

# The Levels of English Language Acquisition on the Basis of Problem-solving and Product-oriented Tasks in the Multilingual Social Medium

Roza A. Valeeva

*Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, Kazan, RUSSIA.*

Valeriy F. Aitov

*Bashkir State Pedagogical University named after M.Akmulla, Ufa, RUSSIA.*

Aygul A. Bulatbayeva

*Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, KAZAKHSTAN.*

•Received 19 September 2013 •Revised 11 February 2013 •Accepted 21 April 2015

---

This article is aimed at revealing similarities and distinctions of the native, Russian and foreign languages in the natural multilingual social medium. The main idea in the research of this problem is realization of the problem-project approach to foreign-language education, principles of which a) determine mutual relations between a teacher and a pupil; b) specify content and structure of teaching material; c) optimize the foreign-language education process organization technology. The article presents the comparable and comparative collation of the native, Russian and English languages, cultures and similar language phenomena to be learned by carrying out of problem-solving and product-oriented tasks at linguistic, speech and spiritual-cognitive levels. This contributes to the development of metacompetences of pupils, expands their linguistic horizons and creates a stable basis for the development of linguistic, speech and sociocultural components of communicative competence.

*Keywords:* natural multilingualism, problem-solving and product-oriented tasks (problem-project tasks), language acquisition, language and cultures collation (comparison), communicative competence

## INTRODUCTION

Russia, as a member of the Council of Europe, is involved in the process of the European educational system reforming. One aspect of this process is to improve linguistic education. It should be emphasized the importance of the Council of Europe project "Linguistic policy in multilingual and multicultural Europe", aimed at development of a new diversified approach to language learning (Ek, 1989). Russia

Correspondence: Valeriy Fakilyevich Aitov,  
Bashkir State Pedagogical University named after M. Akmulla, October Revolution  
Street, 3a, Ufa 450000, Russia.  
E-mail: valerie.aitov@mail.ru  
doi: 10.29333/iejme/329

is a multinational state. Its territory is home to more than 180 nations, while Russian is about 80% of the population. According to the latest census in the Russian Federation, Russian called themselves 111 million Russians, the second largest nationality are Tatars - 5.31 million, in the third place Ukrainians - 1.93 million. Bashkortostan, as well as Tatarstan and Kazakhstan, according to their ethnic composition are multi-ethnic republics. A distinctive feature of the implementation of linguistic education on the area of multilingualism is a predominance of the Russian language, which has a national status. Thus, in the educational institutions of the Republic of Bashkortostan 15 languages are studied, while teaching is conducted on six languages: Russian, Bashkir, Tatar, Mari, Udmurt and Chuvash (Ryazyapov, 2004).

It is common knowledge that, in accordance with the Federal State Educational Standards (FSSES) on the lessons of foreign-language education, forming of foreign competence is an ultimate goal as well as civic education of the young Russians (Valeeva et al, 2015). However it must be admitted that the state of linguistic education fall short of to the mentioned requirements. Some of the students are not able to formulate their ideas correctly on the native, Russian and foreign languages, to read and comprehend the text, to distinguish the main moments of the speech, to react adequately on speech stimuli, in other words, to participate fully in a communicative act (Sinagatullin, 2002).

We think that linguistic education is not very successful because of the following reasons. Due to the current multi-year tradition the main part of school teachers try to give the material under study including linguistic cut and dried. On the basis of this teaching there is a knowledge-centered paradigm which is aimed at the transfer of knowledge, but not at the development of the creative initiative and independence of students. That's why simple implementation of traditional grammar and relative communicative exercises is not effective. This makes it necessary to find the ways out of the situation.

## METHODOLOGY

In accordance to the new priorities in modern education the emphases shifts from the concept of "teaching-training" which is based on the "reproductive" sequence "knowledge - skills - abilities", to the notion of "learning - acquisition" the native, Russian and foreign languages. Therefore, the only way of this situation can be joining of the efforts of teachers-linguists in the organization of the process of assimilation of the native, Russian and foreign languages on the basis of the inclusion of key concepts of the problem-based learning. Within the problem-solving approach the process of appropriation of abilities is built usually on the *productive* basis.

