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TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS IN CHINA AND UKRAINE

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ABSTRACT

The research need is determined by active educational partnership between People's Republic of China and other countries, and Ukraine too. The collaboration promotes the comparative pedagogical researches of educational process of both countries.

The content of the Recommendations of the European Council, the recommendations of the British Council on language education demand new requirements for the language quality teaching and learning, the development of new forms, methods and tools in the world. In this regard, it is important to study the principles of teaching English in China and Ukraine.

*The **purpose** is to outline the basics of teaching English at school in China and Ukraine.*

***Methodology.** The analytical method is used to investigate English teaching process; the comparative method is used to analyze the experience of teaching English in two countries.*

***Results.** Teaching English in China as the new reality shows that the National Curriculum has made English a compulsory subject for Chinese schools. The teaching method in China differs greatly from the international, Western one. It is based on information memorization, as well as it is focused on the study of the Chinese language, culture, and history.*

Only in international or private schools in China, teaching is conducted according to international standards. To learn English, the British or

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American model of learning is used, based on communication and discussing learning material and new information, and not on copying or memorizing it. According to the new Curriculum, for young learners, English is taught as a subject two or three hours a week in 1-3 grades, three or four hours a week in 4-6 grades. International English curricula focus on communication and skills, but the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China has decided to expand its goals to national ones and adapt the international English curriculum for Chinese young learners.

Experience of teaching English in Ukraine shows that English is studied from the 1st grade, from the age of 6, according to the "New Ukrainian School" curriculum. The British Council in Ukraine took care of teaching English to young learners greatly. It trains a lot of English teachers in Ukraine. Teaching English to young learners has moved very much in providing the communicative approach. At English lessons children learn English by communication using pictures, songs, poems, fairy tales, short plays, games and holidays.

Conclusion. China becomes the world leader in the number of English learners as it is necessary for schools, Universities, and future careers. Now about 400 million Chinese learn English, there are more English learners in China than English speakers. The English teaching method is mostly old school, and traditional, but the situation is changing. Most Chinese consider that English is a necessary means of bringing China closer to the whole world. Ukrainian teachers and learners are more trained for the new requirements to teach and learn English due to the British Council's help in Ukraine. The communicative approach is basically used for teaching English. Ukrainian teachers and learners have got a definite positive experience to teach and learn English successfully.

KEYWORDS: Teaching, Learning, English, China, Ukraine, Young Learner.

INTRODUCTION

The research need is determined by active educational partnership between People's Republic of China and other countries, and Ukraine too. The collaboration promotes the comparative pedagogical researches of educational process of both countries.

The content of the Recommendations of the European Council, the recommendations of the British Council on language education demand new requirements for the language quality teaching and learning, the development of new forms, methods and tools in the world. In this regard, it is important to

study the principles of teaching English in China and Ukraine.

In general, English education in China has always been valued. The education system in China is divided into primary school (six years), junior high school (three years) and senior high school (three years), which means that Chinese learners generally have to go through 12 years of study before passing the college entrance examination to enter a university.

During twelve years of learning, English is very important. Now, most primary schools start to teach English from the first year, and the last one is not higher than the third grade, and even some

preschool children learn English before they enter primary school.

In junior and senior high schools, English is one of the most important subjects. Good command of the English language is a crucial factor in college admission decisions. In some universities in China applicants are required to pass the College English Proficiency Test (CET4) in order to get a degree certificate, which also makes it necessary for most students to keep learning English during their college years.

In China's postgraduate entrance examination, English has become the most influential subject, and students' English scores directly determine the final result. Therefore, in China, the importance of English is obvious. Students must learn English all the time, it makes English more and more popular in China.

In Ukraine teaching English has become very popular for the last 20 years. English is extremely important in Ukraine.

Firstly, the purpose of teaching English is communication, as it must be, the development of active skills and their practical use, not an assessment for the studied topic.

Secondly, a teacher's friendly attitude, not the authoritarian work style.

Thirdly, games as a practice, a dynamic change of learners' attention, because learning English should be interesting, easy, and only in such a way it is effective in Ukraine.

The purpose is to outline the basics of teaching English at school in China and Ukraine.

METHODOLOGY

The analytical method is used to investigate English teaching process; the comparative method is used to analyze

the experience of teaching English in two countries.

RESULTS

Teaching English in China as the New Reality

So, let's analyze primary English education. The National Curriculum in China since 2001 has made English a compulsory subject for Chinese elementary schools (Kaduhr, & Fujisawa, 2009).

The National Curriculum was adopted a bit in 2011 (Gil, & Adamson, 2011). As a rule, English is studied in schools from the 2nd grade, from the age of 7, less often from the 4th grade, from the age of 9 (Wang, 2007).

