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Summary

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SUMMARY

The author deals with the problems of the lexicon of the foreign language on the background of linguodidactic trends in the past.

An overall view of the problems of the lexicon in teaching languages we have attempted at enables us to pronounce some general conclusions.

Medieval scholasticism brought into the teaching of Latin and Greek languages mechanical imitation and mostly memorization. The 16th century means a break into this concept of foreign language teaching under the influence of the inductive method of F. Bacon, empirism of J. Locke and stressing national languages (Ratke, Comenius).

The Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries weakens the exclusive position of Latin and Greek as foreign languages and further strengthens rational elements in teaching. Stressing the rational factor led, on the other hand, to the overgrammatization and the overtheorizing of the teaching (Meidinger, Mager). German philanthropism, however, brought narrow practicism into teaching foreign languages (Basesdow; the interlinear method). In an effort to help the pupil and maximally make the learning easy, there is a requirement to make language learning „easy“, like the mother tongue.

This idea, affected by linguistic and psycholinguistic discoveries of the 19th century and supported by the necessity of international and trade contacts, was materialized by the so-called reform movement of the seventies (Viëtor). A practicism orientation of the teaching (Berlitz) of foreign languages was strengthened by the requirement of excluding the mother language from the teaching process.

An objective of instruction, a thing, which were to serve — in the spirit of Locke's empirism — the mastering of the teaching instruction by all possible senses, got now the role of a semantizing means for understanding the foreign language equivalent.

The unjustifiability of the direct method of the reformists for the needs of school teaching led to the solution of the problem of the goals of foreign language teaching. The anti-reform movement and the so-called mediation method (Thiergen) gave a clear answer to this question. A foreign language is not to be only a means of understanding a foreigner and a means of getting acquainted with cultural values by reading literature, but a goal should be also the understanding of the language itself, its phonetical, grammatical and lexical systems (Ščerba).

The school cannot fulfil all these goals. Thus, a selection of goals is necessary (Palmer, West), or the realization of their proportionality with respect to the age of the learners, the degree of their language advanced stage (even in the mother tongue)

and, last but not least, also with respect to the specialization and type of school. Experimental works performed hitherto in the sphere of foreign language teaching or having some relation to it, have fully confirmed this fact.

The interest in the work with the lexicon was in the past so great in the individual authors that no problem can be found that has not been solved in any way or at least hinted at, also by means of experimental methods. It was not only the training of lexical units in the sentence, in sentence patterns, etc., but also the work with an isolated word, its morphematic and semantic analysis, its ranking among the parts of speech according to different morphematic and semantic criteria, etc. From this point of view we evaluate more those methodological processes that do not refuse to isolate a lexical unit (Eggert, Flagstad) also for that reason that in this kind of work it is less bound to the context, thus being freer for using in other contexts (Scholtkowska). Even the supporters of the direct method worked very rationally with the lexicon, but, due to the refusal of the mother tongue, they missed a very important factor of morphematic and semantic comparison in the plan mother tongue — foreign language.

We can say that the tasks that are being solved in the sphere of the foreign language lexicon link up with the rich and well-thought-out work of our predecessors.