The aim of the article is to describe the theoretical basis of a foreign language teaching and learning in our academy and illustrate this theory with practical examples from the real study process.

The article deals with definite study programmes and their foreign language courses, study process organisation. Different aspects of study content and process, for instance, ESP, CLIL, individualisation, task-based studying, projects, independent studies, self-assessment, peer-assessment as well as reflection will be focused on.

The implementation of the teacher training orientation and reorientation to education for sustainable development is also considered as a crucial part of the research, therefore, the authors highlight it as well.

**Research Methods**

Theoretical methods: analysis of scientific and methodological literature.

Empirical research methods:
Methods of data acquisition – observation, experimenting, analysis;
Data analysis by using the software SPSS 17.0.

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**Santrauka**

Straipsnio tikslas – aprašyti teorinį užsienio kalbos mokymo(si) mūsų akademijoje pagrindą, iliustruo- jant jį mokyma(si) praktiniais realaus mokymos(si) proceso pavyzdžiais.

Straipsnyje pristatomos studijų programos ir studijų proceso organizavimas. Dėmesys kreipiamas į įvairius studijų turinio ir proceso aspektus, pavyzdžiui, anglų kalbą specialiesiems tikslems (ESP, angl. English for specific purposes), turinio ir kalbos integruotą mokymą (CLIL, angl. Content and language integrated learning), individualųjį mokymą, užduotimis pagrįstą mokymą, projektus, savarankiškas studijas, savęs bei bendraamžių vertinimą.

Taip pat straipsnyje pabrėžiamas mokymo ren- gimo, juos orientuojant ir perorientuojant į darnaus vystymosi ugdymą, įgyvendinimą. Tai ir yra svarbiausia tyrimo dalis.

**Tyrimo metodai**

Teoriniai metodai: mokslinės ir metodologinės literatūros analizė.

Empiriniai tyrimo metodai:
Duomenų rinkimo metodai – stebėjimas, eksperimentai, analizė;
Duomenų analizė naudojant SPSS 17.0.

**Esminiai žodžiai:** užsienio kalbos mokymasis, studijų turinys, studijų procesas, holistinis požiūris į kalbą.
Introduction

Our dynamic life brings changes not only into our daily life, but in thinking and the way to work and to learn as well. We have to be faster and more flexible in order to develop our professional, social and civic competencies. Education helps to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and in the future, and to act upon these decisions. That is why trainee teachers and academic staff have to find the best ways in acquiring and teaching professional competencies and in developing their individual qualities. There are different proper theories in pedagogy and foreign language teaching, and we have to use them according to our needs, aims and situation. Most of the study programmes at Riga Teacher Training and Education Management Academy (RTTEMA) include Applied English on bachelor and master level; also, there is a programme “Primary school teacher with the right to teach 1 subject in basic schools” for students to choose the sub-programme of the English language teacher. We cover these courses enhancing not only the knowledge of the foreign language, but educate the future teachers as personalities.

The aim of the study programmes is to master foreign languages to carry out research studies and to promote a further development of a personality. It explains the use of current theoretical developments in the organisation of the study process.

Widely acknowledged Leontjef’s theory on activities and action reveals its logics, i.e., awareness of learners’ needs and situations, setting appropriate aims and tasks to acquire the selected content, to use proper approach as well as the right choice of material; moreover, it includes the organisation of the study process with individual and of team tasks to be carried out in order to reach the common aim, the presentation of the product (result) and the reflection on the performance and certain aspects of the study process.

In this process the theory of constructivism should be recalled as the aspect of self-experience construction that emphasizes each learner’s importance in order to create new knowledge.

As the implementation of future teachers’ programmes includes the content to satisfy the particular learners needs, i.e., topicality that is linked with their future profession, using LSP (language for specific purposes) un CLIL (content and language integrated learning) approaches.

Nowadays the aspect of lifelong education has greatly actualized so it is included in the study process focusing on a human’s steady lifelong growth/development; apart from that, it emphasizes the future educators’ competencies to work with the new generation, foresees both independent learning as well as promotion of collaborative skills.

