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SCENARIO THINKING AS A POWERFUL TOOL IN DEVELOPING LANGUAGE COMPETENCES

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In modern psycholinguistics, there are practically no studies on the search for new methods and approaches that ensure effective mastering of a foreign language, including the role of the psychological component (alongside the linguistic component). Mastering a foreign language and communicating in a foreign language is a complex process, primarily of a linguistic nature. That is why the psychological component has been insufficiently researched. The use of the latest approaches and methods is becoming an important issue. In this process, the combination of modern methodological approaches supported by psychological knowledge contributes to a comprehensive development of the linguistic personality.

The given paper presents the findings of the qualitative analysis based on a survey conducted among the second-year students of LNU named after I. Franko with results that show that scenario-based thinking strategy (empowered with a variety of different activities, e.g. TED talk / BBC talks) can be a powerful tool in a new language acquisition paradigm that can be revealed through a modern approach called gamification. The effectiveness of using scenario-based strategy in developing English language competences has been investigated. The efficacy of scenario design and thinking, with an emphasis on academic and psychological elements has been analyzed and described. Scenario thinking implication has been proved to be a powerful tool of broadening participant's outlook and gaining new insights, expressing their viewpoints critically, maintaining meaningful interaction with interlocutors and developing interpersonal skills, enriching both productive and receptive skills as well as critical and imaginary thinking skills. These factors have been highly rated and stated as a powerful means of enhancing linguistic, inter- and intrapersonal competences. One of the most outstanding characteristics of this type of language acquisition is that it contributes to both academic and psychological spheres.

Key words: interpersonal skills, productive and receptive skills, critical and imaginary thinking, gamification, scenario design, black swan theory, narratives.

Кульчицька О. В. Сценарне мислення як інструмент розвитку мовленнєвих компетенцій. У сучасній психолінгвістиці досліджень, у яких би були порушені питання пошуку нових методів та підходів, що забезпечують ефективне оволодіння іноземною мовою, серед іншого й питання ролі психологічного складника (разом з лінгвістичним), практично немає. Оволодіння іноземною мовою та здійснення комунікації іноземною мовою є складним процесом, передусім лінгвістичного характеру. Саме тому психологічний складник є мало досліджений, а звідси проблеми використання новітніх підходів та методів набувають особливої актуальності. У такому процесі поєднання сучасних методичних підходів, підкріплених психологічними знаннями, сприяє всебічному розвитку мовної особистості.

У статті представлено результати аналізу застосування сценарного мислення як інструменту розвитку мовленнєвих компетенцій на основі опитування, проведеного серед студентів другого курсу Львівського національного університету імені Івана Франка, які засвідчують, що стратегія мислення, базована на побудові сценаріїв (підкріплена використанням різноманітних сучасних ресурсів, до прикладу TED talk / BBC talks), відіграє роль потужного інструменту в новій парадигмі оволодіння мовою, для якої характерне сприйняття через призму гейміфікації. Простежено ефективність використання сценарної стратегії для розвитку навичок англійської мови. З опертям на академічний та психологічний складники досліджено ефективність використання методів побудови сценаріїв та дизайнів у мисленні. Доведено важливість застосування такого типу мислення, як засобу розширення світогляду учасників процесу, здобуття та розбудови мовних компетенцій, отримання нових знань, підтримки змістовної взаємодії зі співрозмовниками та розвиток навичок міжособистісного спілкування, збагачення продуктивних і рецептивних навичок, а також навичок критичного та уявного мислення. Ці фактори були позитивно оцінені та визначені як ефективні методи розбудови як мовних, так і інтра- та інтерособистісних компетенцій.

Ключові слова: навички міжособистісного спілкування, продуктивні та рецептивні навички, критичне та уявне мислення, гейміфікація, сценарний дизайн, теорія чорного лебедя, наративи.

Defining the problem and argumentation of the topicality of the consideration. We are living in an era of technological progress and scientific achievements where established processes are constantly replaced with new ones. This context justifies a need for a methodological change in language acquisition practices. Teachers are expected to use new engaging and interesting approaches to be in line with the modern trends. The study aims at identifying the effectiveness of using

scenario thinking strategy as a modern means of developing English language competences.

A number of researches and practices have been conducted in order to ensure the efficacy of implementing a concept of scenario thinking as an example of gaming methodology (gamification) in higher education through teacher training as well as in everyday language acquisition. The given paper does not advocate educational changes based on productive and receptive skills as well

as critical and imaginary thinking, but contributes to the development and creation of practical gaming alternatives in developing English language competences.

