; introducing new concepts based on previously studied facts from different academic subjects; specifying already known concepts and expanding their characteristics by applying them in various fields of knowledge; defining new, more general concepts from more specific ones and refining general concepts using more specific ones; integrating knowledge from different academic disciplines into a cohesive system; and utilizing practical skills acquired in one discipline in various types of educational and cognitive activities[4,145].

Regarding foreign language learning, its interaction with other academic disciplines is multifunctional and diverse, and it is most effectively realized in two main directions. The first direction involves improving the content of foreign language education. This is related to expanding the subject matter and content of reading in a foreign language by enriching it with extralinguistic information from other subject areas. Information of both universal and specialized nature, which is part of the curriculum materials from other academic disciplines, should be introduced into foreign language education as early as possible. This systematic early introduction of information aims to broaden students' general educational horizons and contribute to the creation of a strong cognitive motivation for studying a foreign language.

The second direction, which characterizes the process of foreign language education in non-language universities, involves improving general academic skills for working with educational information and, based on these, forming interdisciplinary specific skills. These skills enhance the effectiveness of foreign language reading and verbal communication, guide students toward the activation and systematization of knowledge acquired in foreign language courses and other academic disciplines, and promote the subsequent use of this knowledge in their educational journey. When developing general academic skills, we believe that primary attention should be given to those skills focused on extracting information from texts, which characterize reading as an informative and search-based process. For example, this includes the ability to divide a text into meaningful parts and identify the main information in each, as well as to distinguish between primary and detailed information in the text as a whole. These skills, in turn, contribute to the formation of specific interdisciplinary abilities, such as the ability to understand specialized commentary on a text. The methods for developing both general academic and specific interdisciplinary skills should primarily involve activation, comparison, and systematization.

Mastering these techniques will allow students to establish and implement connections between the foreign language and other academic disciplines. To ensure that the information students acquire through the foreign language is subsequently used, they should be given a clear directive, such as: "Think about and decide how and where you can use the information you've received when writing your report [5]." Both directions of implementing interdisciplinary connections between foreign language and other academic disciplines can be realized by selecting and organizing foreign language text materials based on an integrative approach. When selecting materials, it is important to consider their typicality, general recognition, thematic relevance, and functionality, as well as their differentiation from the students' native culture. In our view, the most effective forms of independent work for students in non-language fields to master skills in foreign language professional-oriented reading, as well as oral and written communication, are paired, group, and team work combined with individual tasks.

Collaborative learning has significant advantages: it significantly increases each student's speaking time during a lesson, provides an opportunity for each participant in the conversation to supplement foreign language information with knowledge from related disciplines in which they are more interested and, therefore, have a greater knowledge base[6]. During paired, group, and team activities, all three types of interdisciplinary connections can be used. Students incorporate previously studied and current information from related and major disciplines, and often even personal experiences that have not yet been covered in their university studies. These forms of interaction allow the teacher to promptly identify students' potential, teaching them to support discussion topics with facts from intra-disciplinary and interdisciplinary sciences. In our opinion, the more often a student takes the role of an active participant in

learning and verbal communication, the more quickly positive motives for learning a foreign language will form in their mind, and the more likely they will feel the need to seek additional knowledge in their field of study from authentic, diverse sources [7,5-11b].

Thus, when determining methods for improving independent work for students in non-language majors within the process of foreign language education on an interdisciplinary basis, the main task is to develop such skills and abilities in the primary forms of foreign language communication that, from the outset, include a predetermined system of knowledge and ensure its application within predefined limits. In exploring the main approaches to improving the methodology of independent study in teaching foreign languages, we recognize the importance of creating a learning environment that empowers students to take ownership of their language learning journey. Independent study is a crucial component in language acquisition, as it fosters self-discipline, enhances critical thinking, and allows for personalized learning experiences.

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