The main purpose of this coordination is to unify the methodology of linguistic education based on common principles of problem-project approach, which define the relationship between a teachers and a student, specify the content and the structure of educational material and optimize the technology of educational process organization in language acquisition.

In the context of learner-centered and function oriented approach (Leontiev, 1969; Zimnyaya, 1991) the organization of foreign language education can become one of the forms of cooperation, based on the implementation of problem-solving and problem-project tasks.

In this article we consider the notion of «problem-solving and product-oriented tasks» (or "problem-project task" for short) as a written or oral instruction of the teacher, which is aimed at solving a purely practical problem - to learn, to find any information through independent mental actions, analysis, comparison, generalization and systematization to address emerging challenges in the

educational process to produce a particular result (verbal or graphic) (Aitov, 2007, 2012).

If the principle of problematization emphasizes a personal character of the educational process (development of creative mental activity of pupils), the principle of projectivity supposes a pragmatic, procedural nature of language education, which aims at creating a speech activity product.

According to this position, it can be concluded that students should be involved in vigorous activity which is not limited by mastering of knowledge, skills and abilities, but by all means involving their application for solving various problems of reality, that is, the development their metacompetences. In the course of such educational process organization students are learning to acquire knowledge independently, to seek and find necessary funds for their training and sources of information, to be able to work with this information, including modern information sources in their native, Russian and foreign languages.

In the multilingual social medium as one of conditions for creating of problematic situations it is appropriate to use the principle of "contrast" as a result of collating and learning contrasting languages and contrasting cultures' (Kovalevskaya, 2000: 129).

One of the ways to implement problem-project approach in the linguistic education is a comparative analysis of native Russian and foreign languages, aimed at revealing of similarities and distinctions, which is realized by carrying out of problem-solving and product-oriented tasks (problem-project tasks) on linguistic, speech and spiritual-cognitive levels.

## RESULTS

### The basic concepts of problem-based learning

It is generally known that a *language* is a means of "forming and formulating of a thought" 20 (Zimnyaya, 1991); *speech* is a method of information exchange in the course of communication between people; *mentation and soul* is what unites all people on the Earth by universal human values and spiritual concepts. Let's consider the basic concepts of problem solving education (a problem, a problem situation, a problem task) with regard to foreign-language education at three levels: linguistic, speech, spiritual-cognitive. Thus an educational problem plays the role of a barrier (differences in phonetics, grammar, vocabulary in the comparable languages) in the process of language acquisition that stimulates and directs a pupil's mental search for new knowledge and finding ways out.

At a higher level, the problem may be put forth in the form of conflict or confrontation of points of view on the universal questions (see Table).

A *problem situation* is a situation created by a teacher of cognitive difficulty (intellectual - at the level of language, communicative - at the level of speech and conceptual - in the spiritual and cognitive level), which is overcome at various levels in the process of creative search of new knowledge and finding ways out.

One of the most accessible forms of problem-solving and product-oriented task is the **collation**, i.e. revealing of similarities and distinctions between the compared phenomena.

The existence of the problem is defined by problematization which is the main characteristic of problem-solving teaching.

### Levels of problem-solving learning

Problematization acts as the mechanism of problematization creation. Such a problematization supposes a conscious (if needed) inclusion of a certain difficulty

(practical or theoretical), which forces the student to overcome it, thereby activating his/her mental activity.

With respect to the question under study what is stated above in a generalized form can be summarized in the following table.