Setting the goals and tasks of the article. The study aims at investigating the effectiveness of using scenario thinking in developing English language competences, emphasizing academic and psychological elements. The research tasks are to study the efficacy of scenario thinking implication as a means of broadening students' outlook and gaining insights, expressing their viewpoints critically, maintaining meaningful interaction with interlocutors and developing interpersonal skills; enriching both productive and receptive skills as well as critical and imaginary thinking skills.

Analysis of recent research and publications. A survey of the literature suggests that the scenario-based approach is used by educators to foster both personal and professional identity. It is designed to supplement rather than substitute lived work experience. E. Errington can be undoubtedly called a pioneer in the field of the scenario-based approach. He has published several books on scenario-based learning ("Developing Scenario-Based Learning" (2003), "Being There: Closing the Gap between Learners and Contextual Knowledge Using Near-World Scenarios" (2009), "Mission Possible: Using Near-World Scenarios to Prepare Graduates For The Professions" (2011), "As close as it gets: Developing professional identity through the potential of scenario-based learning" (2011)), and has presented "scenario" master classes in twelve countries. Apart from that, he was a keynote speaker at the European Conference on Scenario-Based Learning (UK, 2005). His ideas resonate in the works of his successors – M. A. Andreu-Andrés and M. García-Casas, who have conducted a research on gaming as experiential learning (2011); A. García-Carbonell, B. Montero and F. Watts who have studied simulation / gaming and the acquisition of communicative competence in a foreign language (2001); J. Deway has provided with key information into affecting language learners' use of vocabulary learning strategies in massively multiplayer online role-playing games (2013); C. Elliott-Kingston, O. Doyle and A. Hunter have described the benefits of scenario-based learning (2016); Ç. Hürsen and F. Gezer-Faşlı have investigated the efficiency of scenario-based learning and reflective learning approaches in teacher education (2017); R. Jayashree has conducted a study on innovative teaching learning methods for undergraduate students including scenario thinking (2017); C. Ribchester and R. L. Healey have examined the use of scenarios to support the development of the ethical thinking skills of undergraduate students (2017). The gains of scenario thinking applied to language learning are also discussed at length by Ö. Bektaş, S. Aslan (2019), R. Sorin, (2019), M. Kebritchi (2017) and other scholars who support the effectiveness of this approach in the development of interpersonal, receptive and productive competences in a foreign language acquisition.

The outline of the main research material. E. Errington claimed that scenario thinking strategy is very conducive to learners in boosting both productive and receptive skills. The scientist points out that this type of a methodology aims to promote awareness, deep

learning and thinking by involving learners in realistic critical situations and incidents where students are also forced to reflect, make decisions and consider a wide range of factors [8, 3–5]. There is another claim that such a strategy is one of the modern approaches that reinforces gaining meaningful learning within different contexts [13, 158–168]. Scenario-based learning incorporates a number of different instructional methods such as role play, storytelling, narratives, simulation, cooperative, game, experiential, e-learning and others [11]. The biggest value in this type of a teaching activity, apart from boosting receptive and productive learner's skills, is that it highlights student's sense of interest, satisfaction, participation, responsibility, and academic achievement, amplifies student's motivation and self-esteem, modifies their attitudes and perception in a positive way, help them get rid of their shyness, fear of failure, lowers language anxiety, promotes more collaborative, communicative, and risk-free environment [13, 158–168].

L. Angelini, A. García-Carbonell, F. Watts claim that designing scenarios can be a powerful tool to enhance learning of the methodology and awareness of the issues that can lead to affective learning as well [3, 5]. Moreover, this technique is applicable in acquiring both basic language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking, and language areas – vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. G. L. Scott Hilton has conducted a practical research on the use of scenarios in developing English language competences practice. The results showed that all students participated in a survey claimed that scenarios design enabled them to widen their thinking about the curriculum and become more responsible for their own learning [9]. The cultivation of fair-minded critical thinking using the English language in developing language competences practice is crucial for the development of a personality as it entails rigorous self-reflection and open-mindedness of the students.

The elements, components, stages, types and approaches of scenario-based learning vary greatly, so it becomes important to evaluate the learning needs of a group of learners to best fit in and plan the activity accordingly. Needless to say, that in order to be successful it should be diverse and game-like, with clearly stated objectives and structure [11].