In general the study programme is the plan of the organisation of the study process as well as its content. Pedagogical principles to consider while working out the programme define the aim and results suitability, planning learning and teaching, development of each learners’ skills, inner balance and coherence of the study course with other study courses, sustainability as well as the accumulation of learners’ experience (Andersone, 2007, 12). The efficiency of foreign language studies depends on the unity of the forwarded aim, tasks, content, methods as well as the evaluation criteria of the organisational pre-conditions that are based:

- The approach of holiness within the language acquisition process (Lieģeniece, Nazarova, 1999, 68);
- The interdisciplinary study approach (Ernšteins, 1999, 189);
- The attitude to a student as an active subject of the study process. Also, exploration/ analysis of each student’s needs, aims, the level of the previously acquired skills, interests as well as awareness of student’s former learning habits and life experience;
- Appropriate and meaningful content choice for students;
- Student’s own evaluation as well as peer–assessment that fosters the comparison of his own growth (Hahele, 2006, 153);

‘Each student’s motifs, aims as well as the ways of a foreign language acquisition are individual. This aspect should be taken into consideration as well as included in the respective course, programmes and the selection of study tools. A student is the study subject who understands the study process as well as can make further decisive steps by himself’ (Grīnhāge-Moneti, Kleps, 1998, 21).

Setting a definite goal is a must pre-condition to foster students’ independent work. The aims should respond students’ individual needs and interests.

One more pre-condition in the students’ independent work and its organization is awareness of the planned tasks as well as students’ interest in them. Freedom of choice is a crucial factor in students’ independent work activities.

Methods and the selection of learning tools depend on the fundamental approach to solve the problem. The most essential approaches in foreign language
studies are the following: the integrated language acquisition approach, the interdisciplinary study approach, the unity of the interactive content and form interconnection. Apart from that, the principle of mutual co-operation should be observed in the selection of approaches.

Currently at higher education institutions the interdisciplinary approach is becoming more and more popular whereas the analysis of the real situation approves educators’ preference to use reading and translation of texts in ESP courses. Educators select texts for students that do not suit learners’ previous language acquisition and their experience, no opportunity to find and choose texts is offered thus, the pre-conditions of the language acquisition have been ignored. Due to the lack of a united/common concept of holiness in the language acquisition, the planning of the study process as well as its organization mutual relations between a student and an educator are formal.

On the one hand, foreign language educators include texts related to the learners’ profession thus, creating favourable conditions to enhance the development of their professional competencies; nevertheless, collaboration with the educators’ of other study courses is insufficient.

The whole language approach, as the name suggests, calls for language to be regarded holistically rather than as pieces (the vocabulary words, grammar structures and pronunciation points). Whole language educators believe that students learn best not when they are learning language piece by piece, but rather when they are working to understand the meaning of whole texts (Lieģeniece, Nazarova, 1999, 54). In order the study process would precede effectively, the unity of learners’ cognitive interests and awareness of certain results has to be achieved. A lecturer must be able to inspire learners to discover new values and accept them. The organization and planning of the study process have to consider the acquisition and further development of content, level of knowledge, skills, relations and values of the related course as well as learners’ specific features and interests. During the planning and implementing of the study process close collaboration between the lecturer and students is going on as well as mutual collaboration among the students themselves is carried on. The organization of the study process is based on students’ self-studying whereas the educator performs a consultant’s role. Starting to train each new group, the educator has to explore it previously, to plan and to predict its further performance and progress. In order to carry out the study process successfully, the educator must interact with the group as a whole as well as each participant separately. These relations are shown in the grid No.1 where subject stands for student’s active position in study process, Content stands for language and other subjects’ integration and experience stands for student’s knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

Grid No 1. Relations: subject, experience, content.

All effective instruction requires adequate pacing, attention to student’s developmental levels, specification of appropriate objectives, a variety of activity types, and ongoing, formative evaluation. In addition to these basic considerations, content teachers working with foreign language learners must take extra measures in lesson planning in the following areas:

- **vocabulary instruction:** systematic activities for vocabulary instruction must be devised since foreign language learners often lack the basic and specialized vocabulary which characterizes academic texts;
- **prioritizing objectives:** the content teacher must decide what key concepts should receive the most attention since it may not always be possible to cover all of the material.

### Materials and methods

The importance of learning through interaction using group work and pair work has been advocated in mainstream education while in English language learning content studies such as Jeremy Harmer (Harmer, 2007), Penny Ur (UR, 2006) and Jim Scrivener (Scrivener, 2005) demonstrate the need for collaborative learning in order to support students’ ability to verbalize content knowledge. Research shows that collaborative learning methods can improve the effectiveness of student learning in content-integrated classroom, while in foreign-language classes the quantity and quality of student talk can be increased.

Integrative approach requires teachers to select content from the institution’s curriculum that is compatible with the language course objectives so that the content becomes cognitively engaging. A focus
on the students’ linguistic outputs those expected as a result of the learning aims and those expected by planned classroom activities, is an increasingly well recognized stage of language learning. Using these approaches, students are encouraged to make active use of language for genuine communicative purposes involving a variety of pupil outputs in spoken or written form build up content knowledge which simultaneously draw on appropriate language, ascertained by the pupils’ needs and the curriculum content demands.

