

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIDACTICS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we will look closely into foreign language didactics, analyse its expanded concept and its contemporary emphases. Our aim is to approach foreign language didactics as part of subject didactics but also via the construct of didactics itself. We intend to analyse the etymology of didactics, the ways it has been divided into various components, and to compare it with the concept of pedagogy. We will also study foreign language didactics as transdisciplinary science though closely linked to the conception of language, language proficiency, foreign language teaching and studying and equally as part of extensive societal progress and societal structures, such as national educational systems, human cultural capital growth, national identity and equity promotion.

Key words: *Language Learning and Language Teaching, international, Communicative language Teaching (CLT), cultural context, foreign language didactics; didactics; pedagogy; foreign language teaching; teaching–studying–learning process; foreign language; language proficiency; affordance;*

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a significant role in human connection. Although all creatures have their ways of communicating, humans are the only ones that have mastered cognitive language communication. Language allows us to share our ideas, thoughts, and feelings with others. It has the power to build societies, but also tear them down. It may seem clear, but if you're asking yourself, why is language essential? You'll have to break it down to truly understand why.

Learning a foreign language has become a significant demand in the present day. People learn a new language to qualify for education abroad, to communicate with their colleagues in international companies, or to learn a language because of entertainment.

MAIN PART

There are four basic language skills, listening, reading, speaking and writing in foreign language education and training (Bağçeci & Yaşar, 2007, p. 16; Barın, 1997) and they are indispensable parts of a language teaching. In language teaching these are divided into two; the ability to understand and read, and the ability to speak which are also regarded as speech and writing. On the other hand, the other indispensable elements in foreign language teaching are grammar and vocabulary (Balci, 2015). For successful and effective education and training in foreign language courses, these four basic language skills need to be developed and reinforced in accordance with the level and needs of the learners. Taking into consideration the stages in which a child learns his mother tongue, it has been adopted to teach basic language skills in that sense in a foreign language course. When looked at textbooks in education, it is seen that there is often listening-comprehension, after that reading comes followed by talking and finally writing. In many national and international literatures, it is possible to find articles about these skills in terms of their significance and purpose, thus this study will focus only on the aims and specific features that are intended to clarify the results of the student opinions in the research. The purpose of this study is not to question and describe the definition of the four basic skills in detail, its contribution to foreign language education; because this type of work has only been done in the direction of the opinions of teachers and linguists by focusing on a certain skill (Deneme & Demirel, 2012). For this reason, the aim of this research is to reveal how the students who are learning foreign languages are approaching the four basic language skills in general terms, their opinions on emotions and thoughts by identifying important issues within this framework. The problem is

not to determine the position of four core skills in foreign language teaching, or to question its definition, but to show how the students approach the problem and master these four basic skills.

Language didactics deals with the teaching and learning of foreign languages in an institutional setting. On the one hand, this concerns the development of foreign language skills (listening, comprehending audio-visual texts, reading, writing and speaking as well as the ability of language mediation); on the other hand, language didactics is about ways of learning and teaching grammar (morphology, syntax) and knowledge of vocabulary (orthography, pronunciation, register, meaning/connotations). Courses in language didactics focus on linguistic phenomena, mechanisms of language learning, character traits of speakers, desired linguistic competences and the conditions and methods of language classes. The focus of language didactics is influenced by developments in the domain of language research: linguistics, applied linguistics, second language acquisition research, language teaching research and language psychology. It is also informed by current didactic approaches within the branch of foreign language teaching (e.g. competence-orientation, action-orientation, learner-orientation).

Didactic teaching, which is one of the two main teaching disciplines, is a structured and teacher-focused method centered on teachers delivering lessons to students. If you work as a teacher, it's valuable to understand what didactic teaching is and how it differs from pedagogy so that you can use the best teaching approach for you and your students. In this article, we define didactic teaching, discuss didactic teaching approaches and list the major differences between didactics and pedagogy.

Didactic teaching is a teaching method that focuses on teachers giving lessons to students. Typically, teachers who use didactic teaching create structured lessons that focus on lectures. Teachers can use different teaching methods depending on the needs of their students, their personal preferences and other factors. Didactic teaching is often well-suited for teaching basic subjects and instructing students who thrive with structured directions.

