METHODS OF TEACHING METAPHORS

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Annotation: The article discusses the role of metaphors in English as a Second Language (ESL) acquisition, emphasizing their importance in enhancing learners' reading, vocabulary retention, and critical thinking skills. It highlights common challenges, such as cultural differences in metaphorical imagery and teachers' tendency to underestimate the value of metaphor instruction. The authors argue that metaphors should be integrated into vocabulary teaching, as they are part of everyday communication and essential for developing communicative competence. Various techniques are suggested for different proficiency levels, including matching exercises, metaphor identification in argumentative texts, creative rephrasing, and using advertising materials to foster metaphor awareness. The study underlines that working with metaphors not only strengthens language skills but also promotes cross-cultural understanding, creativity, and critical evaluation.

Keywords: ESL (English as a Second Language), metaphor teaching, critical thinking, cultural awareness, vocabulary retention, cross-cultural analysis, conceptual metaphors, interactive activities, communicative skills, language learning strategies

Introduction: Today teachers pay more attention to teaching of strategies for comprehending and producing metaphors in ESL acquisition[1]. Metaphor can be a helpful tool for improving reading skills, as it maydevelop learners' critical evaluation of the text, encourage them to express their opinions or foster debate on some problems, enrich problem-solving tasks and make them more interesting for the students.

The issue is that many teachers handle metaphors in a way that makes ESL learners believe they are separate from daily life and not an essential part of normal speech or writing. Some educators exclude metaphor instruction from their curriculum, undervaluing its role in language acquisition and assuming it will be too difficult for students to remember. Teaching and learning metaphors is further complicated by the frequent partial or complete differences in how specific concepts are expressed metaphorically across languages. . For example, the English expression *to make a mountain out of a molehill* has a different metaphorical image in Russian – instead of English images of a mountain and a molehill we have the images of a fly and an elephant (literally, to make an elephant out of a fly), although the meaning is the same,

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[1] Temnikova I., Nagel O. Cognition focused technologies in EFL teaching (TSU case study), *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2014, vol. 154, - P.37.

i.e. greatly exaggerating something. So, the metaphorical image from the native culture may interfere with the language learning process in the context of metaphor awareness. That's why metaphors should be an integral part of vocabulary instruction; otherwise it may prevent learners' communicative ability as a whole.

Lazar admits the importance of vocabulary building skill in understanding and creating figurative extensions for a word in English[2]. We believe that engaging with metaphors stimulates both language development and learners' critical thinking. This critical thinking involves cross-cultural analysis of metaphors, which means examining and comparing the linguistic and cultural aspects of the native and foreign languages to identify the most accurate meaning of a given metaphor.

To overcome these difficulties, it is necessary to provide the classroom foreign language with authentic texts containing metaphors from modern books, magazines and newspapers. We should encourage our students to use all the available contextual clues when working out the meaning of new and unfamiliar metaphoric vocabulary. The study and comparison of the topics covered in the home and foreign media at the same time can serve as a source of study of national values, patterns of everyday life, and it will contribute to breaking the stereotypes and creating a more holistic view of the world as a cultural space. Our experience shows the efficiency of active involvement of students in pair and group work, project work, etc., including working with proverbs and sayings. At the same time it does not prevent the work with dictionaries of idioms, slang and phraseology. The adopted teaching strategy is closely connected with students' level. For elementary learners the acquaintance with metaphor can begin with common conceptual metaphors which represent the same meaning in both foreign and native language, e.g. *the rat race, to digest the info,* etc. The teaching techniques at the first stage may include matching the definition with the metaphor or two halves of the sentence, or filing the gaps.

Another effective method for advanced learners is to highlight that argumentative texts frequently rely on one or two core conceptual metaphors, such as "society is a sick body." Students can be provided with several short texts and asked to identify these metaphors and explain their meanings. As a follow-up, they may be tasked with expressing the same idea through different metaphors and reflecting on the implications of those choices. This approach also strengthens their critical thinking skills.

Metaphors can also be used for vocabulary building. The research has shown that raising metaphoric awareness in this way improves vocabulary retention[3].Students can be presented with a central, conceptual metaphor(such as *"the science is a moving*

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[2] Hotten J.C. *The Slang Dictionary*, London: John Camden Hotten, 1865, - P.12.
[3] Makovskii M.M. *Angliiskie sotsial'nye dialekty* [English social dialects], Moscow: Vysshayashkola, 1982, - P.137. (In Russ.)

vehicle'') and asked to come up with as many possible manifestations of the metaphor as possible, e.g. *the science is a high speed train*. They might then be asked to think of meanings for expressions such as *"a rocket scientist"*, *"ideas hamster"*, *"cash cow"*, which are used in the appropriate context. Another way of introducing and practising metaphor usage is advertising products which may be helpful for developing both language and communicative skills. Students can be asked to prepare a colorful presentation about some product using imagery devices and other students should discuss it, give some recommendations and opinions. Or the teacher can take any advertisement (from the Internet, a newspaper, etc.) and introduce it to the students for discussion. Through these activities, learners broaden their metaphorical vocabulary while also strengthening their critical thinking. Teaching a foreign language is a complex task, as instructors must focus not only on developing the core communicative skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, but also on addressing extra-linguistic aspects such as metaphor use, which is essential for understanding the culture embedded in the target language.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the teaching of metaphors in ESL classrooms plays a vital role in developing learners' communicative competence, critical thinking, and cultural awareness. Metaphors are not just stylistic devices but an essential part of everyday language that help students comprehend texts more deeply and express ideas more creatively. Teachers should integrate authentic materials, cross-cultural analysis, and interactive activities to overcome the challenges caused by metaphorical differences between languages. By gradually introducing metaphor-based techniques according to learners' levels, educators can enhance vocabulary retention, improve problem-solving skills, and foster meaningful communication. Ultimately, raising metaphor awareness enables students to gain a more holistic understanding of both the foreign and their own culture.

List of used literature

1. Temnikova I., Nagel O. Cognition focused technologies in EFL teaching (TSU case study), *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2014, vol. 154, - P.37.
2. Hotten J.C. *The Slang Dictionary*, London: John Camden Hotten, 1865, - P.12.
3. Makovskii M.M. *Angliiskie sotsial'nye dialekty* [English social dialects], Moscow: Vysshayashkola, 1982, - P.137. (In Russ.)