In junior and senior high schools, English continues to be studied in China, it is included in the National Curriculum as the main subject.

Further to obtain a diploma of graduation from a college or University, an English language exam is required. All applicants to graduate school must pass an English language exam too. The level of English proficiency also affects career development in China, being one of the necessary demands (Meredith, 2022). So, let's analyze teaching in China schools in general.

As it is known, primary school in China is the first stage of compulsory education. Children study from the age of six from 1 to 6 grades. About 60% of the time is devoted to the main subjects as Chinese, Mathematics, then they teach English, Natural Science, Art, Music, Natural History and Geography. Practical classes begin from the 4th grade, learners work in workshops or on farms.

Chinese schools, in comparison with the Ukrainian ones, have more lessons, classwork and homework activities. The

teaching method in China differs greatly from the international Western (Ukrainian) one. It is based on information memorization, as well as it is focused on the study of the Chinese language, culture, and history.

Only in international or private schools in China, teaching is conducted according to international standards (Pettit, 2016). To learn English, the British or American model of learning is used, based on communication and discussing learning material and new information, and not on copying or memorizing it.

The peculiarity of Chinese lessons for young learners at schools is their early start, around 8 o'clock in the morning. In the first half of the day, there are four or five lessons, in the second there are three or four. In addition, China's elementary school has a physical training break, a lunch break, and a break for sleep.

The schedule for young learners is strictly structured. A certain time is agreed for doing homework at school after lessons. While doing homework at school, teachers monitor young learners carefully.

Only after completing homework, young learners can start reading fiction or other activities that are not related to the basic program, but they must remain in the classroom until the end of free time.

In China, all schools, unlike in Ukraine, have their own fenced area (campus) with an open sports ground, an indoor stadium for physical training, a gym and a swimming pool, and equipped classrooms for playing musical instruments.

In addition, there are clubs on campus aimed at the development of various abilities for young learners: from drawing to a drama club. Time for classes in

additional clubs is also taken into account in the schedule for young learners.

Thus, young learners from the 1st grade develop the discipline routine, it is also added by wearing the same uniform for everyone. And it is forbidden to use gadgets during classes and do homework at school. Even during the 15-minute break between lessons, it is forbidden to take out all smartphones or tablets, it is strongly recommended to leave them in the classroom.

In high school, schools strictly monitor the students' behaviour and their safety; it is almost impossible for a stranger to enter the school campus. On campus smoking, drinking alcohol or taking drugs are also prohibited in high school.

A discipline order in high school is strictly controlled, and with systematic rule violations students can be expelled. Though, students in high school usually set career goals, so, they need English very much (Gamlam, 2019).

Especially in some provinces in China that are closely connected with international trade, such as Shanghai, English is needed strongly (Qi, 2016). In the curriculum for Shanghai schools, it is indicated that young learners from 3 to 5 grades take a test at the semester end, although this is not an exam yet.

Thus, on the one hand, English is encouraged to learn, but not imposed (Yang, 2016). On the other hand, the Chinese Ministry of Education, in my view, may be concerned that the younger generation of Chinese, knowing English, can get any international information that has not been processed by Chinese censors and it may differ from the official Chinese ideology.

The Chinese People's Press, in collaboration with English publishing house Pearson, has written and published

two new series of English textbooks for Chinese learners.

Before using these textbooks, they underwent many tests and were eventually recommended for teaching and learning in China. According to these textbooks, learners from 25 provinces and cities of self-government are taught. Textbook series have been used in approximately 70% of primary and secondary schools across China.

That's why, for example, in 2021, English authentic textbooks disappeared from sale in the bookstores in Shanghai because they were not officially approved to be used by the Ministry of Education. So, it has become very difficult to find authentic English language textbooks for Chinese children. It is also very difficult to find it in online bookstores.

Most English textbooks are written or adopted by Chinese authors. The Chinese Ministry of Education does not allow the use of textbooks in schools written only by foreign authors. It is believed that foreign authors do not know the needs of Chinese children. In each textbook, along with the English word, an explanation is written in Chinese. According to the new Curriculum, for young learners, English is taught as a subject from two to three hours a week in 1-3 grades, three or four hours a week in 4-6 grades.

The main purpose of teaching English in a primary school as it is known from international experience is to develop young learners' communication and skills (Ren, 2017); to use English in everyday life and for further study. International English curricula focus on communication and skills (Li, 2019), but the Chinese Ministry of Education has decided to expand its goals and adapt the international English curriculum for Chinese young learners.

To achieve the best result in English teaching for young learners, the Ministry of Education in China has allowed the use of satellite television at lessons for educational purposes. Video can be used at lessons for no more than 25 minutes. In China, there is a separate channel where special educational cartoons and programs are demonstrated. Teachers of English can use the channel at lessons if the topics match the curriculum.