A didactic teaching approach involves a teacher directly instructing a student through planned lessons and lectures. Didactic teaching is characterized by:

- Structured lesson plans: One of the top characteristics of didactic teaching is structured lesson plans. Teachers who use the didactic teaching approach keep their lessons clearly organized to present information to students directly.
- Specific learning objectives: Teachers who use the didactic teaching approach usually set specific learning objectives for their students. They design lesson plans and assign coursework to help their students achieve these objectives.
- Periodic performance evaluations: In the didactic teaching approach, teachers also complete periodic performance evaluations to gauge their students' progress toward achieving their learning objectives. Performance evaluations can also allow teachers to measure their students' understanding of what they're learning.
- Lectures from the teacher to the student: Didactic teaching also emphasizes lectures given by the teacher to the student. Often, students learn from lectures by taking notes and asking questions.
- Group discussions: In the didactic teaching approach, group discussions often follow a lecture or reading. Teachers can guide discussions by asking open-ended questions about the lesson and encouraging their students to think critically.
- Consistent learning schedules: Another key aspect of the didactic teaching approach is consistent learning schedules. Typically, classroom schedules that follow the didactic teaching approach change little from day to day.

Didactics, consisting language didactics as a subject-didactic component, represents a central part of educational sciences. Over the past years, foreign language didactics and foreign language teaching have been influenced by various types of emphases and practices. Foreign language didactics can be considered as part of subject didactics and pedagogy, but we must, at the same time, pay enough attention to the changes that have taken place in neighbouring sciences. We regard foreign language didactics as an extensive subject-didactic component of educational sciences, with a research emphasis on the teaching–studying–learning (TSL) process, in which studying foreign languages is equally important as teaching and learning them. We argue that foreign language didactics must be approached not only in a multi-, inter- and cross-disciplinary manner but also as a transdisciplinary science that has an autonomy of its own. This interpretation must be linked to the conception of language, language proficiency, foreign language teaching and studying. In our opinion, foreign language education serves well as the professional scientific background for language teachers, in the same way as didactics is regarded in Finland as the professional and scientific basis for the teaching profession. Further, we argue that in didactics it is still important how the teacher makes the student to study and to learn. Certain features that are essential for the foreign language didactic process, and which are in an interactional relationship between each other, include the following: purposiveness (intentionality), cultural context, interaction, content and methods. These can also be studied from the perspective of different language affordances. Foreign language teaching itself has developed over the past few decades from closed to open systems. This can be exemplified by the shift from drill methodology towards communicative language teaching; CLT).

Foreign language education, foreign language teaching and the views on language proficiency have also been strongly influenced by the changes in conceptions of knowledge and learning in the direction of socio-constructivism and socio-culturalism. At present, a foreign language is a skill subject, a knowledge subject and a cultural subject (LOPS, 2003) and, at its best, an empowering mediator that has an impact on an individual's whole personality (Tella, 1999). Foreign language didactics and foreign language teaching also have an impact on the realisation of various social, societal and moral values as part of large structures of our contemporary society. Key words: foreign language didactics; didactics; pedagogy; foreign language teaching; teaching–studying–learning process; foreign language; language proficiency; affordance; socio-constructivism; socio-culturalism; societal development.

Didactics is regarded in Finland as the professional and scientific basis for the teaching profession (Kansanen, 1990, p. 17). In the same way, we argue that foreign language education can serve well as the professional scientific background for language teachers. Didactics is divided into two dimensions: descriptive and normative. Uljens (1997) contends that as a normative study of teaching (normatiivinen opetusoppi), didactics relates to giving teaching instructions and to the value-boundness drawn from the aims and goals of the curriculum. As a descriptive science of teaching (deskriptiivinen opetustiede), didactics refers to research on teaching. It must be noted, however, that descriptive didactics is not free from normativity, which concerns the axiological issues beyond the scientific theory, such as the knowledge interest represented by theory. (Uljens, 1997, p. 52.)

Some basic didactical teaching strategies can include:

- Demonstration: Demonstration is a teaching strategy in which the teacher demonstrates a concept. The demonstration method can be especially effective when combined with visual aspects like writing on a whiteboard.
- Explanation: Explanation is a strategy in which the teacher explains the concept, and it can occur independently or along with demonstration to enhance learning.

-Observation: Observation is a method in which students make observations to learn more about topics. Students can observe at teacher's demonstration to help them better understand a concept.

-Problems: Teachers can create problems for their students to solve to help them learn their curriculum. Completing problems can help students learn how to do math and understand other concepts.

-Exercises: Teachers can help their students learn new skills and knowledge by assigning them exercises to complete. Like problems, exercises can allow students to practice concepts to strengthen their understanding.

Educational sciences have emerged from the need to study the institutional school, as Kansanen (2004, p. 83) notes. The key content of the notion of didactics covers the central area of educational sciences, which is not even shattered by the varying use of the concept itself. Didactics is often referred to general didactics or subject didactics, though it is true to say that it is often divided into "sub-didactics" based on educational or training levels, such as adult didactics. Subject didactics is also represented by language didactics, which, on the one hand, relates to subject content of linguistics and, in particular, to thematics of applied linguistics, and, on the other, to didactics, thus showing for its part the multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary field of educational sciences and their different profiles.