Scenario thinking is one of the most efficient ways of preparing a right mindset for future favorable and adverse changes in external environment. Moreover, it plays a prominent role in developing learners' English competences [11]. It is based on building alternative options i.e. scenarios of the development of external environment. K. van der Heijden pinpoints that "scenarios are tools to research one's understanding of the world. In line with the critical realism paradigm the objective is to challenge one's own "mental model of the future" [12]. It created a natural environment where students become engaged in various new and unusual activities, including debates, making proposals, interaction, sharing their ideas, etc. G. Burt and A. Nair argue that in scenario analysis, it is key to move away from the traditional habitual understanding of various situations and start looking for dynamics in places that are least understandable [6]. In this way, rather

than seeing the environment we are used to, we will begin to see different variations and use them. J. Dator in his research of the uses of “alternative future”, which is mainly based on the nuances of the use of personal experience, provides a fruitful background for the development of imaginary thinking [7]. And imagination permits us “to have an experience” [1]. Such an immersion in language learning through new activities promotes constant interaction and feedback from every student, lowers anxiety and contributes to the entertaining atmosphere of a class adding values to both receptive and productive skills.

Students see and perceive information at different angles. It becomes interesting for them to focus on different things as some of them may fail to see noticeable trends which are irrelevant to their life whereas others do. While analyzing diverse sources of information, students receive a more comprehensive picture of a subject matter resulting in better vocabulary. They look at various prospects in different ways, with each student being able to offer something different, something new, something verbalized in their own way.

The theory of the black swan can become another engaging and entertaining tool in teaching English and captivating students’ attention. This term was presented to the public by N. Taleb in his book “The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable”. The Black Swan is a metaphor which explains a phenomenon which has taken place and is completely unpredictable [10, 429]. In scenario planning some events by mistake were often referred to as black swans but actually they had significant roots in the past which grew big and ultimately surfaced. In order to see a probable scenario, students first need to step back and see the general picture of a situation. It is not sufficient for them to just evaluate the situation. It would be more relevant to examine statistics, trends, find more information regarding past and present, and try to forecast the situation. Only by looking at long-term prospects one can understand if a particular project will be viable in the future. This allows one to see a general picture rather than focus on small details. And this entails the development of critical thinking.

Another important factor in scenario planning is moving away from a desire to solve a particular problem. Needless to say that team work and collaborative learning should be constantly fostered. Focusing on a problem means that all facts are considered with a narrowed vision. Besides, a strong desire to find a solution to a problem may lead to the creation of an artificial situation. And it is the point where imagination steps in. In his book “Teaching smart people how to learn” C. Argyris reveals an understanding that learning is an ability to gain experience from others. Students share their ideas and shape a new vision [4, 12–14]. What is valuable is that regardless of criteria, individuals can bring in something new. Besides, it is important to collect all points of view, hold discussions and achieve a certain vision of the future.

Storytelling is an indispensable part of scenario planning and is another way to engage students in learning process. D. Barry and M. Elmes point out that “as a narrative form, strategy seems to stand somewhere between theatrical drama, the historical novel, futurist fantasy, and autobiography” [5]. People have been

telling stories since times immemorial and stories are everywhere. Narratives are a bridge connecting all the participants of a learning process. Listening to public speeches, e.g. Ted Talks, does not only enrich the vocabulary of a learner, perfecting their listening skills, but also affect their perception and vision thanks to the interesting and captivating format of delivery.

Results of the main research material. This paper presents the findings of twenty second-year students of the Faculty of Philosophy (LNU named after I. Franko) and their reflections on “Scenario-based teaching strategy”. Their reflections were extracted from the Google Forms platform (data source <https://forms.gle/YfoYJg3vppnPApMf9>) which serves as a questionnaire tool and support for the given research. The participants had to reflect on a number of questions. The students’ reflections are presented in the appendices (Figure A.1. Evaluation of educational activities; Figure A.2. Benefits of scenario-based thinking; Figure A.3. Evaluation of academic and psychological contributions; Figure A.4. Evaluation of scenario-based approach and its effects). All questioned issues were evaluated positively. The following benefits were highly rated: scenario thinking broadened students’ outlook as it gave them some new insights; students considered the experience to be fruitful as they found themselves capable of reaching agreements with their peers as well as expressing their viewpoints critically, maintaining meaningful interaction with their fellow students; watching TED talks helped students to gain a deeper understanding of studied material enriching their productive and receptive skills; scenario thinking has both academic and psychological contributions. Overall experience on designing scenarios as a tool was defined as an engaging one, developing critical and imaginary thinking, improving both productive and receptive skills, promoting further self-development with the added value of building social awareness.

