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Interpretation of the concepts of metacognitive and intercultural approaches in teaching professional English communication

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The metacognitive and intercultural approaches in teaching professional English develop strategic thinking and cultural awareness. The former helps learners manage their learning and communication consciously, while the latter enables effective interaction in intercultural contexts. Their combination strengthens language competence and prepares learners for global professional communication.
Keywords: metacognitive approach, intercultural approach, professional English communication, cultural differences, intercultural education, metacognitive processes, cultural changes, teaching strategies.

Метакогнитивный и интеркультурный подходы к обучению профессиональному английскому способствуют развитию стратегического мышления и культурной осведомлённости. Первый помогает студентам осознанно управлять обучением и коммуникацией, второй – эффективно взаимодействовать в межкультурной среде. Их сочетание усиливает языковую компетенцию и готовит к глобальному профессиональному общению.
Ключевые слова: метакогнитивный подход, интеркультурный подход, профессиональная коммуникация на английском языке, культурные различия, интеркультурное образование, метакогнитивные процессы, культурные изменения, стратегии преподавания.

Introduction. In recent years, Uzbekistan has experienced significant shifts in its socio-economic landscape, one of the most important of which has been the growing demand for skilled professionals, particularly in the fields of logistics and engineering. This has been facilitated by the country's active participation in global trade, the development of a market economy, and a focus on the education reform to meet international standards. As a result, the need for highly qualified specialists in logistics has risen, and this requires enhanced educational programs and training strategies for future professionals.

According to the requirements of educational laws and regulations, a modern logistics specialist must be qualified in their field, possess a range of professional skills, be flexible and mobile, capable of working effectively according to international standards, and be ready for both professional and personal development. At the same time, the intensification of competition in the global labor market and the growing demand for specialists able to adapt to modern world standards require new approaches to training highly qualified personnel.

The main task of modern technical higher education institutions is to increase students' effectiveness, prepare them for future professional activities, and develop personnel who are ready to work in the modern social environment. In the context of academic mobility, where the issue of forming active individuals is especially urgent, future logisticians must demonstrate a high level of mobility both during their education and in their professional careers.

According to educational laws and regulations, a modern logistics specialist must be qualified in their field, possess a set of professional skills, be flexible and mobile, capable of working effectively according to international standards, and be ready for both professional and personal development. Furthermore, the intensifying competition in the global labor market and the growing demand for specialists able to adapt to modern world standards require new approaches to training highly qualified personnel.

Academic mobility is an integration process in education that enables students, doctoral candidates, and teachers to participate in various educational or research programs, receive high-quality education in their chosen fields, broaden their knowledge across cultural areas, and feel fully independent. The main objectives of such programs are to improve the quality of education, develop intercultural exchange, and train future qualified logistics specialists.

The growing importance of ensuring the quality of education and developing professional competencies in students requires the active integration of innovative pedagogical and information

technologies, educational programs, and teaching materials based on international standards. In this regard, it is crucial to implement advanced international practices to expand academic mobility opportunities among students, thus improving their quality of knowledge acquisition.

In Uzbekistan, the reform of higher education and integration into international education systems have prioritized the development of these competencies. This transformation has made academic mobility a pivotal part of the educational process. Within this framework, the integration of new teaching methodologies, particularly those that focus on metacognitive and intercultural approaches, has proven to be a powerful tool in preparing students for the global workforce.

Main body. ***What is the Academic Mobility Program? How Does it Work? What Are its Objectives?***

– Academic mobility is a new system that allows mutual educational exchanges in better conditions and has been developed as an efficient alternative to transferring studies between universities.

– Academic mobility means that students or teachers, under agreements, study or teach for a specified period at domestic or foreign higher education institutions. Students under the academic mobility program are generally divided into two groups:

– Free movers: students who independently decide and arrange to study elsewhere.

– Program-based students: students participating in exchange programs developed by universities or faculties in collaboration with other institutions.

Programs can operate at both the national and international levels. Academic mobility has always been considered a key element of internationalization in education.

The concept of «metacognition» was first introduced to science by John Flavell in 1976. According to him, «metacognitive» refers to the domain of knowledge that encourages the control of general knowledge about one's cognitive processes. The term «metacognitive» is derived from two words: «meta» and «cognitive». According to the dictionary sources, «meta» is a Greek-origin word meaning «after», «beyond», or «through». John Flavell defines metacognition as «knowledge about one’s own cognitive processes, their products, or anything related to them». The prefix «meta» indicates «about itself». Therefore, the concept of metacognition refers to «knowledge about knowledge» or «thinking about one’s own thinking» [1].

The word «cognitive» comes from the English (Latin) word «cognize», «meaning» «to know, to understand, to perceive, and to think», or from «cognition», meaning «knowing, understanding». Flavell describes cognitive activity as «a phenomenon related to a person's direct perception and sensing of reality».

John Flavell identifies four components of metacognition:

– metacognitive knowledge;

– metacognitive experiences;

– metacognitive goals;

– metacognitive strategies.

According to the English scholar A. Brown, metacognition is the knowledge individuals have about their own cognitive processes. He suggests studying metacognition based on two categories:

1. knowledge about cognition – a set of activities involving reflective processes that consciously manage cognitive behaviors and abilities;

2. regulation of cognition – a set of behaviors and activities that coordinate the sense of striving for knowledge in didactic processes [2].

A. Brown emphasizes that metacognitive approaches help coordinate and control educational processes and consist of several systems:

– the process of planning activities (formulating plans, anticipating outcomes, analyzing identified shortcomings);

– the process of controlling activities;

– the process of evaluating the effectiveness of cognitive activities.

