

Тарелко И. В., студент

Научный руководитель – Прокопенко С.Л., ст. преподаватель
Учреждение образования «Белорусская государственная орденов Октябрьской
Революции и Трудового Красного Знамени сельскохозяйственная академия»

Tarelko I. V., student

Scientific supervisor – Prokopenko S.L., senior lecturer
Educational Institution "Belarusian State Academy of Agriculture of the Orders of the
October Revolution and the Red Banner of Labor"

HISTORY AND DIRECTIONS OF DEVELOPMENT GENERAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN BELARUS ИСТОРИЯ И НАПРАВЛЕНИЯ РАЗВИТИЯ ОБЩЕГО ИНОЯЗЫЧНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В БЕЛАРУСИ

- **Аннотация.** В данной статье представлен всесторонний анализ исторического развития и современного состояния общего образования по иностранным языкам в Беларуси с 1960 по 2020 год. В ней рассматривается переход от идеологизированного языкового обучения к развитию мультикультурных и многоязычных компетенций, освещаются ключевые реформы и проблемы, с которыми сталкивается белорусская система образования.

- **Ключевые слова:** иностранный язык, межкультурная коммуникация, коммуникативная компетентность, образовательные реформы, белорусская система образования.

- **Abstract.** This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the historical development and current state of general foreign language education in Belarus from 1960 to 2020. It explores the shift from ideologically driven language instruction to a focus on developing multicultural and multilingual competencies, highlighting key reforms and challenges faced by the Belarusian education system.

- **Key words:** foreign language education, intercultural communication, communicative competence, educational reforms, Belarusian education system.

Introduction. In the modern world, proficiency in foreign languages has become a crucial element of functional literacy and intercultural communication. This is driven not only by social demands and scientific and technological progress but also by individuals' aspirations for self-realization. Foreign language education in Belarus has undergone significant changes from 1960 to 2020, reflecting broader trends in the development of education and society. During this period, the term "foreign language education" became widely accepted in academic and methodological literature.

Main part. In the 1960s, Belarus saw a fundamental shift in approaches to teaching foreign languages. The primary focus shifted from "reading and translating texts" to "developing speaking skills." This change was driven by the need to prepare specialists capable of effective interaction in the international arena. In 1964, the curriculum for the eight-year school was revised, reflecting a desire to modernize the educational process.

In the 1970s, schools began offering elective foreign language classes aimed at developing students' abilities. However, by 1975, these classes faced criticism for their insufficient ideological and theoretical level. During this period, research also began to emerge emphasizing the importance of using foreign languages for educational purposes, including fostering interest and respect for the culture of the country whose language was being studied.

In the 1980s, the communicative method continued to develop. E.I. Passov theoretically substantiated the communicative method and defined the structure of communicative thinking. According to the new school curriculum, the requirements for speaking skills included the ability to independently use language material to solve communicative tasks.

In the 1990s, after Belarus gained independence, there was a rethinking of the goals of foreign language education. The primary goal became the formation of a multicultural and multilingual personality. In 1995, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus began publishing a series of textbooks by Belarusian authors, reflecting a desire for national identity in education.

From 1990 to 2020, Belarus developed state normative and planning documents, including the concept of the school subject "foreign languages," state standards, and curricula. The educational process centered around the student's personality, with the aim of their intellectual development and upbringing.

Thus, the development of foreign language education in Belarus from 1960 to 2020 is characterized by a transition from ideologically oriented teaching to the formation of a multicultural personality capable of effective intercultural interaction.

From 1960 to 2020, the development of general foreign language education in Belarus was influenced by economic, political, social, cultural, and pedagogical factors. During this time, the attitude towards learning foreign languages shifted from complete denial to recognizing them as an important part of education .

At the beginning of the crisis and reform period, foreign languages were not considered a priority in the education system. However, with the expansion of international ties and scientific and technical cooperation, there was a need to change approaches to their teaching. The main goal became the development of speaking skills, which required a reform of programs and teaching methods. In 1961, the Council of Ministers of the USSR adopted a resolution aimed at improving the teaching of foreign languages, which led to changes in curricula and methodologies. However, a shortage of qualified personnel and a reduction in teaching hours in 1964 became obstacles to achieving the set goals.

With the transition to universal secondary education in the 1970s, the focus shifted to improving the quality of foreign language teaching. During this period, communicative methods began to develop, and the goal became the acquisition of oral speech and reading skills. However, in the 1980s, due to economic difficulties and a decline in public interest in education, there was a reduction in teaching hours and a deterioration in the quality of education. This led to a shift in educational paradigms towards state interests.

After Belarus gained independence in 1990, the development of a national education system began, aimed at democratization and integration with the global educational space. The goal of general foreign language education became the formation of a multicultural personality. New curricula and textbooks were developed, taking into account the principles of European language policy. However, despite efforts, the contradiction between the declared goals and the actual results persisted. This was due to insufficient consideration of historical experience and ongoing issues in the organization of the educational process.

