

**Konstantin Myachin<sup>1</sup>, Irina Olkova<sup>2\*</sup>, Diana Spulber<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor,  
M. Kozybayev North Kazakhstan University, Kazakhstan, Petropavlovsk,  
ORCID: 0000-0002-2454-0242 E-mail: konstmya1@mail.ru<sup>2\*</sup>Corresponding author, Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor,  
M. Kozybayev North Kazakhstan University, Kazakhstan, Petropavlovsk,  
ORCID: 0000-0002-1045-0887 E-mail: irina\_m\_a@mail.ru<sup>3</sup>Doctor of Science in Psychology, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Professor,  
University of Genoa, Italy, Genoa,  
ORCID: 0000-0001-7395-986X E-mail: d.spulber@unilink.it**MULTI-FACETED CHARACTER OF “METHOD” CONCEPT IN THE CONTEXT  
OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

**Abstract.** This article presents new insights into the conceptual interpretation of the term “method” in its application to the process of foreign language acquisition. The gap in this concept’s field-specific content has been revealed based on the comprehensive analysis of the “method” term understanding and utilization in language-related research fields. The authors analyze the linguistic, pedagogical, methodological, and socio-cultural aspects of “method” in their general abstract understanding and describe their content and the specific contribution of each aspect of communication in a foreign language classroom. The article presents the principles for implementing the above aspects, with special attention paid to the principle of truth, as a necessary condition of foreign language acquisition process leading to real learning. Also, from the previously established connection in linguistics between language and thinking, the authors derived the concept of a subject’s attachment to their native language, resulting in the need to observe and preserve the connection between the mother tongue and the foreign language being studied through educational activities related to translation. Therefore, the article provides an account of the four conceptual aspects of the term “method” used in research, focusing on how language is acquired, learned, and taught, as well as their general characteristics and implications. Describing these aspects’ semantic content in the context of foreign language acquisition, as well as the proposed principles of their realization, allows a deeper understanding of the “method” term’s field-specific meaning.

**Keywords:** method; aspect; language; thinking; principle of truth; native language**For citation:** Myachin, K., Olkova, I., Spulber, D. Multi-faceted Character of “Method” Concept in the Context of Foreign Language Acquisition. *Tiltanyim*, 2025. No. 2 (98). P. 102-110.DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55491/2411-6076-2025-2-102-110>**Константин Александрович Мячин<sup>1</sup>, Ирина Александровна Олькова<sup>2\*</sup>, Диана Спульбер<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1</sup>филология ғылымдарының кандидаты, доцент,  
М. Қозыбаев атындағы Солтүстік Қазақстан университеті, Қазақстан, Петропавл қ.,  
ORCID: 0000-0002-2454-0242 E-mail: konstmya1@mail.ru<sup>2\*</sup>автор-корреспондент, филология ғылымдарының кандидаты, доцент,  
М. Қозыбаев атындағы Солтүстік Қазақстан университеті, Қазақстан, Петропавл қ.,  
ORCID: 0000-0002-1045-0887 E-mail: irina\_m\_a@mail.ru<sup>3</sup>психология ғылымдарының докторы, философия докторы (PhD), профессор,  
Генуя Университеті, Италия, Генуя қ.,  
ORCID: 0000-0001-7395-986X E-mail: d.spulber@unilink.it**ШЕТ ТІЛІН МЕНГЕРУ КОНТЕКСТІНДЕГІ «ӘДІС» ҰҒЫМЫ МАЗМҰНЫНЫҢ  
ПОЛИАСПЕКТІЛІГІ**

**Аңдатпа.** Шет тілдерін меңгеруде «әдіс» концептісін қабылдауға жаңа көзқарасты қалыптастыру мақаланың мақсаты болып табылады. Тілге қатысты зерттеулерде «әдіс» терминін түсіну және колдануды кешенді талдау негізінде осы концептінің салалық мазмұнын сипаттаудағы кемшіліктер анықталды. Авторлар әдістің лингвистикалық, педагогикалық, әдістемелік және әлеуметтік-мәдени аспектілерін жалпыланған-абстрактілі тұрғыдан талдап, сонымен қатар олардың мазмұны мен әр аспектінің шет тілі сабақтарындағы коммуникация үдерісіне қосқан үлесін ашады. Мақалада анықталған аспектілерді іске асыру принциптері ұсынылған, сонымен қатар шет тілін шынайы оқытуға ықпал ететін және оны меңгеру үдерісінің қажетті шарты ретінде ақиқат принципіне