**Table 1.** Levels of foreign-language problem teaching

Level	Problem	Problematization (existence of the problem)	Problem situation (level)	Problem task
<b>I</b> <i>Linguistic level</i>	<b>linguistic</b> (differences in phonetics, grammar, vocabulary in the comparable languages)	linguistic differences	<b>means</b> (at the linguistic level)	<b>collation</b> of specimens at the language level of different cultures
<b>II</b> <i>Speech level</i>	<b>communicative</b> (differences and similarities in the methods of discourse)	a barrier on the way of communicative aim achievement	<b>method</b> (at the speech level)	<b>collation</b> of verbal behavior styles in different cultures
<b>III</b> <i>Spiritual-cognitive level</i>	<b>spiritual</b> (perennial problems of morality, right and wrong, et cetera)	axiological confrontation, conflict	<b>spiritual values</b> (at the level of thought, soul)	<b>collation</b> of universal values in the specimens of folklore of different cultures

As it was stated above, problematization of *educational content*, in which an educational problem acts as a unit, and which includes the following levels of realization: *language, speech, and spiritual-cognitive*.

Let's take a look at each of them:

**I. At the linguistic level** a means of formation/formulation of a thought, i.e. a language is not known. Therefore this level includes linguistic problems correlated with the levels of language: phonetics, vocabulary, grammar.

An example is problem-project tasks on the search of analogies and similar phenomena in the following languages: Tatar, Russian and English. Below there is the independent unpublished researches by D. M. Hayrullina (2015), who has found similarities between English and Tatar lexical analogues.

For example, it is often used in both languages «a baby» - a child. In the Tatar language it sounds almost the same and has the same meaning: **бәби(әй)** In this case even comments are not required.

The English word «bad» - part of the **бәдбәхем**, formed by joining two roots of the opposite sense: **бәд** is bad, but in the modern Tatar language it is not used separately, but **бәхем** is happiness. This is one of ways of word-building in the Tatar language.

«Basic» is the main. In the Tatar language there is the word **базык** that means solid, reliable, steady, it's often used as a sign of man, his/her physical abilities.

«Be» means to exist. It's a similar word, which is now an obsolete word **бу** that meant in the past *a noble and respected man, a big boss, an officer, a tartar prince*, it is possible that a well-to-do man. To think it deeply a noble and respected man's existence seems to be more solid and reliable.

Beg means to ask. In the Tatar language **бек** has a synonym of the same **[bi:]** and in the meaning of the verb: to bend, to bend the knee to smb, common people went cap in hand namely to begs, beys (Turkish titles).

Began, begin. The beginning may be in the meaning of *today*. Today is always the beginning, yesterday ended, moreover the word in Tatar, and in Russian is used not only as a single day, but it can mean an era, today. In the Tatar language there is the word **быген** is today.

Berry, in Tatar, **боре** is a leaf bud, which then becomes a leaf or a fruit.

Big, *бик* is a ban, *бик*– is an intensifying particle - very. *Big* in the semantic meaning is also *бик* (very).

Buy. The turkic word *бай* means rich, also has associations with the purchasing power.

Buzz means buzzing, *бөжәк*, word for word is an insect (*нунңащее*).

Call means a proposal, an appeal. In the lexical composition of the Tatar language the word has a special significance that a lot of words formed with the help of this root: *кал* –is to stay, *кал(а)* is a city, the place of permanent residence (among the nomadic peoples of the town it's always so); *кальга*–is a fortress, fortification, citadel.

Calm is quiet. In the Turkish paganism, in Tengriism *кам* is a priest, a person close to Tangra (God). Such people spent much time in prayer, which is associated with silence, peace.

The words a man and a girl are of particular interest. *Мән* is, above all, consciousness, spiritual program, moreover, *мин* is the pronoun of the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular. The correlation of *тән* and *мин* is merged in the modern language in a multi-valued meaning, it is *self-consciousness, the self, moral personhood*. The fact that in the Tatar lexeme the meaning *a man* was present is confirmed by the fact that it is part of the word, which point to occupation, social status of people, mostly men, who in the modern language are used as names: *мәселман, Сөләйман, каһарман* (a hero), etc.

