

## APPLICATION OF “ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT” THEORY IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES WITHIN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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The article describes methods of applying the theory developed by Brunner D, as well as “scaffolding” for overcoming the zone of proximal development introduced by Vygotsky L. S. Teaching allows building the learning process, taking into account the zone of proximal development of each student, in such a way so that it is based on the student’s basic knowledge, speed of learning language material and mastering features by each student individually. The urgency of the research is justified on the grounds that a principal concern for developing foreign language teaching methodology in an inclusive class is becoming ever more acute, due to the development of inclusive education in Kazakhstan. The article analyzes English language textbooks in order to determine their conformity to the “zone of proximal development” theory. The article deals with the advantages and disadvantages of using scaffolding in a foreign language teaching process within inclusive education. The examples are given for working with students in an inclusive class by using scaffoldings.

**Key words:** *inclusive education, zone of proximal development, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Bloom’s taxonomy, Vygotsky, Brunner, students with special educational needs, constructivist theories*

Foreign language teaching in the context of inclusive education should be provided with a number of conditions for its successful implementation, including teacher’s knowledge of teaching methods in an inclusive classroom, besides material and technical equipment and ensuring training of specialists in various fields.

Currently, future teachers are taught learning basics within inclusive education. However, this elective course is general and has no answer to the question of how to teach a foreign language and what foreign language teaching methods are more effective in an inclusive education for students of different levels training and language skills.

In addition to changes in general approaches to learning, the principles of teaching a foreign language, which in the Soviet school were built on native-based fundamental learning of a foreign language, are also changing. Since recently, teaching has been conducted on the basis of educational and methodological complexes developed in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which implies, for example, not systematic memorization, but using context for studying grammatical phenomena [1; 2].

It should be noted that the tasks in such textbooks are developed on the basis of Bloom’s taxonomy [2; 7-8]: knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and assessment. That is, if we consider a typical English textbook, then we will find that:

The first task allows the teacher to check the level of learning a new topic by students and introduce new words (knowledge), for example, to match words and pictures;

According to the second task, the teacher checks new lexical and grammatical material (understanding), for example, answer the questions or insert missing words;

In the third task, students should use current knowledge (application), for example, listen to the text and answer the questions using new words;

In the fourth task, students should analyze the knowledge gained (analysis), for example, study the rule and answer the questions to it or play a dialogue using new words on a new lexical topic;

According to the fifth task, students should create some kind of their product, using the knowledge gained (synthesis), for example, to do a project work;

At the final stage, students should determine whether they achieved the goals and tasks set at the beginning of a new topic introduction, and where they still have gaps (assessment) [3].

As a rule, assessment is performed by tasks for self-assessment, which are included in the syllabus, and formative or summative assessment work. The latter is carried out at the end of the section or term studied.

In addition to the principles of Bloom's taxonomy, this delivery clearly traces the "zone of proximal development" theory. The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a theoretical constructs introduced by L. Vygotsky in the early 1932-1934 for characterizing the relationship between learning and child's mental development.

"ZPD determines functions that haven't grown ripe yet, but are still in the ripening process, which will become ripe tomorrow, but now are still in its infancy; functions, which can be called not the fruits of development, but like the development of buds, that is, which only becomes ripe" [4; 42]. That means the zone of proximal development is determined by the content of those tasks which cannot be solved by the child independently, but is able to do it together with an adult. The knowledge, initially available to the child under teacher's supervision, later becomes his own achievement (skills, abilities).

Developing the idea of his "ZPD", Vygotsky gave the leading role to an adult [5, XXXIII]. However, within the updated education content, when the lesson is not teacher-centered, assistance in overcoming the zone of proximal development can be given by adults, peers, a textbook, the Internet, books and various objects surrounding the child. An adult should act only as a training provider in this process, guiding child's development, but not as an authoritarian leader.

Nevertheless, giving the leading role to an adult, Vygotsky noted that a team also influences child's mental development. He said about the developmental dependence of egocentric speech and independent reasoning on the interaction in the team. That is, a child, communicating with others and building up some logical reasoning, argumentation of which depends on his mental development, can move this kind of reasoning from outside to inside: from his communication with others into his egocentric speech addressed to himself, and then to his own reasoning [6; 202].

ZPD regulations must be used in the updated program. This is due to differences in the traditional form of education and the updated program. When teaching the traditional form of education the student received a certain content knowledge throughout a term or a year and after that, the knowledge gained was tested or examined. According to the test results, weak, talented and students with a foreign language learning increased motivation were built an educational route, which would allow the above categories of children to improve their language skills. The conducted work was rather complex, as it required an individual approach to each student. In theory, it was focused on students A (talented, gifted, increased motivation students, bright) and students C (students with disabilities, weak and retarded students, deviant behavior students, oralmans (repatriated Kazakhs), ungraded school students, decreased motivation students), but in fact it was directed only at students B (middle level students).