Conclusions and directions for further research in this area. We live in a dynamic and complex world, with changes occurring very rapidly. It is obvious that changes are a norm rather than exception to the methods of teaching. This study has raised important questions about the nature of scenario planning, as well as its constituents through the prism of recent studies. Scenario planning is becoming an increasingly popular tool in developing language competences compared to traditional methods. While developing scenarios, they perfect all their skills – receptive, productive as well as critical and imaginary thinking skills. While analyzing diverse sources of information, they receive a more comprehensive picture of our subject matter resulting in certain conclusions that adds value to their perception of the world. Students find it interesting that scenario planning forecast a number of un- and realistic scenarios rather than just one and is based on building alternative options, so that there is no right or wrong answer and they have a perfect possibility to share their ideas. Apart from that, storytelling proved to be of great importance and an indispensable part of scenario planning that colors up the language competences activities, as narratives tell us what works and what does not, and what is more important is that they change people’s attitude towards certain processes and events while shaping a new vision. The implication of the black swan theory – where

students “think outside the box” and come up with a variety of ideas describing unpredictable events that are beyond what is normally expected of a situation, helps a teacher to create a relaxed and entertaining atmosphere. To gain deeper insights into the studied issues fragments of TED (technology, entertainment, design) speeches proved to be very helpful, edutainment and useful contributing to the overall process.

In spite of its limitations, the given research adds value to our understanding of the notion of scenario-based developing language competences strategy emphasizing on the modern tendencies of its development. A more comprehensive study would include the analysis of all the elements of scenario designing through the perspective of current situations in the world and its modern trends. In order to make sure that planning becomes a valuable and justifiable tool, it is necessary to use methodological approaches, be aware of possible mistakes made in the process of work, draw on the experience and realize that such a process can be time-consuming.

The study results indicated that scenario-based learning strategy was effective in developing cognitive skills and both basic language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking, and language areas – vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. This study contributes to modern means of developing language competences and adds a new finding that is related to developing critical and imaginary thinking skills of a linguistic personality. Therefore, more research should be dedicated to examine the role of scenario designing and scenario thinking in the process of developing English language competences and improving other language aspects and both productive and receptive skills. The prospect of further development in this direction is creation, implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of methods of psychological influence. The most important achievement of implementation of such an activity in a language acquisition process is that it has both academic and psychological contributions.

