СУЧАСНІ ТЕХНОЛОГІЇ ВИКЛАДАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ

І.Г. Бабієць,
Національний університет "Острозька академія",
м. Остог

MONTESSORI METHOD
IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

У статі описуються основні принципи методу Монтессо-рі, подаються дані розповсюдження шкіл Монтессорі в сві-ті, а також розглядається місце даної методики навчання в Україні. На основі теоретичних опрацювань системи Мон-тессорі пропонуються застосування принципів її педагогіки в навчанні іноземних мов.

In this article, the basic principles of the Montessori Method is explained, the dissemination of Montessori Schools in the world is discussed, and the present educational situation in Ukraine is explored. Analyzing the main principles of the method, there are presented the suggestions of using Montessori principles in teaching foreign languages.

"Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand"[1]. The question of HOW to teach has always been a burning issue in all times. The new methods arrive and the old ones are criticized, debates about what is the best and educational reform demands all together tense the atmosphere. The expectations from the modern teacher are growing and it is difficult to catch up with all present educational trends. Analyzing the nowadays situation, I would like to draw your attention on the educational method, that has been a source of inspiration in the last century and still is at the beginning of the new one – the method of Maria Montessori. Early in the 20th century, Dr. Maria Montessori envisioned a radically different approach to education, an approach grounded in close and insightful observations of the children rather than in adult convenience and misconception. A modern research in psychology suggests the Montessori system is much more suited to

---

[1] Chinese proverb.

how children learn and develop than the traditional system[1].

Why the Montessori Method?

What is so special in Montessori schools? The answer lies in observation of Montessori classes. "Observation is the key of adults to the world of children"[2]. The Italian pedagogue herself paid great attention to observing children at work, and her books about the method of teaching were sometimes took years to write, but were based on practical experience.

The Montessori Method has become the field of personal interest after observing a class in a Montessori school in Canada[3]. The teaching approach that I saw differed a lot from a traditional one which was experienced in Ukraine. At this school, children were moving around the class directly exploring their learning environment independently. The teacher was no longer leading the class, but working individually with kids, facilitating their learning.

There could be defined basic principles of Montessori education, which are helpful in understanding of how the system works. Listed below, they are:

1) Assisting the individual in his or her natural development;

2) The impact of movement in learning and cognition;

3) The interaction with "the prepared surrounding";

4) The freedom of choice in "the prepared surrounding";

5) The demands from the didactic material;

6) The evaluation of the student achievement.

1. Assistance in natural development – is connected with the Montessori theory about the inner potential of the child and its natural need for self-development. "Every child is an individual who develops according to his or her inner design"[4] The phenomenon of "absorbent mind" is described in Montessori philosophy, which means that children from birth to around age 6 possess limitless motivation to achieve competence within their environment and to perfect skills and understandings. For example, exhaustive babbling serves as language practice leading to language competence. Every unnecessary help stands in the way of the natural development of the child. A teacher in a Montessori school does not smother spontaneous impulses of the child, but accurately observes and helps him or her.

---

[1] Angeline Stoll Lillard, "Montessori. The Science behind the Genius", Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 3.

[2] Gabriela Badura-Strzelczuk, "Pomóż mi zrobić to samemu: Jak wykorzystać idee Marii Montessori we współczesności" (trans."Help me to Do it Myself: How to Use Ideas of Montessori Nowadays"), Krakow: Impuls, 1998, pp. 35-36.

[3] Montessori School in Regina, Canada, was incorporated in 1971 by parent's initiative.

[4] G. Badura-Strzelczuk "Pomóż Mi Zrobić To Samemu…", p. 41.

2. The impact of movement in learning and cognition. "One of the greatest mistakes of our day is to think of movement by itself, as something apart from the higher functions (…). Mental development must be connected with movement and be dependent on it. It is vital that education theory and practice should become informed by this idea"[1]. The ideas of Maria Montessori are supported in the modern studies, which prove the fact that memory improves when one's movements align with what is to be remembered. For example, when students enact the content of action-describing sentences at encoding, they remember those sentences better than when they learn the sentences without enacting them (Cohen, 1989; Engelkamp, Zimmer, Mohr, Stellen, 1994)[2]. "Student actors recalled a play character's monologue better when they actively improvised what the character was like, than when they wrote about or discussed the character" (Scott, Harris & Rothe, 2001)[3].