This happened because students A and C either received individual tasks and were out of general work, or had to work with everyone, and the tasks targeted at students B, were too difficult for students C and too easy and uninteresting for students A. Students C, unable to cope with the task, or they did in such a way that they understood how far they were behind the rest, and students A, who were not developed by such tasks at all, lost interest and didn't improve their knowledge.

Therefore, only the level of student's current development was determined. The psychologist should inevitably take into account both the current level as well as ZPD when assessing the state of development [7; 905].

The updated program requires building activity in a slightly different way. For example, we determined by testing that two students know how Present Simple is formed. If we do not dwell on this, but try to find out what way both students do tasks built for the next level of language skills which they cannot do independently and if we show them how to do such tasks, ask leading questions, focus on literary texts etc., it turns out that one of students given an assistance understands in what cases Present Simple is used, and the other can tell the difference between Present Simple and Present Continuous.

This gap between current education skills of a tense form, the developmental degree of which is determined by using tasks done independently and the level gained by the student when doing grammar tasks in cooperation, determines ZPD. In our example, this zone for one child is expressed by his ability to determine cases of using Present Simple and a comparison of two forms of Present tense and choice of the most suitable to the situation for another.

As shown from the example, both students have a different level of language competences development and the degree of mastering the material. So, ZPD is different for both. However, both students managed to do the tasks successfully, achieved the goal by knowing and using Present Simple in speech and were able to get out of their knowledge's comfort zone and develop their language skills, each at their own level.

When teaching the traditional form of education, there was an outside chance that students C would ever become successful, that is, they could overcome their zone of proximal development. This happened

because ZPD was too huge to overcome or the student had no way to overcome it, even if he had an example to follow (student A or B did the first task on the board as an example). There should be some transition from what the child can do to what he can't in order to follow.

If everything could be imitated, regardless of the developmental state, then both children would do all tasks, aimed at their language competence level easily, according to CEFR. In fact, it turns out that the child performs tasks, closest to his level of development, more easily even in cooperation. Then, the difficulty of doing the task increases and finally becomes insuperable even in cooperation. The transition of the child from what he can do independently to what he can do in cooperation is the most sensitive symptom characterizing his dynamics of development and success. It comes in line with his ZPD [7; 906].

L. Vygotsky gives an important place in overcoming ZPD to imitation in his work "Thinking and speech", which is the main form of learning influences development [5; 220]. Schooling is built on imitation to a large extent. The child learns at school not what he can do independently but what he still can't, and this becomes achievable for him in cooperation with the teacher and under his guidance. Learning of new things is the main in the child's education. Therefore ZPD, which determines this area of transitions available to the child, turns out to be the most defining moment towards the learning and development.

Imitation in this case is as a kind of scaffolding. In pedagogical and psychological context scaffolding means the educational process support by giving, for example, such advising prompts as instructions, nudging and other types of assistance. As soon as the student is able to do the task independently, scaffolding is gradually taken away [8].

Despite the fact that the theory of scaffolding belongs to constructivist theories, its definition is mistakenly attributed to L. S. Vygotsky. The term "scaffolding" first appeared in 1976 in the article by such American cognitive psychologists as Bruner, Wood and Ross. At that time, it wasn't attributed to Vygotsky's work yet. They chose the "scaffolding" metaphor to describe the form of support offered by teachers to a child. In the process of creating scaffoldings, the child needs help to do the task that he cannot perform on his own. The child is offered help in areas which exceed his current level of knowledge. The goal is to allow him to solve the problem mostly without guidance. Only in 1985, Jerome Bruner noted that there was a parallel between the scaffolding and Vygotsky's theory of ZPD concepts [9].

Certainly, there are both **advantages** and **disadvantages** in using **scaffolding** in learning. **The advantages** are:

1. The student takes part at the lessons. He is not just an information user, given to him by the teacher. Most probably, he develops new skills, based on his previous knowledge, by himself.

2. The student is motivated. Showing him what he can achieve with the help of a competent person, a weak student understands he is able to create things which he considered impossible doing before. Teacher's positive feedback contributes to his further motivation as well.

3. The student is rarely disappointed. It is very important to prevent the student, prone to frustration, from dropping out of the learning process and refusing to follow the lesson. The scaffolds can keep him by focusing on his individual skills.

**The disadvantages** are:

1. It takes a lot of effort. There is often no time needed for finishing a lesson that takes into account previous knowledge and potential knowledge (ZPD) of each student.