A Girl. In the Tatar language the combination of such phonemes forms a word *гөл*, word for word, a flowering plant. Girl, lass is almost in all nations associated with a flower, especially with flowering plants, which have outlook. Therefore, it is the most common part of the Tatar names: *Гөлчәчәк, Гөлназ, Гөлзада, Айгөл, Гөлгенә* etc. (Hayrullina, 2015)

A striking example of samples comparing from different linguistic cultures are proverbs and sayings. Here there is a significant number of proverbs and sayings borrowed which native European languages borrow from each other by a literal translation of the sentence structure, retaining their shaped and lexical-semantic base. In the same way, these proverbs and sayings are spread further outside the European countries (Aitov, Galimov, Kireyeva, 2014).

The latter should include the following proverbs in the Bashkir, Russian and English languages.

1. Б: Тимерзе кызыуында һук..

Р: Куй железо, пока горячо.

A: Strike while the iron is hot.

2. Б: Бөгөнгөштейәрингә (иртәгәгә) калдырма.

Р: Не откладывай на завтра то, что можно сделать сегодня.

A: Never put off till tomorrow what can do today.

3. Б: Ике куянды кыуған берзән тороп калған.

Р: За двумя зайцами погонишься, ни одного не поймаешь.

A: If you run after two hares, you'll catch none (Aitov, Galimov, Kireyeva, 2014).

A special feature of linguistic assignments is that a language phenomenon can be generally unknown to the subject, or one of the components of the linguistic phenomenon – a form, a meaning (content), the usage is not known. On the basis of variation of the amount of unknown components of linguistic phenomena one can complicate or facilitate a problem-project, thereby changing the problem situation complexity level, aimed at the intelligent search for the suitable solution.

**II. At the speech level** a method of forming and formulating of a thought, i.e. speech is not known. A speech level has communication problems, correlated with the levels of speech activity: speaking, listening comprehension, reading, writing, translation.

An activity for training of lexical and grammatical material contained in the so-called equivalent proverbs and sayings precedes the development of skills. The comparison of such proverbs and sayings in Bashkir, Russian and English is very useful in terms of expanding of linguistic horizons acts

For example, give your students the task to answer the question: Why do the Russian and the Bashkir say «Цыплят по осени считают» «Себеште көз һанайҙар», the British - "Don't count your chickens before they are hatched"?

During the lessons as well as during the extra-curricular activities students can be proposed puzzles, games and other entertaining tasks, which contain the texts of proverbs.

As a rule, a communicative task consists in the following – one of the components of the communicative events - the purpose of communication, dialogue participants, circumstances (place, time) of communication should be unknown.

As for the tasks with a small degree of problematicity the following tasks can be used:

- 1) Will you find equivalents to the following proverbs on the best known languages and say how they are united, and how they are distinguished?
- 2) Will you comment on the saying? (Do you agree with this proverb?)
- 3) Will you characterize the personages of the proverb?
- 4) Will you describe the situation using a proverb?
- 5) Will you listen to the situation and find the corresponding proverbs?
- 6) Will you finish the dialogue by a proverb?
- 7) Will you write a story, the title of which is the proverb?
- 8) Will you think of an advertising text using the proverb?

**III. At the spiritual-cognitive level** where the object is unknown, i.e. the idea, content, complex subject – communicative tasks in problem situations can be applied, which have spiritual-cognitive value.

Even without speaking about the content, one can say that a comparison of the native Russian and English languages is a very important source of problematicity. That is why G.I.Gontar uses the principle of "contrast" as a result of collating and studying three contrasting languages and three contrasting cultures while creating problem situations. Indeed, the principle of contrast can be applied in studying a foreign language in relation to the native language. It is this principle that ensured spread of the intercultural approach, the problematicity of which is implicitly embedded in the very fact of comparing the contrasting languages (Gontar, 1987).