Grouping strategies provide:

- alternate ways for providing input;
- techniques for making subject matter comprehensible;
- opportunities to develop language proficiency for academic purposes.

By brainstorming with the class before reading about a specific topic, the teacher finds out what the students already know about the topic. This strategy is especially useful with EFL classes because of the variety and range to be found in their background knowledge and experience. By encouraging students to predict what might be in the reading, the teacher asks students to call on prior knowledge what might be useful in this assignment. Students are immediately involved in the topic through oral discussion and are anxious to make appropriate guesses about what will be in the reading. As they are read, students may have to revise their predictions, and they are challenged to make corrections in their own assumptions, weighing and evaluating what they know with what they read. In so doing, old information is assimilated into new information, and cognitive growth occurs. The teacher guides students through this activity and follows up on the reading with questions to check comprehension of subject matter. By this means, the teacher can find out how much the students actually understood and how well they can respond to probes of the subject matter (Scrivener, 2005, 181).

Before assigning a reading, the teacher may discuss students own experiences. They should compare and contrast their personal experiences with what is depicted. Then they might read through the passage in a step-by-step manner with the teacher, stopping at appropriate places to make predictions about what might follow. Finally, the teacher will help the students to discover how accurate their predictions were and to summarize what they have read. One example of a technique to teach reading that fits with principles of whole language is the language experience approach. The general idea is that the texts students learn to read from are based upon the student’s life experiences. The students take turns dictating a story about their experiences to the teacher who writes it down in the target language. Each student then practices reading his or her story with the teacher’s assistance. The language experience approach applies the principles of whole language: the texts are about content that is significant to the student, it is collaboratively produced, it is whole, and since it is the student’s story, the link between text and meaning is facilitated.

Outlining and note-taking are advanced study skills that require students to summarize important ideas in specific formats. Students often have trouble developing outlines and taking notes because they must comprehend the entire message (given orally or in writing) before they can extract the main ideas and important details and arrange them in an appropriate form. Semantic webbing is an extremely helpful way to teach students how to perceive relationships and integrate information and concepts within the context of a main idea or topic. The graphic representation afforded students by semantic webbing bridges the gap between concrete images and more abstract ideas. The core of web is a key question or term that establishes the purpose of the reading or topic for discussion. Following an oral discussion or a reading, students construct web strands and web supports by putting key words or phrases in boxes or in some other visual arrangement. The boxes can then be connected to illustrate relationships or subheadings under the main ideas.

Two writing techniques that fit well with Whole Language philosophy are process writing and journal keeping. Traditionally, when the teachers teach writing, they assign topics for students to write on; perhaps they do a bit of brainstorming about the topic during a pre-writing phase, and then have students write about the topic without interruption. Subsequently, teachers collect and evaluate what students have written. Such instruction is very “product-oriented”; there is involvement of the teacher in the act or “process” writing. On the other hand, students may initially brainstorm ideas about a topic and begin writing, but then they have repeated conferences with the teacher and the other students, during which they receive feedback on their writing up to that point, make revisions, based on the feedback they receive, and carry on writing. In this way, students learn to view their writing as someone else’s reading and to improve both the expression of meaning and the form of their writing as they draft and redraft. One of our problems in teaching writing is to maintain a fair
balance between content and form when defining our requirements and assessing (Ur, 2006, 163).

Another way to begin working on literacy skills is to have students keep dialog journals, a technique that is widely practiced in the whole language approach. The particular way that journals are used varies, but essentially it involves students writing in class or for homework. There may be a particular focus for the writing, such as the students expressing their feelings for how and what they are learning, but the writing might also be on anything that the student wishes to communicate to the teacher. Usually it is the teacher “dialogs” with the student, i.e. is the audience for the journal. The teacher reads the students journal entry and writes a response to it, but does not correct its form.

There are different methods and activities. The teachers have to decide themselves, which, if any, of techniques will use in their work with students. Techniques should be employed such as reviewing previously covered materials, relating ideas to the students own experiences, using brainstorming or clustering activities help students develop a frame of reference for cognitively demanding content materials. Advance organizers such as outlines, charts, and study guides also help students see the inherent structure of academic materials.

The integration of language and content from other fields has been effectively implemented in a number of EFL courses with students acquiring English. By structuring activities to encourage collaborative problem solving, the courses are directed toward development of higher-level cognitive skills. Trough concrete experimentation and interaction with the teacher and peers, students are actively involved in completing their tasks as they talk and work together.

