

**THEORETICAL ISSUES OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN SECONDARY GENERAL
EDUCATION SCHOOLS**

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***Abstract:** This article discusses the current state and significance of teaching English in general secondary education schools, as well as psycholinguistic phenomena that occur in students' language learning experience. The positive and negative effects of transfer from the native language to a second language are examined and analyzed. The practical, educational, moral, and developmental objectives of foreign language teaching are also recognized and highlighted.*

***Keywords:** general secondary education school, psycholinguistic phenomenon, educational objective, developmental objective.*

Teaching and learning English in secondary general education schools has its own specific characteristics and requires the application of a specialized methodology. Teaching methodology is an integrated system consisting of such components as educational conditions, objectives, content, methods, and teaching aids.

The methodological system for developing foreign language speech skills and competencies is reflected in the following categories: (a) teaching conditions; (b) teaching objectives; (c) teaching content; (d) teaching methods; and (e) teaching aids [1].

These concepts are briefly defined and described in the *Concept of Continuous Foreign Language Education in the Republic of Uzbekistan* [3]. Educational conditions represent an objective reality and are regarded as the primary didactic phenomenon in education. Based on these conditions, educational objectives are determined. In linguodidactics, the term *conditions* refers to concepts related to where, to whom, and for how long English is taught.

More specifically: **Where?** (a) English is taught in secondary general education schools. (b) It may be taught in places with or without a natural English-speaking environment. In schools, English is generally taught in an artificial language environment. **To whom?** (a) English is taught to learners

aged 6–16. (b) Three languages are taught in secondary schools: Uzbek (native language), Russian (second language), and a foreign language (English or another foreign language). In this regard, learners' accumulated linguistic experience in all three languages is taken into consideration. **For how long?** (a) The amount of instruction is determined by the weekly and annual curriculum requirements. In most schools, English is taught 2–3 hours per week, while in specialized language schools it may reach up to 6 hours per week. (b) Instruction may be intensive (accelerated and short-term) or extensive (spread over a longer period). In schools, extensive language instruction is generally implemented [3].

Let us examine these concepts in greater detail. The first component of educational conditions concerns learners' age characteristics and general level of development. It is well known that each stage of a child's development possesses distinctive features.

The second component of educational conditions is the concept of **language experience**. In this context, the term is interpreted from a narrow linguodidactic perspective. A learner's experience includes general awareness of objective reality, knowledge of lexical, grammatical, and phonological language resources, and the ability to receive and convey information within a particular topic area.

Regardless of whether a learner has acquired one or more languages, a certain level of language experience is formed. In language teaching, this experience is interpreted through three components: **speech, linguistic, and linguistic-theoretical**.

- The **speech component** refers to communicative competence, that is, the ability to convey information and understand the ideas of others.
- The **linguistic component** involves the use of language phenomena for obtaining and transmitting information.
- The **linguistic-theoretical component** refers to knowledge about language phenomena.

Together, these three components constitute the concept of language proficiency.

Language experience is initially formed through the native language. As an individual learns two or more languages, additional layers of linguistic experience develop. Consequently, speech, linguistic, and theoretical linguistic components become enriched in memory and cognition. Various linguistic means and strategies from different languages are activated during communication. As a result, the educational process must address the problem of distinguishing between negative transfer

(interference) and positive transfer (transposition) both within a single language and across different languages.

Learners' language experience represents the sum of knowledge, skills, and competencies accumulated through three languages. Issues concerning the volume, scope of application, and interrelationship of this experience fall within the methodological principle of taking language experience into account. Language experience may either hinder foreign language learning through **negative transfer (interference)** or facilitate it through **positive transfer (transposition)**.

Research studies have examined psycholinguistic phenomena occurring within learners' language experience, including:

- (a) transfer from the native language to the second language;
- (b) transfer from the native language to the foreign language;
- (c) transfer from the second language (Russian) to the foreign language;
- (d) transfer from both the native and second languages to the foreign language.

Both positive and negative effects of these forms of transfer have been investigated.