In the early 1960s, significant changes occurred in Belarus in approaches to teaching foreign languages. The main goal became the development of speaking skills, which required a revision of teaching methods. During this period, there was active discussion about the connection between education and life and the practical orientation of education.

The advantages and disadvantages of comparative and intuitive methods were discussed. The comparative method, based on comparing the native and foreign languages, was considered more effective for explaining grammar, while the intuitive method, based on imitation, was used for consolidating the material. The introduction of audio-visual aids, such as filmstrips and tape recordings, was seen as a way to bring learning closer to a natural language environment. The programmed learning method, based on the use of training programs, was also applied, although it did not gain widespread use. In the 1970s, Belarus entered the era of the communicative method, which involved organizing the educational process as a model of real communication. In the communicative approach, the main goal was to form communicative competence. This required new approaches to selecting educational materials and developing exercises. I.F. Komkov scientifically substantiated the use of the term "active method," emphasizing its general didactic significance. This method implied active participation of students in the educational process. The introduction of technical teaching aids, such as educational television and language laboratories, was seen as a way to create conditions for natural language communication. Research on the interference of the native language on the study of a foreign language became an important part of methodological work. Methods to overcome interference were developed.

Experiments were conducted on early foreign language learning, which showed that children can successfully master the language provided they have sufficient conversational practice.

After Belarus gained independence in 1990, the development of a national education system began, aimed at democratization and integration with the global educational space. The main task became the creation of national educational standards and teaching and methodological complexes.

The communicative approach continued to develop, but faced problems of insufficient theoretical justification and practical implementation. Computer technologies began to be used in foreign language teaching, which opened up new opportunities for intensifying the learning process. Project-based learning and gaming simulation were considered effective ways to activate the educational process and develop communicative skills.

Despite efforts, problems persisted, such as a low level of foreign language proficiency, an imbalance in the range of languages studied, insufficient qualifications of the teaching staff, and underestimation of the teacher's role.

The system of general foreign language education in Belarus is complex and closely linked to political, economic, and other social systems. It requires analysis and forecasting to identify errors, prevent irrational actions, and develop ways to achieve goals.

Pedagogical forecasting plays an important role in determining the prospects for the development of education. It includes two stages. Firstly, the preparation of pre-forecast information, i.e., studying the history of the development of education and identifying forecast trends. Secondly, actual forecasting, i.e., developing a pedagogical forecast using the method of extrapolating trends in various conditions.

Research shows that in the history of general foreign language education in Belarus, there is a contradiction between the accumulated experience and the lack of its systematization, as well as between the need for forecasting and the lack of scientific justification for the effective improvement of the process.

The prognostic model for the development of general foreign language education in Belarus examines development trends, historical analogies, prognostic consequences, and directions for improvement.

Development trends are characterized by the predominance of the English language, a shortage of qualified personnel and technical equipment, cultural content of educational and methodological complexes, testing, the use of computer technologies, an increase in class hours, and the introduction of a graduation exam.

Historical analogies are characterized by the introduction of profile classes, administrative regulation, underestimation of staffing, insufficient technical equipment, divergence of goals, and centralized testing.

Prognostic consequences are divided into optimistic, predicting an increase in the level of speech skills, an increase in scientific research, and the solution of personnel problems, and pessimistic, predicting an overload of students, aging of personnel, formalism in learning, and lack of continuity.

Directions for improvement imply the use of scientific and methodological, educational and methodological, organizational, personnel, and material resources to achieve goals.

The current state of general foreign language education in Belarus is characterized by a number of trends, such as globalization, centralized management, communicative-oriented learning, the search for methods of intensification, a shift in the language balance towards English, motivation to acquire communicative competence, the use of the national educational and methodological complex, insufficient teacher qualifications, and insufficient technical equipment.

Conclusion. To improve general foreign language education in Belarus, a comprehensive approach is needed, which includes several key areas. It is necessary to increase the number of fundamental research in the field of foreign languages, actively study and introduce the best practices of other countries, and strengthen state regulation in this area. This will help create more effective teaching methods and adapt them to local conditions. It is important to consider the successful practices of other countries, such as early foreign language learning, an emphasis on developing communicative skills, the use of modern technologies, and the organization of communication with native speakers. This will make learning more effective and closer to the real conditions of language use. It is necessary to develop modern electronic resources and actively use information and communication technologies in the educational process. This will help make learning more interactive and accessible. In addition, it is important to ensure continuity between school and university education, as well as to vary educational programs depending on the interests and level of training of students. It is necessary to start teaching foreign languages at the first stage of general education. This will allow children to start mastering language skills earlier and use them later. Teachers play a key role in the learning process, so it is important to improve their qualifications, organize international internships, and attract native speakers for teaching. Financial support and incentives for teachers are also important factors for improving the quality of education. These measures will help balance the goals and results of general foreign language education in Belarus and increase its effectiveness, bringing learning closer to the real needs of society and the individual.

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