Similarly, the English scholar R. Kluwe divides metacognitive approaches into two systems that coordinate and manage cognitive activity:

– monitoring process – the process that identifies the given task, assesses one's own activities, plans future activities, and ensures effectiveness;

– regulation process – the process that helps allocate resources and determines the algorithm for completing a given task.

Researchers D. Riggle, P. Schatz, R. Glanz, and S. Weinstein describe metacognitive skills as the process of applying reflection aimed at consciously studying one's own knowledge, recognizing it as a set of behaviors aimed at organizing the strategy of thinking. According to these scholars, planning, setting behavioral strategies, and monitoring cognitive processes play an important role in a person's conscious learning activities.

S. Tobias and H.T. Everson propose a hierarchical model of metacognitive skills, highlighting the importance of assessing knowledge, evaluating the quality of teaching, planning future learning activities, and setting learning strategies. They state that knowledge monitoring is a crucial step in developing metacognitive skills, helping individuals to reflect on what they already know and what they still need to learn.

The Russian scholar M.A. Kholodnaya, like other authors, notes that the processes of metacognition cannot be limited only to the conscious control of knowledge. In her research on the intellectual development of preschool-aged children, she identifies three main stages in the formation of mental abilities:

– cognitive knowledge (experience) – mental structure responsible for systematizing, interpreting, and perceiving incoming information;

– metacognitive knowledge – managing intellectual activities by directly and indirectly controlling the received information, providing intellectual monitoring and contributing to the development of metacognitive knowledge;

– intentional knowledge (experience) – mental structures that guide intellectual tendencies.

Research shows that students who possess metacognitive skills have higher intellectual abilities when entering university. Metacognitive skills enhance students' levels of thinking and develop their metacognitive processes. While completing tasks, students learn to focus their attention, sort information, and evaluate their own activities [1], [3].

Manifestations of human metacognitive activity are reflected in J. Piaget's complete theory, J. Bruner's cognitive concept, the theories of thinking by A. Newell, J. Shaw, P. Lindsey, H.A. Simon, and the concepts of activating mental processes by P.Ya. Galperin, N.F. Talyzina, and others [4]–[5], [2].

The analysis of these scientific views, theories, and concepts highlights the importance of developing metacognitive skills in teaching English communication to logistics students. One of the important components of metacognition is metacognitive strategies. According to Flavell, these strategies serve to monitor and control one's own learning goals.

Scientific views of D. Kuhn and V.A. Molyako focus on the structure of personal cognitive strategies. Researchers A. Wenger, N.N. Poddyakov, N.G. Salmina, and others emphasize the importance of developing students' professional and intellectual skills through the use of metacognitive strategies [3], [6], [5, p. 65].

As a result of the literature analysis, we were able to define metacognitive strategies as follows: metacognitive strategies are thinking strategies that guide dialectical mental actions and control the structure of thought. These strategies coordinate cognitive processes and encourage the following mental activities:

1. realizing that the current mental strategy is insufficient and that there is a need to develop a new structure, leading to the development of alternative strategies;

2. transforming the current strategy, that is: a) developing a new strategy to replace the outdated one; b) combining two or more strategies through mental generalization, and so on.

According to A. Venden, this approach implies a «set of metacognitive knowledge» in language learning. From this, it can be concluded that the metacognitive approach teaches students to anticipate about how they think and how they approach learning. In addition to developing social skills and strategies, this approach also fosters the ability to independently solve personal and interpersonal problems. Successful acquisition of metacognitive strategies is crucial because it allows students to better manage their cognitive abilities and identify weaknesses that can be addressed by creating new cognitive skills. Any student who possesses a certain skill is capable of metacognition, meaning they think about how they are performing that skill [7, p. 400].

Promoting metacognition starts with developing students' understanding of what metacognition is, how it differs from knowledge, and how it enhances academic success. Metacognitive strategies play a more significant role than other strategies. If a student understands how to regulate their learning through the application of metacognitive strategies, language acquisition will proceed more efficiently. Metacognitive strategies help students in self-awareness, management of the overall learning process, and the achievement of their specific learning goals. One group of metacognitive strategies helps individuals to better understand themselves as language learners. Self-discovery strategies include identifying personal interests, needs, and preferred learning styles.

Conclusion. Technology plays an important role in developing metacognitive skills among students of the logistics education field. By using various digital tools, students can enhance their ability to reflect on their thinking processes, which leads to improved learning outcomes.

Metacognitive knowledge significantly contributes to learning outcomes and can be taught through instructional processes that incorporate metacognitive knowledge and facilitate metacognitive experiences. Academic achievement, the use of web-based learning, and the development of metacognitive abilities encourage students' engagement. Therefore, web-based learning proves to enhance students' metacognitive skills as they explore the vast amount of information available online. Moreover, when developing such web-based programs, it is crucial to assess students' levels of metacognitive knowledge.

Metacognitive and intercultural approaches to teaching professional English communication are essential in preparing students for the complexities of modern workplaces. Through fostering self-awareness, critical thinking, and cultural competence, educators can equip students with the skills necessary to thrive in diverse professional environments. This integrated approach not only enhances language proficiency but also develops empathetic and adaptable communicators capable of navigating an increasingly interconnected world [7]–[8].

Both metacognitive strategies and web-based learning play vital roles in reinforcing each other. Therefore, web-based education should be adopted as a new-generation educational strategy that supports the development of all students.

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