The English language study acquisition, its planning, organization and putting into practice on bachelor level is also based on the approach of holiness, co-operation and collaboration, mutual interaction as well as consideration of the other subjects’ interests. In the research lecturer D. Liepa used the observation method in the study process. The researcher acted in the research environment. One of the learners’ selected themes is ‘the presentations’.

The lecturer D.Liepa chose related texts to the theme, audio materials as well as visual tools. Teaching – learning tools by M. Grussendorf M. Harris, D. Mower, A. Sirkorzynska, D. Pauna were made use of. The learning stuff responded the 3 language acquisition levels thus, creating the possibility for learners to choose their own texts. Students could watch recorded peer- group presentations, too. At the beginning of the session students eagerly got involved in it, yet some of them felt shy and not confident, even needed group mates’ assistance. At the end of the session the learners were more confident and less shy as they felt the activities were appropriate and suited their skills; also, they understood their meaningfulness to meet their English language needs. Considering learners’ individual traits and differences in their language level skills, the pace of the activities differed. Sound attitude and mutual co-operation promoted successful study process. Yet, several problems appeared, i.e., learners with lower skills and less confident were not willing to talk and do the tasks. As they needed extra help, the educator as well as fast- learning group mates assisted them.

Some activities for the integrated approach are the following:

**Theme:** Classroom interaction.

**Step 1**
- Work alone
  - Write down some groups that you have belonged to, or belong to now.
  - Example:
    - My English class
    - Group of my friends
    - My dance group
  - Choose one group that you really like and write two aspects which make a successful group effective.
  - Example:
    - Dance group (everyone works hard);
  - Think about the group which you don’t like and write down two aspects which make a less successful group less effective.
  - Example:
    - School’s board
    - One person takes all the decisions.

**Step 2**
- Looking at your notes for step 1, make a list of what you consider makes an effective or successful group. List at least five aspects.
  - Example:
    - Group members are tolerant.
  - Make similar list of some aspects of an unsuccessful group.
  - Again list at least five aspects.
  - Share your ideas with the group, then with class.

**Step 3**
- Look back at the groups in your first list in step 1.
• Identify the stage of development for each of your groups and explain why you think they are at the stage.
  Example:
  • I have just joined a group for a tennis lesson. We are getting to know each other, so the group must be at the forming stage.

Theme: First lesson.

Step 1
Remember the first lesson or lessons you had as a learner.
Think about:
• the other learners;
• your feelings;
• Your new teacher;
• first impressions of the subject;
• Write two lists: positive points, negative points

Step 2
Work in groups
• Describe your ideas from task 1.
• What do you want to happen in the first lesson?
• What do you not want to happen?
• What kind of first impression would you, as a teacher, like to make on your learners?
• Share your ideas in your group and in the class.

Step 3
Work in pairs
• Match each actions and belief or beliefs.
• Write any additional actions.
• Circle number of those actions which you would like to do in your own first lesson.
• Discuss which actions and beliefs you matched.
• Tell each other which actions you would take in your first lesson.

Step 4
Design and teach an activity for the first lesson.
Discuss:
• age of learners;
• motivation;
• level of language;
• number of learners;
• possible discipline problems;
• your confidence with an activity;
• learners’ familiarity with each other;
• learners dreams and dreads;
• the atmosphere you would like to create;
• length of the activity.
• Design a new activity. It should last 5-10 minutes (Tanner, Green, 2007: 4).

Results

The experiment shows that participants made improvements not only in cognitive and academic achievements but also in language proficiency. Success is attributed to factors including a classroom organization encouraging students to talk with each other while doing intellectually challenging activities and the availability of peers who can provide English language input is an important resource. The teacher is manager, asking appropriate questions and guiding the students’ experiences as they work in small groups, pairs, or even individually at the learning centers. Students do the activities that emphasize how they think through a given problem.

The research results have interpreted quantitative with programme of data analysis SPSS.

In a study of first year students, authors of the article have found that professional courses inquiry facilitated the development of classification skills and English oral language communication simultaneously. In a series of EFL lessons that introduced scientific concepts, students learned to make observations, comparisons, and descriptions. Each lesson introduced specific terms appropriate to the pedagogical courses. In developing the language of pedagogical science, students learned new vocabulary in context, word meanings, and operational definitions of terms. They learned how to use the precise and descriptive language of pedagogical science. Interactions with peers and the teacher were an important part of carrying out the classification tasks.

Students develop their self awareness of the learning process and are capable of reflecting about what they have done and how well they have done. As an example; presentations’ self assessment and assessment criteria were completed and used during the study course. Students took part in completing criteria and were able to assess their own and the other students’ achievements.