2. The teaching staff has insufficient skills. From the scaffolding theory viewpoint, teachers should be specially trained in order to use this learning strategy in full. Teachers are not ready to give a task to students for doing independently and allow them to make mistakes.

3. There are often no examples and recommendations on how a teacher can plan his lessons on a certain topic by using scaffold [10].

Various **methods and techniques** can be used as **scaffoldings** at foreign language lessons:

1. **Organizers** and **tools** that present new information for a student (ways to organize information). They organize the information in such a way as to help students understand new and difficult material. Such organizers include:

Venn diagram, which allows comparing two categories and identifying differences and general criteria, is made up in the form of two crossed circles. One of them describes features proper to only one category, the other describes features proper to the second one. The features, proper to both categories, are named in the crossing place of these circles. For example, we can compare the cases of using different tense forms or the forms of passive and active voice with the help of Venn diagram.

Flow charts are charts describing algorithms or processes where certain steps are demonstrated as blocks of various forms, interconnected by lines and indicating the sequence direction. The use of flow charts is varied: for example, starting from describing the formation of various grammatical forms or lexical

units and ending with an explanation of how to work on a particular topic and to handle a new lexical and grammar material.

Chart is a short summary or a so-called sketch of some topic. The chart, like a flow chart, allows us to organize an algorithm for working on a new topic. In addition, the chart application allows us to describe briefly the content of any topic and be used as prompts (scaffolding) in the future.

Assessment criteria are described in topic activity results. They can be developed both by the teacher himself and by the students together with the teacher or by themselves. Moreover, the assessment criteria can be either a student's activity assessment put by a teacher or other students, or achievable and unachievable goal assessment set at the beginning of a new topic introduction.

2. **Modeling** is the presentation of desirable behavior, knowledge or tasks to students. Modeling is used for:

- presentation of tasks that should be done by students independently. For example, students read the text on a card in order to create a similar one that will describe their own situation.

- step-by-step guide. Step-by-step guides, like flow charts, can be used to help students understand how to work on a new topic.

It is the encouragement of students in a new problem or task activity, that is, a practical task that allows students to work with materials and stimulates their need for knowledge. For example, students should be given a model of a house or room for its detailed description when having such lexical topic as "House".

3. **Concept maps** are another kind of organizer, graphic tools for organizing, presenting and displaying the connection between knowledge and concepts. Concept maps include:

The spider map is organized as follows: the main topic is in the center, subtopics move away from the main topic. This format really makes the map look like a spider. This type of a map is ideal for writing an essay, since it helps to generate the accompanying conditions, to understand primary and secondary properties of objects. It performs the role of a lexical organizer very well at the initial stage.

Hierarchical/chronological map allows us to organize events or concepts in a hierarchical or chronological order. It is very useful when working with texts in which you need to remember a logical or chronological order.

A system map is like a spider map organizes information, but unlike the second, the system map components are not interconnected. It consists of drops where the words are written into, which in turn can be outlined/connected with another drop. Such a map helps to structure the system, as well as a spider map, and can be used for writing an essay.

The mental map is a thinking visualization technique. Applications of mental maps are very diverse. For example, they can be used to fix, understand and remember the content of a book or text, generate and write ideas, take in a new topic, work out a plan for working on a problem.

4. **Teaching tools** are the ways in which teachers present and explain new material to students. The way a new topic being presented is a critical component for effective learning. The use of pictures, graphic organizers, video, audio files and other technical teaching tools can make the explanation of a new material more attractive, motivating and meaningful for learning.

5. **Teaching material** is an additional resource used to support teaching and learning. These tools can provide students with the necessary information, such as task instructions, learning goals, tasks and practice, for example, tasks that need to be done. Such tools are necessary for students to master new knowledge and skills. Teaching material is useful for explanations and examples.

6. **Hints or reminders** are physical or verbal signal set to make the learner recall the material studied before. The prompts can be: pointing, nodding, tapping with a finger or foot, ringing the bell, asking leading questions, placing reference materials in a visible place. The latter can be developed both by the teacher and students themselves, with or without teacher's help.

To determine how successfully a student has overcome his ZPD in learning a new topic, it is necessary to observe two things:

1. Setting a goal at the beginning of a new topic presentation.

2. Assessment and analysis of overcoming ZPD in learning a new topic or after its completion.

Foreign language learning in elementary school and even in the fifth grade is completely under teacher's control, as they have no skills in analyzing their achievements and planning, since their prefrontal cortex is underdeveloped. But already at this stage, the teacher may ask questions that will guide the child in this process. For example: "Look carefully at page 30. What do you see? What do you think we are going to study today? What mistakes do you see in your classwork? What words were spelled wrong? What is the correct spelling of this word?"