3. Interaction with "the prepared surrounding" is the vital element of the work in Montessori educational system. "We have repeatedly emphasized that both in the environment at school and in the materials used, everything should be carefully considered in its artistic bearings, to provide ample room for development for all the phenomena of attention and persistence in work which are the secret keys of self-education"[4] The one can observe harmony and order in Montessori Classrooms. The furniture is generally made of smooth wood, adapted to the needs of a child. Soothing classical music is often being played in the background. Montessori classrooms are supposed to be beautiful, because beauty inspires interest[5].

The student in a Montessori classroom is not a passive observer; he or she understands the organization of the classroom material and can readily explore it at will. Montessori teachers are required to organize the learning environment in such a way so that primarily only necessary material is accessible which supports them to the ultimate learning objective. Some additional, albeit limited, materials may be present to help foster decision-making, personal choice, and social skills. An expectation of the student is that he or she is to use the material in constructive and responsible ways. "Our goal is the creation of a suitable environment where a child can pursue a series of interesting objectives and thus channel his random energies into orderly and well-executed actions"[6].

---

[1] Maria Montessori, "The Absorbent Mind", trans. C.A. Claremont, New York: Henry Holt, 1967, pp. 141-42.

[2] A. S. Lilliard, "Montessori…", pp.38-40.

[3] A. S. Lilliard, "Montessori…", p. 41.

[4] Maria Montessori, "Spontaneous Activity in Education: The Advanced Montessori Method", trans. F. Simmonds, New York: Schocken, 1917/1965, p.197.

[5] A. S. Lillard, "Montessori…", Oxford University Press, 2005, p.137.

[6] Maria Montessori, "The discovery of the child", New York: Avon, 1967,

4. Freedom of choice in the "prepared surrounding" is the most popular and the most scandalous principle of Montessori pedagogy when compared with traditional instructional pedagogy[1]. There was much debate about how such an educational system that relies on children making their own choices for their learning could possibly be successful. The term "prepared environment" refers to a carefully organized class, where the didactic material is accessible for the children and is designed in an attractive way in order to motivate them to work with it. "These children have free choice all day long. Life is based on choice, so they learn to make their own decisions. They cannot learn through obedience to the commands of another"[2]. Making their own choices impacts positively on the task performance, because children can choose their own occupation according to their particular preferences and feel responsible about the choice they made. Freedom also means that children decide whom they will sit and collaborate with, which develops the social skills of respect towards others and ability to cooperate[3].

5. Demands from the didactic material. The didactic materials of Maria Montessori are creating the thought-out integrity and are managed by the following rules:

a) The task, that a child should discover and comprehend, represents one separate feature of the material;

b) Tasks are introduced in the sequence from easy to more difficult ones;

c) The initial materials present the feature in the concrete way, developing towards abstractness;

d) Conducted materials prepare for the future study;

e) Tasks are made towards self-education, so that the control of the mistake lies in the material itself[4].

6. Evaluation of the work. Great attention in Montessori education is paid to the appropriate and non-appropriate time for rewards and to the

---

p.62.

[1] The critics of Montessori method could be found in number of scientist's works, among them S. Hessen "Podstawy Pedagogiky" (trans. "Pedagogic Basis"), Warsaw 1935 and "Pedagogika Marii Montessori i jej Losy" (trans. "Montessori Pedagogy and its Drawbacks") printed in the magazine "Przedszkole" 1935/36, nr 3,4,5;   William Heard Kilpatrick "The Montessori System Examined", United States, 1913 etc.

[2] Maria Montessori, "The Child, Society and the World: Unpublished Speeches and Writings", trans. Caroline Juler, Oxford: Clio, p.26.

[3] Based on regular observations of Primary Class M3 in Montessori School "Przymieza Rodzin", Warsaw, teacher – Monica Pavluchuk-Solazh(October-December, 2008).

[4] Beata Tarapata, „Rola Otoczenia w Metodzie Marii Montessori" ("The Role of Surrounding in Maria Montessori Method"), Lubelski Rocznik Pedagogiczny, 1993, pp. 201 – 208.

idea of determining grades. "Grades and other evaluations (…) undermine motivation perhaps in part because they tend to lead to performance goals instead of mastery ones. Grades appear to lead children to view their level of performance as reflecting their being smart or dumb, not as indicative of having studied hard or not"[1].