Problem-project spiritual-cognitive tasks are in the basis of the problematic situations creation with the previously worked methods of forming and formulating of a thought by known foreign language means to express the unknown new content, a thought, i.e. the subject of the utterance.

Here the decision of its own subject mental tasks is carried out which are given in a problem situation and which are understood disciple as his/her own personal-spiritual problems of the spiritual level of varying degrees of complexity. It is at this level that the samples of folklore (tales, songs, proverbs and sayings) can be methodologically appropriate.

On the spiritual-cognitive level, first of all, one should pay attention of trainees to universal values expressed in the best samples of folklore of different nations.

In the context of a problematic situation in which simultaneously with problem solving the development of knowledge and skills of practical use is simultaneously mastered, a parallel mastering of the means and the methods of forming and formulating of a thought occurs (Kovalevskaya, 1999: 64).

In other words, in a foreign language teaching the use of problem-project tasks allows not to separate from the preparatory stage of the process of speech, during which only skills can be formed and fixed.

## DISCUSSIONS

A lot of scholars searched for the optimal approach to the organization of foreign language education. It is possible to affirm that in recent years the preference is given to the approaches that encourage intellectual development of a person, develop his/her verbal and cognitive abilities. They are learner-centered and function oriented approach (Zimnyaya, 1994; Leontiev, 1969; Vorozhtsova, 2002, et al.) a problem approach (Matyushkin, 1972; Makhmutov, 1984; Zimnyaya, 1991; Kovalevskaya, 2000, 2006; Kudryavtsev, 1991; Lerner, 1974) and a problem-project approach (Polat, 2000; Burtseva, 2002; Mikitchenko, 2004; Pakhmutova, 2003, et al.) approaches. It must be assumed that there is a need to integrate these approaches in the context of the competence approach in the problem-project approach, the principles of which were developed by the author of the article. An analysis of scientific papers devoted to the problem of foreign-language education in the real multilingualism on the basis of problem-project approach was not considered.

## CONCLUSION

A comparative analysis of the native, Russian and English languages, aimed at revealing of similarities and distinctions in the planes of expression and content at the *linguistic* level (typological comparison of grammatical and lexical systems), at the *speech* level (the correlation of formulas of speech etiquette and styles of verbal behavior in different linguistic cultures), *spiritual-cognitive* levels (collation and search of proverbs, sayings which have analogues in the other language culture, the best examples of the national culture, generalization of universal values) contribute to the development of pupils' mental abilities, broaden their linguistic horizons, thus create a solid basis for the formation and development of linguistic, speech and socio-cultural components of communicative competence.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The materials of this article can be useful in a practical plan for the teachers of philological institutes and faculties, teachers-linguists and education managers, heads of educational establishments during foreign education program development.

Taking into account the results of this study one can define a number of scientific and perspective directions which demand further investigation: deepening and widening of certain points contained in the article connected with the formation and accumulation of linguistic data bank on the comparison of the native, Russian and foreign languages, the development of scientific and methodological provision of foreign-language education.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

## REFERENCES

- Aitov, V. F. & Aitova V. M. (2012) Formation of foreign professional competence on the basis of cognitive-search tasks/ «*Problem and noosphere approaches to education – conditions of sustainable development of civilization*”: Materials of the XII Moscow international