In the fifth grade, goals and tasks are set at the beginning of each topic. For example: “In this section: I talk about daily activities. I listen and read a legend. I ask and answer the questions about past events” [3; 44].

In the sixth grade, there are no such goals, that is, the students are supposed to set the goals on a new topic by themselves.

Formative assessment tasks are used to define the midpoint assessment and analysis of overcoming ZPD. That is, the task of such test is to be performed by the students (or a teacher at the initial stage) to determine inaccessible zones and develop a follow-up plan for correction. Summative assessment is performed to determine how successfully ZPD has been overcome, what zones still remain inaccessible, what was achieved and what you should pay attention to in the future.

The zone of proximal development determination allows the learner to overcome it, gaining new knowledge at his own pace, correct disadvantages and use advantages for extending this zone, being in a success situation. The student becomes an active participant in this process: defining his ZPD and using various types of scaffolding, he becomes able to make a significant progress for himself in foreign language learning, regardless of his developmental level and language competence skills. Moreover, students A will not take advantage in obtaining new knowledge and will have to work on a par with other students, students C will remain interested and successful, and students B will be able to reach a new level for themselves. Each student will get a quality result in foreign language learning, irrespective of their needs.

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### ИНКЛЮЗИВТІ БІЛІМ БЕРУ ЖАҒДАЙЫНДА ШЕТ ТІЛІН ОҚЫТУ ҮДЕРІСІНДЕ "ЖАҚЫН АРАДАҒЫ ДАМУ АЙМАҒЫ ТЕОРИЯСЫНЫҢ" ЕРЕЖЕЛЕРІН ҚОЛДАНУ

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Бұл мақалада Д.Бруннердің тұжырымдамасын қолдану тәсілдері, Л.С. Выготский енгізген жақын арадағы даму аймағынан өтуге көмектесетін «көпір» түрлерінің түсінігі сипатталады. Әрбір оқушының жақын даму аймағын ескере отырып, оқыту білім алушының бастапқы білімдеріне, тілдік материалды меңгеру

жылдамдығына, әрбір білім алушының жеке-жеке меңгеру ерекшеліктеріне негізделетіндей оқыту бағдарламасын құруға мүмкіндік береді. Мақаланың өзектілігі – Қазақстанда инклюзивті білім берудің дамуын ескере отырып, инклюзивті сыныпта шетел тілін оқыту әдістемесін әзірлеу мәселесінің белсенді талқылануы. Мақалада ағылшын тілі оқулықтарының "жақын даму аймағы" теориясына сәйкестігін анықтау мақсатында талдау жүргізіледі. Инклюзивті білім беру жағдайында білім алушылардың шет тілін оқыту үдерісінде «көпірлерді» қолданудың кемшіліктері мен артықшылықтары қарастырылады. «Көпір» ретінде әрекет ете алатын, инклюзивтік сыныптағы оқушылармен жасалатын жұмыстың үлгі-нысандары келтірілген.

**Түйін сөздер:** *инклюзивті білім беру, жақын арадағы даму аймағы, Блум таксономиясы, шетел тілін меңгеру деңгейін анықтаудың еуропалық өлшемдері, Выготский, Бруннер, ерекше білім алу қажеттіліктері бар оқушылар, сындарлылық теориясы*

## **ПРИМЕНЕНИЕ ПОЛОЖЕНИЙ «ТЕОРИИ ЗОНЫ БЛИЖАЙШЕГО РАЗВИТИЯ» В ПРОЦЕССЕ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ В УСЛОВИЯХ ИНКЛЮЗИВНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ**

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В статье описываются способы применения теории, разработанной Д.Бруннером - «подмости» для преодоления зоны ближайшего развития, понятие которой было введено Л.С. Выготским. Преподавание с учетом зоны ближайшего развития каждого ученика позволяет выстроить обучение так, чтобы оно основывалось на исходных знаниях обучаемого, скорости усвоения языкового материала, особенностях его усвоения каждым обучающимся в отдельности. Актуальность статьи обосновывается тем, что с учетом развития инклюзивного образования в Казахстане все острее встает вопрос о разработке методики преподавания иностранного языка в инклюзивном классе. В статье проводится анализ учебников английского языка с целью определения их соответствия теории «зона ближайшего развития». Рассматриваются недостатки и преимущества применения подмостков в процессе обучения иностранному языку обучающихся в условиях инклюзивного образования. Приводятся примерные формы работы с обучающимися в инклюзивном классе, которые могут выступать в качестве подмостков.

**Ключевые слова:** *инклюзивное образование, зона ближайшего развития, таксономия Блума, общеевропейские критерии определения уровня владения иностранным языком, Выготский, Бруннер, обучающиеся с особыми образовательными потребностями, конструктивистские теории.*



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