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THE PRINCIPLE OF AMBIVALENCE IN JUDGEMENTS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract. This paper explores the theoretical and methodological foundations of the principle of ambivalence in judgments as a pedagogical strategy in foreign language education.

In the theoretical section, ambivalence is examined through philosophical and psychological lenses as the coexistence of contradictory evaluations or interpretations. In pedagogical and linguistic discourse, it is reframed as intellectual flexibility — the ability to comprehend and engage with opposing viewpoints. Drawing on philosophical, psychological, and educational discourse, the study positions ambivalence as a key factor in fostering critical thinking, discursive flexibility, and intercultural competence.

The practical section outlines five key methods for implementing this principle in the language classroom through the analysis of ambivalent statements, engagement with controversial media texts, situational role-play involving ethical ambiguity, reflective writing tasks, and comparative study of cultural concepts. Particular emphasis is placed on the capacity to interpret and evaluate conflicting perspectives, navigate semantic ambiguity, and engage in ethically informed dialogue.

In conclusion, integrating ambivalence-based tasks into the foreign language learning process cultivates a linguistically adaptable and critically aware learner, capable of responding to the complexities of intercultural communication in a globalized world.

Key words: the principle of ambivalence of judgments, discursive flexibility, construction of ambivalent utterances, – formulation of counterarguments, situational simulation, reflective writing

Introduction.

Contemporary paradigms in foreign language teaching increasingly align with theoretical frameworks that account for the cognitive complexity of thought, the discursive multiplicity of meaning, and the learner's capacity for self-reflection. Within this context, the principle of ambivalence in judgment emerges as an effective approach in learning / teaching foreign language that fosters the development of a learner's critical thinking, adaptability in communicative strategies, and openness to alternative interpretations in intercultural discourse.

Main text

Let us consider the theoretical foundations of the principle of ambivalence in

judgments. The term *ambivalence* (from Latin *ambi* – “both,” and *valere* – “to have strength or value”) originates from psychology and philosophy, and denotes the coexistence of two or more contradictory evaluations, judgments, or emotional responses toward the same object or phenomenon.

In pedagogical and linguistic discourses, ambivalence is understood as intellectual flexibility – the capacity to simultaneously comprehend, accept, or engage with opposing viewpoints.

As noted by Polish scholar K. Kwiatkowski (2021), in the context of a globalized world, ambivalence represents an inherent feature of intercultural communication, as meanings, norms, and linguistic constructions often carry diverse cultural connotations. Accordingly, the integration of ambivalence into the process of foreign language acquisition contributes significantly to the development of intercultural competence.

In English-language academic literature, the concept of ambivalence is frequently associated with *critical ambiguity*, which, according to P. Brookfield (2017), serves as a cornerstone of critical thinking. As he states: “Learning to think critically involves the discomfort of realizing that most questions have multiple, simultaneously plausible answers” [Brookfield, 2017].

Ukrainian scholar I. Savchenko (2020) links the principle of ambivalence to the post-nonclassical educational paradigm, wherein knowledge is no longer presented as a system of absolute truths, but rather as a polyphony of perspectives requiring interpretation, comparison, and critical reflection. This is particularly relevant in foreign language education, where students must not only internalize linguistic content but also learn to navigate ambiguous communicative situations, demonstrate semantic flexibility, and differentiate contextual meanings.

Thus, the principle of ambivalence in judgments within foreign language education can be defined as a methodological orientation toward openness to multiple interpretations, readiness to engage with contradictory positions, and the cultivation of argumentation skills in semantically ambiguous contexts.

Now, let's dwell on key directions for practical implementation of the principle

in foreign language instruction. The practical implementation of the principle of ambivalence is realized through the incorporation of pedagogical tasks that foreground semantic multiplicity, moral-ethical dilemmas, and culturally driven conflicts of interpretation. Below are selected methods, recommended by Ukrainian, Polish, and English researchers, which have proven effectiveness of the approach in this regard.

1. Analysis of ambiguous statements and quotations. One foundational tool involves engaging with ambivalent judgments that require analysis from multiple perspectives. For instance, the quotation *“Silence is sometimes the best answer”* may serve as a prompt for discussion: In which cultures is silence regarded as a sign of wisdom, and where might it be perceived as weakness? This approach enables:

- the development of discursive flexibility;
- activation of moral-ethical reflection;
- enrichment of lexical resources through synonymic and antonymic constructions.

2. Engagement with journalistic and media texts. Utilizing articles, podcasts, and videos that present polarized opinions (e.g., on artificial intelligence, freedom of speech, or migration) stimulates learners to:

- construct ambivalent statements;
- formulate counterarguments;
- model dialogic and discursive exchanges.

Polish researcher A. Brzózka (2022) emphasizes that “working with conflicting narratives in the media fosters critical intercultural awareness and equips students to navigate real-world, ambiguous communicative scenarios.”

3. Situational role-play involving ambiguity. Designing scenarios in which there is no clearly defined “correct” response encourages learners to employ a broad range of linguistic and cognitive strategies. For example:

- a student assumes the role of a business owner accused of violating environmental regulations;
- a student interprets a negotiation, realizing that a literal translation may

provoke conflict.

Such exercises cultivate communicative adaptability and foster moral reasoning in conditions of ethical ambiguity.

4. Reflective writing. Assignments such as “*Explain your position on a topic, then articulate what your opponent might say*” stimulate metacognitive engagement and foster intellectual tolerance. Brookfield (2017) refers to this as “thinking from an oppositional perspective,” a critical component in developing a critically literate language user.

5. Cross-cultural concept comparison. Exploring ambivalent concepts (e.g., *freedom, honor, tradition*) across cultures encourages learners to reflect on semantic variability. For instance, in the American context, *freedom* often implies individual autonomy, whereas in Chinese cultural contexts, it may be interpreted through a collectivist lens. This method is particularly effective when integrating cultural studies with foreign language instruction.

Summary and conclusions.

To sum up, the principle of ambivalence in judgments constitutes a powerful pedagogical tool for fostering critical thinking, discursive sensitivity, and intercultural awareness in the context of foreign language education. Its effective implementation entails the integration of tasks that engage learners with opposing viewpoints, ethical dilemmas, and contextual ambiguity.

In conclusion, the theoretical underpinnings of this principle are rooted in philosophical and educational traditions, offering a robust conceptual framework for its application. In practice, the incorporation of ambivalence-based approaches enables the formation of a linguistically and culturally competent learner – one capable of engaging in reasoned dialogue under conditions of communicative complexity and semantic plurality in a globalized world.

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