Our main argument is that the concept of foreign language didactics has especially widened to cover all the three components of the teaching–studying–learning (TSL) process, in a profound continental European meaning. This also means that research is being focused on different forms and aspects of pedagogical activity and on the roles of different actors. At the same time, curricula are understood not only as instructions of planning, implementing and assessing teaching, but, more and more, also as knowledge-strategic and future-oriented thinking.

In foreign language didactics, we must take into consideration all those changes that have taken place in our conception of foreign language². In the same way, changes have taken place in conceptions of language proficiency and language studying (cf. Harjanne, 2004b). These changes are important to foreign language didactics as it serves as a scientific basis for language teaching, which, at its best, lead to manysided and empowering language proficiency (language proficiency as empowering mediator; Tella, 1999).

The Montessori school had preplanned teaching (Didactic) materials designed, to develop practical, sensory, and formal skills. Lacing and buttoning frames, weights, and packet to be identified by their sound or smell. Because they direct learning in the prepared environment, Montessori educators are called directress rather than teachers.

In Brazil, there has been for more than 80 years the government program called PNLD (National Program of Didactic Book). This program seeks to provide basic education schools with didactic and pedagogical records, expanding access to the book and democratizing access to sources of information and culture. Textbooks, in many cases, are the only sources of information that poor children and young people have access to in a poor country like Brazil. These books are also valuable support to teachers, offering modern learning methodologies and updated concepts and content in the most diverse disciplines.

Functions of didactic method:

- [1] cognitive function: to understand and learn basic concepts
- [2] formative-educative function: to develop skills, behavior, abilities, etc.
- [3] instrumental function : to achieve educational objectives
- [4] normative function : helps to achieve productive learning, attain required results, etc

As late as the 1980s, foreign languages were mostly taken for instrumental subjects. It was currently thought that they only had instrumental value, while the real values were to be found elsewhere. This narrow and, in the light of contemporary knowledge, biased conception started to get widened in the 1990s, partly because language

teaching was increasingly influenced by sociological and societal points of view and the socio-cultural perspective about the growth of human beings' mental capital. At first, the instrumental value of languages was expanded to cover aspects of a skills subject (taitoaine), as Tella (1994) did, for instance:

"Foreign languages must be considered both skills and instrumental subjects. When we speak of language proficiency, the language must be analysed from the viewpoint of a skills subject. Then a manysided language and communication proficiency is emphasised, both written and oral. When we speak of the instrumental value or utility of languages, then we underline the importance of languages as medium. As a medium (instrumental) subject, languages are used to present language users' own standpoints, opinions as well as feelings and expression of will, and then to transmit different educational contents. We can even argue that speaking of the instrumental value only is to restrict the reality, because language proficiency builds the basis for an individual's creative self-expression and even for the mastery of his or her life. Language is also communication and foreign language teaching helps transfer language and culture via different communication channels and modes" (Tella, 1994, p. 137)

Though the didactic method has been given importance in several schools, it does not satisfy the needs and interests of all students. It can be tedious for students to listen to the possible lectures. There is minimum interaction between the students and the teachers. Learning which also involves motivating the students to develop an interest towards the subject may not be satisfied through this teaching method. [17][18] It may be a monologue process and experience of the students may not have a significant role in learning.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion language didactics is mostly concerned with issues of institutional foreign language acquisition – a topic in which the other branches of the didactics of foreign languages (literature and culture didactics) also take an interest. This overlap occurs for two reasons: on the one hand, language acquisition cannot take place without the consideration of cultural aspects and on the other hand, literary texts in the foreign language are used in the foreign language classroom to enable learners to get in touch with authentic language. Wishing to highlight the importance of linguistic language research for the teaching of languages, we also offer cooperations with linguistics, e.g. in joint course projects or when it comes to topics for Master's theses.

As we have already seen, language has been taught in many different ways. Theories on the nature of language, such as the behaviorist or the cognitive theory have also influenced the way in which language was taught. There have been many different language teaching methods and approaches. To start with, the grammar-translation method, the oldest one and linked with the monastery tradition. Then the different direct methods, which moved the focus towards the living language arguing that speech was primary. After that came the various structural methods and approaches which focused on listening and speaking and were based on the assumption that language was habit-based. Structuralists introduced graded and repetitive sentence drills known as "pattern drills". Finally, the communicative approach is nowadays considered the most appropriate approach in language teaching and learning.

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