- conference "Education in the XXI century through the eyes of children and adults». Moscow, Russia.
- Aitov, V. F., Galimova, Kh. Kh. & Kireyeva, Z. R. (2014). Using the elements of the problem-based teaching for of pedagogical high school students linguoculturological competence formation (based on the comparison of Russian, Bashkir, English and French proverbs and sayings). *Vestnik VEGU. Socio-economic and the social sciences (pedagogy, psychology, political science, sociology, jurisprudence, economics)* 5, 5-16.
- Burtseva, E. V. (2002). *A project as a means of motivating of foreign language of a nonlinguistic institute of higher education*: PhD Thesis. Ulan-Ude.
- Ek, J. van. (1989) *Introduction to the theme "Language learning objectives for multilingual and multicultural Europe"*, Sintra Symposium. Portugal: Council of Europe.
- Galimova, Kh. Kh. & Kireyeva, Z. R. (2010). Proverbs and sayings in the system of linguistic education. *Modern Ethnopedagogics: Problems and Prospectives of development: Materials of inter-regional scientific-practical conference of young scientists (Ufa, 16 April, 2010)*. - Ufa: RIO RUNMTS MO RB.56-63.
- Gontar, G. I. (1987). *Using problem approach for teaching English as a second FL*: Thesis. ... Candid.of pedagogy sciences. - Moscow.
- Il'ina, T. A. (1976). Problem teaching - concept and content. *Vestnik of vysshayaShkola*, 2, 39-48.
- Khairullina, D. M. (2015). Some hints on collation of Tatar and English lexics. Unpublished master's thesis. Birsk Branch of Bashkir State University.
- Kovalevskaya, E. V. (2006). A model of problem situations in the process of teaching a FL. Problematicity and specialization in education – a condition for sustainable development of civilization: *Materials of VI Moscow International Conference "Education in XXI century - through the eyes of children and adults."* Moscow: Kompaniya Sputnik+, 55-58.
- Kovalevskaya, E.V. (2000) *Problem teaching: approach, method, type, system (based on the material of foreign languages teaching)*: Bk. 2. Moscow: MNPI.
- Kudryavtsev, V. T. (1991). *Problem teaching: origin, nature and prospects*. Moscow: Znanie.
- Leontiev, A. A. (1969). *Psycholinguistic units and creation of speech utterance*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Lerner, I. Ya. (1974). *Problem teaching*. Moscow: Knowledge.
- Makhmutov, M. I. (1975). *Problem teaching: key issues of theory*. Moscow: Pedagogika.
- Matyushkin, A. M. (1972). *Problem situations in thinking and teaching*. Moscow: Pedagogika.
- Mikitchenko, S. P. (2004). *Organization of problem tasks in the process of a FL teaching*. PhD Thesis. Nizhnevartovsk.
- Nikitenko, Z. N., Aitov, V. F. & Aitova, V. M. (1996). Authentic materials as one of the elements of national and cultural component of the FL teaching content. *Foreign languages at school*, 4, 14- 20.
- Okon', B. (1968). *Basics of problem-based teaching*. Moscow: Prosveshchenie.
- Pakhmutova, E. D. (2003). *Telecommunication projects in intercultural teaching a foreign language*. PhD Thesis. Saransk.
- Polat, E. S. (2000). Method of projects on the FL lessons. *Foreign languages at school*, 2, 3-10.
- Ryazyapov, R. F. (2004) *Code of Laws about the Bashkir language. The beginning of the XXth century*. Ufa: Kitap.
- Sinagatullin, I. M. (2002). The new millennium: the role and the place of a foreign language in multicultural society. *Foreign languages at school*, 1.
- Valeeva, R.A., Koroleva, N.E., Sakhapova, F.K. (2015). Civic education of the technical university students in foreign language classes. *Review of European Studies*, 7(1), 176-181.
- Vorozhtsova, I. B. (2002) *Personal-position-pragmatist model of teaching a FL (based on teaching of French in high school)*: Thesis. ... Ed.D. in Educational Psychology. Izhevsk.
- Zimnyaya, I. A. & Sakharova T. E. (1991). The Project methodology of teaching English. *Foreign languages at school*, 3, 9 - 15.
- Zimnyaya, I. A. (1994). Problematicity in teaching the second FL. *Problematicity in FL teaching in the institute of higher education. Intercollegiate collection of scientific papers*. Perm: Publishing House of Perm State Technical University.
- Zimnyaya, I.A. (1991). *Psychology of FL teachi*