Unfortunately, classes for English lessons in public schools in cities and towns are not divided into groups. About 40 learners are taught English together (Gao, 2016). That's why in primary school in China, class work in the classroom predominates (Liu, 2011). In modern well-equipped schools any multimedia can be used, and information and communication technologies too (Bo, 2013). Such teaching means and tools are used in primary schools in large cities mostly.

Experience of Teaching English in Ukraine

In Ukraine, English is studied (Methods, 2013) from the 1st grade, from the age of 6 according to the "New Ukrainian School" curriculum (State Standard, 2019). In 2017-2019, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine together with international and national partners implemented a number of interrelated projects aimed at face-to-face and distance training teachers of 100 pilot Ukrainian schools to teach English to young learners in a new context.

The British Council in Ukraine took care of English teachers. 164 teachers of pilot schools and 25 methodologists of postgraduate pedagogical education took part in the training events with a total duration of 88 hours and received certificates.

Also, 17 master-trainers and 120 teachers-agents of change were trained, who then trained more than 17 thousand English teachers in Ukraine who started teaching first-graders in the 2018-2019 school year. So, teaching English has got effective preparation.

“New Ukrainian School” is a curriculum aimed at young learners’ development (Typical educational programs, n.d.; Savchenko, n.d.). It is necessary at English lessons to change the types of activities: young learners should not sit still at the desks for at least 10-15 minutes, they should move (Redko, 2018).

Therefore, it is important to change lesson activities (Makar, Derkach, 2020).

Young learners remember English better if it is presented in games, songs, rhymes, or storytelling. At English lessons, it is necessary to use poems, fairy tales, short plays, games using English songs and poems (Kavaler, n.d.).

It is a great pleasure for young learners to recite poems. Young learners willingly make their own "Little dictionary books with pictures" for new English words on the topic. Using their own pictures, young learners retell, describe objects, and share emotions.

At English lessons, young learners really should move a lot: during physical activity with English rhymes young learners repeat and remember new English words. The combination of movements and pronunciation helps them to learn English very much (Dudyk, & Zevchenko, 2017).

Last few years, with the help of the British Council in Ukraine, teaching English to young learners has moved a lot in providing a communicative approach. It differs from previous English teaching in primary schools (Bernatska, & Komogorova, 2019).

Let’s revise the basics of a communicative approach to teaching English:

- active pair and group work, communication first of all;
- use of visibility, authentic materials (Kostikova et al, 2020), digital tools (Komar, 2020; Kostikova et al, 2019; Kostikova et al, 2021; Shevchuk, 2021);
- achieving the expected results, feedback, and reflection.

Let’s analyze the basics of English lesson organization for young learners in the first grade in Ukraine. Some pieces of advice are the following. Any lesson should be communicative. A lesson lasts 35 minutes. Children's attention is short-lived, so it is necessary to change the activities in the classroom every 5-7 minutes.

Children are energetic and need constant movement. Regularly it is necessary to change outdoor games for quiet classroom activities. It is necessary to create positive motivation to learn English. Show children that you work with them with joy and pleasure that you are confident and sure of their success. In such a way children will also work with joy and pleasure.

It is needed to develop a lesson routine. Develop communicative skills using active, diverse activities. However, you can use one game at several lessons, and children like it. Vary pair, group, and individual activities (Voloshina, 2018).

A teacher keeps in touch with the class and each young learner during a lesson, using physical activities, songs, poems, movements, so-called body language, and emotional language (speak loudly or softly, in different tones). Give each young learner the opportunity to take an active part at a lesson.

As we know children learn about the environment by touch. Allow them to

touch toys, flashcards, and pictures, as well as to draw, create something themselves.

You can use a puppet show or a mask. Sometimes for shy children it is often difficult to talk before other children, but they can speak under a mask. It is very important to evaluate young learners verbally and only positively.

It is recommended not to teach more than four or five new words at a lesson. Let's remember that the aim of teaching English is communication, so particular attention should be paid to speaking and listening, developing communicative skills. Encourage young learners to communicate as much as possible in English, even at the beginner level.

And finally, pair or group activities in the classroom should be as simple as possible, so that children can understand them. It is necessary to give clear and simple instructions so that children understand what is expected of them. Use shorter activities as children's attention and concentration are short-lived. And children usually lose interest in the activity if it is too long and difficult.

DISCUSSION

As for the discussion, on the one hand, English education in Ukraine is more in line with international standards. At the same time, the classroom is more interesting and diversified. It pays more attention to children's learning through games, makes them move in class, gives full play to their subjective initiative, and strives to improve learners' comprehensive English ability.

On the other hand, China's English class is strict, the learners should under the requirements of a teacher to complete the class assignments and homework, although they lack interest.