Montessori Worldwide

Montessori education was first used with impoverished preschool children in Rome. The program continues to grow in popularity. Estimations indicate that more that 5000 schools in the United States – including 300 public schools and some high schools use the Montessori approach. It is estimated that there are over 8 000 Montessori schools in the world, with the next highest reported schools being from the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, and Canada[2].

The written works of Maria Montessori are translated into more then 30 languages. According to the Polish researcher, Rishard Kukha, there were, 183 monographs and 296 articles published in Italy (total 479, which is 32, 97% of the published Montessori works in the world); in Germany – 132 monographs and 41 articles (total 173; 11.91%); in the USA – 95 monographs and 66 articles (total 161; 11, 08%), in Russia – 6 monographs and 2 articles (total 8; 0, 55%), in Poland – 1 monograph and 1 article (total 2; 0, 14 %) etc. Ukraine was not in the least. The statistics were based on the bibliographical publication "Montessori. Bibliografia Internacionale. International Bibliography 1896-2000" was issued in Rome in 2001 with the entries in both Italian and English languages. It includes 14, 279 sources which corresponds to 12805 bibliographic units[3].

Currently, Montessori education finds its support in almost every corner of the world, especially in countries which politically embrace values of individualism, before conformity. It is one of the most important examples of individualized education and most closely attempts to embody a truly liberated educational experience in Europe and the United States, and has been globally embraced[4].

The Montessori Method is applied to children of different traditions, cultures, religions, and social backgrounds. In Brazil, Africa, Middle and South Americas, this pedagogy is often applied to "street culture kids".

[1] A. S. Lillard, "Montessori…", p.168.

[2] Maria Montessori European Visions, "Education with the human face", 2003, Warsaw.

[3] Rishard Kukha, "Istorychnyj Narys Rozvytku Pedagogiky Montessori u Polshi" (trans. "Historical Narrative of Montessori Pedagogic Development in Poland"), trans. T. Leshchak, Visnyk Lviv Univ, N 18, Ser. Pedagog., 2004, pp.129-143.

[4] There are Association Montessori International (AMI), American Montessori Society (AMS), Pacific Northwest Montessori Association, Montessori Australia, South African Montessori Association, Montessori Educators International (MEI) to mention a few examples.

In wealthier countries, the Montessori system is often considered to be elite, even though the philosophy itself does not share this perception, and is extended to children of families with a comfortable financial and intellectual basis[1].

Some common elements of the Montessori education are:

– a move from teacher-centered to student-centered education, or a growing emphasis on learning process of the individual pupil instead of the emphasis on teaching process;

– an emphasis on the practical learning by experiments, by doing, by trying out, in other words "hands on education", learning by using your hands to understand objects and concepts

– an emphasis on learning skills, especially skills to acquire new knowledge, instead of acquiring useless or fast-changing knowledge; evidently, in fast changing society relevant knowledge changes[2].

The Montessori Method in Ukraine

Ukrainian historiography, dedicated to works of Italian doctor and pedagogue Maria Montessori, reaches pre-war period, but nevertheless, is far not the richest. Back in the history of arising of the method, it was supported and popularized by such outstanding pedagogues of that time as: Russova[3], Tichejeva, Fausek and Lubinec[4]. In the time of the Soviet Union, though, the concept of 'freedom of choice' was strongly criticised, and the Montessori Method was considered to be 'bourgeois': incompatible with the educational system that supported communistic philosophies and values[5].

As noted by Ryshard Kukha, "There is an impression that some countries, including Ukraine, have been cut off from international developments for a long time. Our education used to be more inward-

---

[1] Barbara Surma, "Pedagogika Montessori – Podstavwy Teoretyczne i Twórcze Inspiracje w Praktyce" (trans. "Montessori Pedagogy – Theoretical Background and Creative Inspiration in Practice"), Lodz, 2008, p. 26.