As a result of the lectures, scores improved significantly. Students have improved their marks at the end of EFL study course. The inquiry approach used in this study specifically identifies contributions of the following to the successful simultaneous development of cognitive and linguistic processes in a pedagogical context. The assessment and self-assessment of the presentations were done two times (figures No1. and No 2.). The first time happened during the study process, the second at the end of the study course. Each presentation was discussed and analyzed. In general students’ self assessment and assessment results don’t differ. Some students
have evaluated their communicative and discussion skills lower than the lecturers and peers. They didn’t feel confident during discussions and communicative activities.

The assessment and self assessment results show that students’ have improved their skills for about 5%. The term “general language skill” is dealt with which is linked with the concept of two basic types of language skills – colloquial skill and academic language skill. It is the academic style which is commonly assessed in tests and should be differentiated from relatively superficial colloquial style. Colloquial skill can be acquired fairly quickly and is sufficient for communication in the street and shop, while academic style takes 5–7 years to be mastered (Beikers, 2002, 19). The results show that language courses which are provided by higher institutions are too short and need more credits and time. Human pedagogical school theory describes the school as an influential force in the mutual relationship of...
social culture, social economy and politics. Therefore, teacher training should enhance the conditions for the quality development of community: positive attitude.

Students learn not only by formal studies at university. There are different possibilities to develop their professional competence due to the updated informal studies inclusion into the formal studies. Now the ideas generated by the analysis of the pedagogical psychological theoretical and practice sources, have led Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy’s (RTTEMA) academic staff and students to participation in an Erasmus project started as a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) project, then empowered by the academic staffs and students participating in its most recent developments – EquiTiFoLa (Equity in Teaching Foreign Languages) and CiTiFoLa (Active Citizenship in Teaching Foreign Languages). The above mentioned Erasmus project has been developed and is being maintained by educators from 12 higher education institutions with the purpose to sum up new information on the diverse significance of the EFL for the contemporary students.

The ideas, knowledge, skills and experience gained by the participation in the project’s stages and the involved Intensive Programme are being introduced into the training of the potential EFL teachers for the compulsory primary education schools (Forms 3–9) accomplished by RTTEMA. The participation in the Erasmus project stages has already promoted the inclusion of creative attitude and relevant global issues into teaching of the course in academic writing to the students and promoting their professional competence in general. New types of essays such as group essays written by a student team have been introduced into the course due to innovative experiences gained.

The academic year of 2010/2011 has brought into studies at RTTEMA issues of equity and sustainable development as informal studies in the project framework addressing the issues of equity and education for sustainable development. Our aim is to produce teaching materials, which foster social and ecological sensitivity in learners of 10–18 years in content and language integrated (CLIL) lessons. Reflections and sharing of the ideas from the Intensive Programme, where teachers and teacher trainees work together in international groups, discuss updated, global pedagogical issues, and prepare lesson plans based on common criteria, involve the global dimension into RTTEMA. They pilot their materials in schools and reflect on their experiences. A CD is produced and disseminated to CLIL schools in Europe containing the input of the Intensive Programme, the lesson plans, the teaching materials and the reflections on the lessons taught with video footage are designed with the intention to widespread them to the students in the respective teacher training institutions of all countries participating in the project. With every year preparatory and follow-up project activities are enhanced by a forum provided by an Internet-based Learning Management System on a higher level as well.

Equity and other global issues are designed to be approached in a multidisciplinary sense: the incorporation of education for sustainable development into different subjects of the school curricula contributes to the development of social and civic competences required for lifelong learning. EquiTiFoLa participants experiment with task-based CLIL lessons with elements from keyboarding skills, communications and arts. EquiTiFoLa draws on previous project outcomes dealing with Multiple Intelligences, Culture and Creativity.

**Conclusions**

- Traditional methods for teaching foreign languages often disassociate learning from cognitive or academic development. There are many different theories which are not used in real language classroom.
- Integration of language and other courses provides a motivational and cognitive basis for language learning since it is interesting and of some value to the student.
- The language of different subject areas is characterized by specific genres or registers which may be a prerequisite of specific content or to academic and personal development in general.
- Language is learned most effectively for communication in meaningful, purposeful, social and academic content.
- The organization of the study process is based on students’ self-studying whereas the educator performs a consultant’s role.
- The inquiry approach used in this study specifically identifies contributions of the following to the successful simultaneous development of cognitive and linguistic processes in a pedagogical context.
- The results show that language courses which are provided by higher institutions are too short and need more credits and time.
Literature