But in China's English class, the learners can master the English words more quickly, and can also learn English grammar faster by concentrated reading and practice that the learners can quickly and skillfully master the knowledge of each lesson unit.

Although English classes in some parts of China are not in line with international standards and lack interest, it is the best way under the current national conditions of China. Because of the large population in China, the current way is the most reasonable to popularize English education in a more comprehensive way.

CONCLUSION

So, to conclude, China will become the world leader in the number of English learners as it is necessary for schools, universities, careers. Now about 400 million Chinese learn English, there are more English learners in China than English speakers.

The English teaching method is mostly old school, but the situation has changed. Most Chinese insist that English is a necessary means of bringing China closer to the whole world.

Ukrainian teachers and learners are more trained for the new requirements to teach and learn English due to the British Council in Ukraine. The communicative approach is basically used. Ukrainian teachers and learners have got the definite experience to teach and learn English successfully.

So, both countries should learn from each other and build a better English teaching system.

Figure 1.*At English lessons in China*

(<https://silkroadnews.org/upload/iblock/7f2/7f2f43417def47f8f6ef768ada2eb86c.jpg>)

Figure 2.*At English lessons in Ukraine*

(<https://i.ytimg.com/vi/xIH6Okv23XY/maxresdefault.jpg>)

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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АНОТАЦІЯ / ABSTRACT [in Ukrainian]:

**ВИКЛАДАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ МОЛОДШИМ ШКОЛЯРАМ У
КИТАЇ ТА УКРАЇНІ**

Необхідність дослідження визначається активним освітнім партнерством між Китайською Народною Республікою та іншими країнами, а особливо, Україною. Спільна співпраця сприяє порівняльно-педагогічним дослідженням освітнього процесу обох країн.

Зміст Рекомендацій Європейської Ради, рекомендацій Британської Ради щодо мовної освіти потребують нових вимог до якісного викладання та вивчення англійської мови, розробки нових освітніх форм, методів та засобів. У зв'язку з цим важливим є вивчення засад викладання англійської мови в Китаї та Україні.

Мета – окреслити основи викладання англійської мови в школі Китаю та України.

Методологія. Аналітичний метод використовується для дослідження процесу навчання англійської мови; порівняльний метод використовується для аналізу досвіду викладання англійської мови у двох країнах.

Результати. Викладання англійської мови в Китаї як нова реальність показує, що національна навчальна програма зробила англійську мову обов'язковим предметом для китайських шкіл. Методика навчання в Китаї значно відрізняється від міжнародної, західної. Вона заснована на запам'ятовуванні інформації, а також школа здебільшого орієнтована на вивчення китайської мови, культури, історії.

Тільки в міжнародних або приватних школах Китаю навчання англійської мови ведеться за міжнародними стандартами. Міжнародні навчальні програми з англійської мови зосереджені на спілкуванні та комунікативних навичках. Для вивчення англійської мови в таких школах використовується британська або американська модель навчання, заснована на спілкуванні та обговоренні навчального матеріалу та нової інформації, а не на заучуванні. Згідно з новим навчальним планом у Китаї для молодших школярів англійська мова викладається як предмет дві-три години на тиждень у 1-3 класах, три-чотири години на тиждень у 4-6 класах. Проте, китайський уряд вирішив адаптувати міжнародний навчальний план з англійської мови для китайських школярів, доповнивши його національними цілями.

Досвід викладання англійської мови в Україні показує, що англійська мова вивчається з 1 класу, з 6 років, за програмою «Нова українська школа». Британська Рада в Україні доклала багато зусиль для навчання англійської мови. Вона проводила в Україні системну перепідготовку вчителів англійської мови. Викладання англійської мови для молодших школярів значно змінилося на краще для забезпечення комунікативного підходу. На уроках англійської мови школярі вивчають її через спілкування, за допомогою малюнків, пісень, віршів, казок, коротких п'єс, через ігри та свята.

Висновок. Китай стає світовим лідером за кількістю охочих вивчати англійську мову, оскільки мова необхідна для шкіл, університетів, подальшої кар'єри. Зараз близько 400 мільйонів китайців вивчають англійську мову, у Китаї більше тих, хто вивчає англійську, ніж англословних носіїв. Метод викладання англійської мови переважно традиційний, але ситуація змінюється. Більшість китайців вважають, що англійська мова є необхідним засобом для наближення Китаю до

всього світу. Українські вчителі та учні більш підготовлені до нових вимог викладання та вивчення англійської мови завдяки сприянню Британської Ради в Україні. Основним підходом у навчанні є комунікативний. Українські вчителі та учні вже мають певний позитивний досвід для успішного викладання та вивчення англійської мови.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: викладання, навчання, англійська мова, Китай, Україна, школяр.

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