Another component of educational conditions concerns the amount of time allocated to English language instruction. The above analysis of educational conditions is necessary because this primary linguodidactic phenomenon, derived from objective reality, serves as the basis for determining educational objectives according to the demands of the current stage of societal development.

It is well known that every objective arises from a specific need. An objective represents a general direction in education and a plan for accomplishing particular tasks. In foreign language teaching, four main objectives are recognized: **practical, educational, moral (formative), and developmental** objectives.

The purpose of teaching English in secondary schools is to develop learners' ability to use the target language as a means of communication, enhance their cognitive activity, and cultivate linguistic and communicative competence. All intended objectives are closely interconnected and mutually supportive within the educational process.

The meaning of the **practical objective** can be inferred from its name: it implies the use of the language in learners' actual activities and practice. Although foreign language teaching methodology provides various definitions and interpretations of practical language learning, some teachers mistakenly equate practical language proficiency solely with oral communication or speaking skills.

Such an interpretation is inaccurate, since communication and information exchange occur not only through oral language (speaking and listening comprehension) but also through written language (reading and writing) [2].

The term *practical objective* is also interpreted differently in language-related school subjects. Research has demonstrated that this concept acquires different meanings in the process of learning the three languages taught at school.

In the school context, the native language serves as a means of preparing learners who possess oral and written communication skills.

Methodologists specializing in foreign language teaching do not share a single view regarding the practical objective. Rather, they interpret it differently depending on the educational context [4].

One group of foreign language methodologists understands the term *practical objective* as achieving a level of language proficiency that is insufficient for professional purposes but adequate for further study according to learners' interests or future specialization. Within this perspective, practical objectives may include:

- acquiring non-professional foreign language competence;
- mastering the basic types of speech activity;
- developing competence in all types of speech activity;
- engaging in oral and written communication in a foreign language.

Another group of scholars considers the ability to express one's thoughts orally and in writing, as well as to understand the ideas of others, as the essence of the practical objective. Some researchers further argue that this concept should also encompass teaching the culture of the people whose language is being studied.

According to the modern educational concept, the practical objective of foreign language teaching requires the development of communicative skills that enable secondary school students to acquire communicative (speech interaction), linguistic (language-related knowledge), country studies (knowledge about the country where the target language is spoken), and linguocultural (knowledge about the culture of the people who speak the target language) competencies.

The English language curriculum for secondary schools identifies the following practical objectives that students are expected to achieve:

1. To read and comprehend socio-political and popular scientific literature within the scope of the curriculum.
2. To communicate orally and in writing in English within the requirements of the curriculum [3].

The ultimate practical goal of teaching English to secondary school students is the development of speech skills and competencies in reading, oral communication (speaking and listening comprehension), and writing. In short, learning English for practical purposes means acquiring and transmitting necessary information through the medium of the English language. The information acquired serves to increase students' knowledge, contribute to their education, and promote their personal development [4].

The practical objective serves as both a foundation and a condition for educating, nurturing, and developing students through communication in English. Upon completing their school education, students should be able to understand spoken and written English (through listening and reading) and express their thoughts in the language (through speaking and writing). The nature of the information to be received and conveyed will be discussed in the section entitled “Teaching Content.”

These tasks require that the teaching of all subjects included in the secondary school curriculum be subordinated to this objective. As a general educational subject, English contributes, alongside other disciplines, to the education, upbringing, and comprehensive development of students. Before discussing the general educational objective of English language teaching, it is appropriate to consider several views and interpretations of this concept within the field of didactics.

Education, as a form of cognitive activity, is interpreted in educational theory as:

- a) the formation of specific knowledge, skills, and competencies in learners;
- b) the development of particular views, worldviews, and beliefs;
- c) ensuring that learners become educated, well-mannered, cultured, and well-rounded individuals;
- d) the development of abilities related to a particular profession or field of activity [2].

Based on the aims and objectives established for the subject, the process of learning English contributes to the development of students' **communicative competence**, that is, their ability to use language as a means of communication. Communicative competence consists of:

Linguistic competence (knowledge of the language system),



Sociocultural competence (social and cultural knowledge),

Speech skills and communicative abilities.

Together, these components enable learners to use English effectively and appropriately in various communicative situations.

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