[2] Jan Van Dijck, "O Korzyściach Płynących ze Współpracy Międzynarodowej" (trans. "The Benefits of International Cooperation in Education"), materials from the international conference on "Metoda Marii Montessori: Historia i Współczesność" (trans. "Maria Montessori Method: History and the Present?"), Lublin, 1993.

[3] S. V. Rusova, "Doshkilne Vyhovannia" (trans. "Preschool Education"), 1918, – analyses method of Montessori preschool education in the chapter "Sychasni Dytachi Sadinnia" (trans. "Modern Kindergartens").

[4] P. A. Semepnikowa, "Metod Nauchnoj Pedagogki Marii Montessori" (trans. „Maria Montessori Educational Method"), Kiev, 1993, p.145.

[5] V. V. Maslova, "dydaktychne Zabespechennia Pedagogichnyh Technologij: Konspekt Lekcij dla Studentiv Socialno-Humanitarnogo Napriamku" (trans. "Didactic Support for Pedagogic Technologies: Abstract of the Lectures for the students of Humanities and Social studies"), Mariupol, 2006, p. 152.

looking and nation-oriented"[1]. Of course, with the processes of integration with Europe and general globalisation, the situation has been changing, but the whole process of the reform is still really time-consuming. Analysing the growing amount of the articles about Maria Montessori Method during the last decade, the conclusion could be made that Montessori Education awakes the interest of Ukrainian pedagogues more and more.

Currently in Ukraine there is a Montessori Association in Kiev. The first Montessori school recently appeared in the capital city in 1992, and proposes the program for children from 2 to 10 years old. There are only a few more kindergartens and Montessori schools, all of them are private. None of the Montessori schools in Ukraine work with a second language as it should be according to Montessori principles. The usual daily Montessori work is integrated with 45-minute lessons of foreign language. As such, the English teacher most likely enters the classroom with a sudden interruption of the individual work of pupils – with his or her 'traditional' approach.

Why Foreign Language Class?

The applying Montessori Method in language learning classes could be useful for the number of reasons. Firstly, the humanization and individualization of studying process could be practically realized through implementation of Montessori principles in foreign language classes. For example, the teacher's role is to prepare the environment for the child, where he or she could feel comfortable and free to work individually. The child chooses what exact material he/she wants to work with. "Help me do it myself" – is the principle of Montessori education, which means that the teacher is no longer the center and the leader of the class, but the observer and helper. Most of the time children work individually with the teacher, if they have any difficulties with the chosen material. The classes are full of respect and freedom in discipline.

Secondly, every child in a Montessori class can learn the language at his or her own tempo, without the "gaps" of knowledge and according to his or her own abilities. One educational program for everyone has proved to be ineffective, because it is always stopping the most talented students from further developing and kills the motivation of slower students, just because the level could be too high for them. In Montessori Method the teacher guides the every student through his or her individual way of gaining the knowledge.

Thirdly, such new technologies as Project Making, Portfolio Method, Role Play, Circle Check and many others can become into one connected system, not separately organized lessons. The system of the

---

[1] Ryshard Kukha, "O Potrzebie Międzynarodowej Współpracy Edukatorów" (trans. "The Needs of International Cooperation", materials from the international conference on "Metoda Marii Montessori: Historia i Współczesność" (trans. "Maria Montessori Method: History and the Present?"), Lublin, 1993.

class organization, as well as the way of giving home task and checking the class work in Montessori lesson is very similar with the modern approaches of teaching English Language. For example, in the beginning of the class everyone sits in the circle and teacher asks "How are you?", children share the ideas with which they came into class, the mood that they have and according to such Circle Check teacher can make the group activity, suitable to the situation. After the group work there is the time for individual practice with the chosen material. It is important to mention that every child has also his or her one project to make in some flexible amount of time. Projects are the new perception of home tasks that are bigger and more time-consuming. In the end of the class, the children get back into Circle and there is evaluation and reflection about the work that has been completed.

To conclude, this article was to show one of the possible alternative method of teaching, that could be applied to any group in needed extend. The situation of Montessori Schools in Ukraine and the dissimilation of the method in the world show us that this principle of education is very promising. While Montessori Method meets all needed requirements in organization the Language Learning Class according to the demands of the educational reform, using it can help in solving some educational problems.