Appendix A

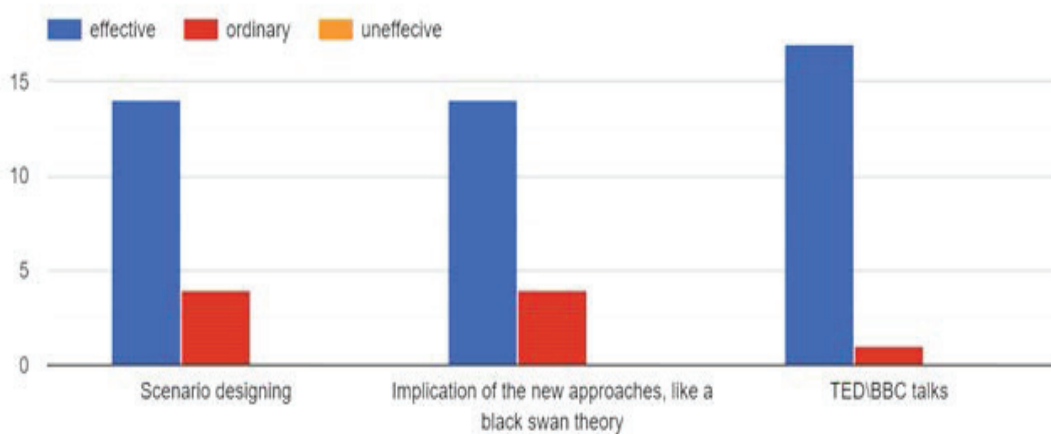


Figure A.1. Evaluation of educational activities

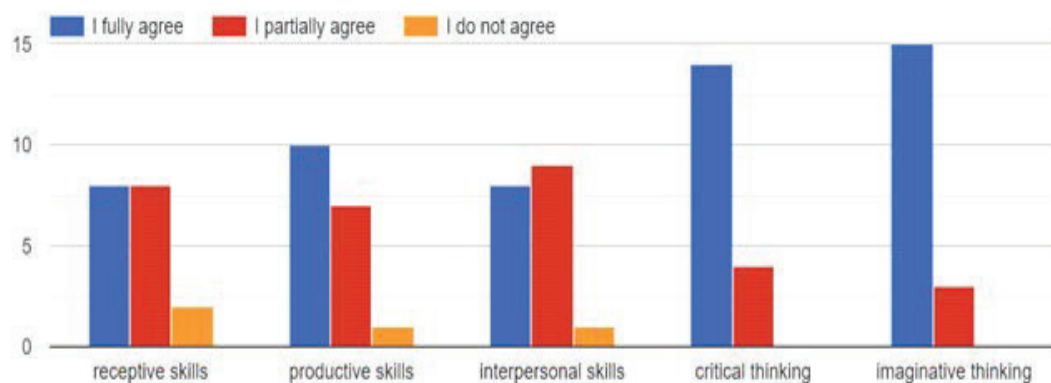


Figure A.2. Benefits of scenario-based thinking

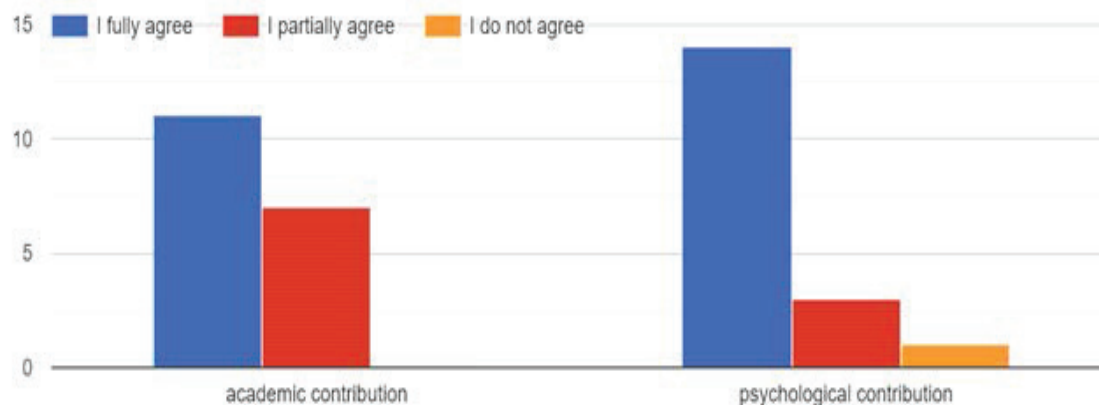


Figure A.3. Evaluation of academic and psychological contributions

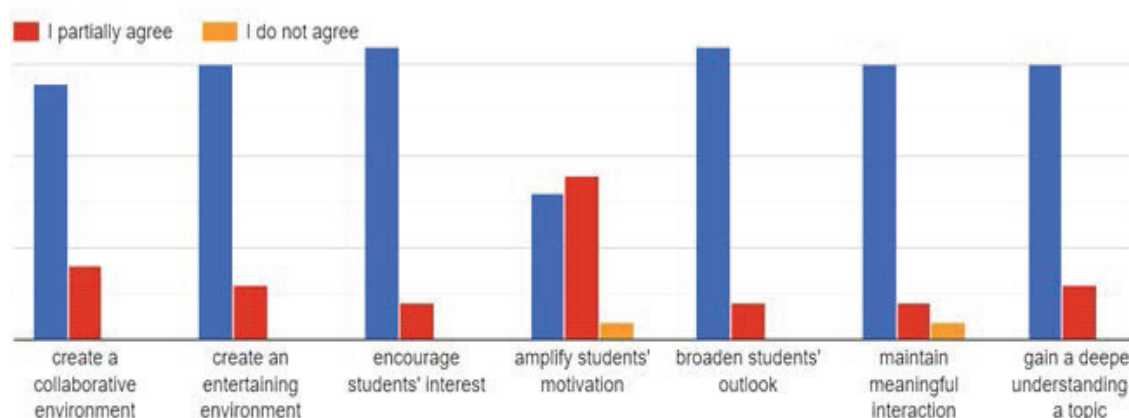


Figure A.4. Evaluation of scenario-based approach and its effects

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