Bibliography

1. Angeline Stoll Lillard, "Montessori. The Science behind the Genius". – Oxford University Press, 2005. – p. 3.

2. Barbara Surma, "Pedagogika Montessori – Podstavwy Teoretyczne i Twórcze Inspiracje w Praktyce" (trans. "Montessori Pedagogy – Theoretical Background and Creative Inspiration in Practice"), Lodz, 2008, p. 26.

3. Beata Tarapata, "Rola Otoczenia w Metodzie Marii Montessori" ("The Role of Surrounding in Maria Montessori Method"), Lubelski Rocznik Pedagogiczny, 1993, pp. 201 – 208.

4. Gabriela Badura-Strzelczuk, "Pomóż mi zrobić to samemu: Jak wykorzystać idee Marii Montessori we współczesności" (trans. "Help me to Do it Myself: How to Use Ideas of Montessori Nowadays"), Krakow: Impuls, 1998, pp. 35-36.

5. Jan Van Dijck, "O Korzyściach Płynących ze Współpracy Międzynarodowej" (trans. "The Benefits of International Cooperation in Education"), materials from the international conference on "Metoda Marii Montessori: Historia i Współczesność" (trans. "Maria Montessori Method: History and the Present?"), "Maria Montessori Method: History or the Present?", Lublin, 1993.

6. Maria Montessori, "Spontaneous Activity in Education: The Advanced Montessori Method", trans. F. Simmonds, New York: Schocken, 1917/1965, p.197.

7. Maria Montessori, "The Absorbent Mind", trans. C.A. Claremont, New York: Henry Holt, 1967, pp. 141-42.

8. Maria Montessori, "The Child, Society and the World: Unpublished Speeches and Writings", trans. Caroline Juler, Oxford: Clio, p.26.

9. Maria Montessori, "The discovery of the child", New York: Avon, 1967, p.62.

10. Nicole Else-Quest and Angeline Lilliard, "Evaluating Montessori Education", Science, Vol 313, 29 September 2006.

11. P. A. Semepnikowa, "Metod Nauchnoj Pedagogki Marii Montessori" (trans. "Maria Montessori Educational Method"), Kiev, 1993, p.145.

12. Rishard Kukha, "Istorychnyj Narys Rozvytku Pedagogiky Montessori u Polshi" (trans. "Historical Narrative of Montessori Pedagogic Development in Poland"), trans. T. Leshchak, Visnyk Lviv Univ, N 18, Ser. Pedagog., 2004, pp.129-143.

13. Ryshard Kukha, "O Potrzebie Międzynarodowej Współpracy Edukatorów" (trans. "The Needs of International Cooperation", materials from the international conference on "Metoda Marii Montessori: Historia i Współczesność" (trans. "Maria Montessori Method: History andor the Present?"), , Lublin, 1993.

14. Meczuslawa Materniak, **"Die Aufgaben der Erzieher in der Erzieher in der Montessori-Padagogik und ihre Bedeutung fur Fremdsprachenunterricht",** "Prace Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej w Częstochowie. Studia Neofilologiczne", Z.1, 2000, pp. 93-98.

15. S. Hessen "Podstawy Pedagogiky" (trans. "Pedagogic Basis"), Warsaw 1935 and "Pedagogika Marii Montessori I jej Losy" (trans. "Montessori Pedagogy and its Drawbacks") printed in the magazine "PrzedszkoleKindergarten" 1935/36, nr 3, 4, 5.

16. S.V. Rusova, "Doshkilne Vyhovannia" (trans. "Preschool Education"), 1918, – analyses method of Montessori preschool education in the chapter "Sychasni Dytachi Sadinnia" (trans. "Modern Kindergartens").

17. V.V. Maslova, "dydaktychne Zabespechennia Pedagogichnyh Technologij: Konspekt Lekcij dla Studentiv Socialno-Humanitarnogo Napriamku" (trans. "Didactic Support for Pedagogic Technologies: Abstract of the Lectures for the students of Humanities and Social studies"), Mariupol, 2006, p. 152.

18. William Heard Kilpatrick "The Montessori System Examined", United States, 1913.

19. Сумнительний К.Е. Как помочь ребенку построить себя (Беседы о педагогике М.Монтессори). – М.: Academia, 1999. – С. 204.