ерекше назар аударылған. Сонымен қатар тіл білімінде бұрыннан қалыптасқан тіл мен ойлау арасындағы байланыстан авторлар «субъектінің өз ана тіліне жақындығы» деген ұғымды ойлап тапты, бұл аудармаға байланысты танымдық іс-әрекеттер арқылы ана тілі мен оқытылатын шет тілі арасындағы байланысты ұстану және сақтау қажеттілігін тудырды. Осылайша, мақалада тілдің қалай үйренетініне, зерттелетініне және оқытылатынына және олардың жалпы сипаттамалары мен мағыналарына назар аударып, зерттеуде қолданылатын «әдіс» терминінің мазмұнының төрт концептуалдық аспектісі сипатталған. Шет тілін меңгеру контексіндегі осы аспектілердің семантикалық мазмұнын, сондай-ақ оларды жүзеге асыру принциптерін ұсыну «әдіс» терминінің салалық мағынасын тереңірек түсінуге мүмкіндік береді.

**Тірек сөздер:** әдіс; аспект; тіл; ойлау; ақиқат принципі; ана тілі

**Сілтеме жасау үшін:** Мячин К.А., Олькова И.А., Спульбер Д. Шет тілін меңгеру контексіндегі «әдіс» ұғымы мазмұнының полиаспектілігі. *Tiltanyum*, 2025. №2 (98). 102-110-бб. (ағыл. тілінде)

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**Константин Александрович Мячин<sup>1</sup>, Ирина Александровна Олькова<sup>2\*</sup>, Диана Спульбер<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>кандидат филологических наук, доцент,

Северо-Казахстанский университет имени М. Козыбаева, Казахстан, г. Петропавловск,

ORCID: 0000-0002-2454-0242 E-mail: konstmya1@mail.ru

<sup>2\*</sup> автор-корреспондент, кандидат филологических наук, доцент,

Северо-Казахстанский университет имени М. Козыбаева, Казахстан, г. Петропавловск,

ORCID: 0000-0002-1045-0887 E-mail: irina\_m\_a@mail.ru

<sup>3</sup>доктор психологических наук, доктор философии (PhD), профессор,

Университет Генуи, Италия, г. Генуя

ORCID: 0000-0001-7395-986X E-mail: d.spulber@unilink.it

## ПОЛИАСПЕКТНОСТЬ СОДЕРЖАНИЯ ПОНЯТИЯ «МЕТОД» В КОНТЕКСТЕ ОВЛАДЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННЫМ ЯЗЫКОМ

**Аннотация.** Целью статьи является представление нового взгляда на понимание концепта «метод» в его применении к овладению иностранным языком. На основе комплексного анализа понимания и употребления термина «метод» в исследованиях, связанных с языком, выявлен пробел в описании отраслевого содержания этого концепта. Авторы анализируют лингвистический, педагогический, методический и социокультурный аспекты метода в обобщенно-абстрактном его понимании, а также раскрывают их содержание и специфический вклад каждого из аспектов в коммуникацию, протекающую на уроке иностранного языка. В статье представлены принципы реализации выявленных аспектов, а также уделено отдельное внимание принципу истинности, как необходимому условию процесса овладения иностранным языком, способствующему реальному обучению. Кроме того, из ранее установленной в лингвистике связи между языком и мышлением авторы вывели концепцию привязанности субъекта к своему родному языку, что привело к необходимости соблюдать и сохранять связь между родным языком и изучаемым иностранным языком посредством учебной деятельности, связанной с переводом. Таким образом, в статье дается описание четырех концептуальных аспектов содержания термина «метод», используемых в исследованиях, с упором на то, как язык усваивается, изучается и преподается, а также их общие характеристики и значения. Описание смыслового содержания этих аспектов в контексте овладения иностранным языком, а также предлагаемых принципов их реализации позволяет глубже понять отраслевое значение термина «метод».

**Ключевые слова:** метод; аспект; язык; мышление; принцип истинности; родной язык

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### Introduction

The term “method” is generally defined as “a procedure or process for attaining an object: such as a systematic procedure, technique, or mode of inquiry employed by or proper to a particular discipline or art” (Merriam-Webster, 2025). In this general meaning, the term “method” is used in various scientific research as the basis for classifications to be applied to a certain specific field of analysis. For instance, the psycholinguistic analysis of thinking aloud strategies involves using a “multi-level C-Test” method (Babaii, 2021: 5).

According to the Corpus of Contemporary American English data, the word “method” is mainly used in the academic literature in the “methodology” thematic field with its dominant collocations with such linguistic units as “research, study, use, teach, develop, scientific, traditional, effective, and others,” as presented in Figure 1 (Davies, 2008). These statistical data highlight the essential aspects of the

conceptual meaning of the “method” term related to foreign language teaching, learning, and acquisition, which the article deals with.

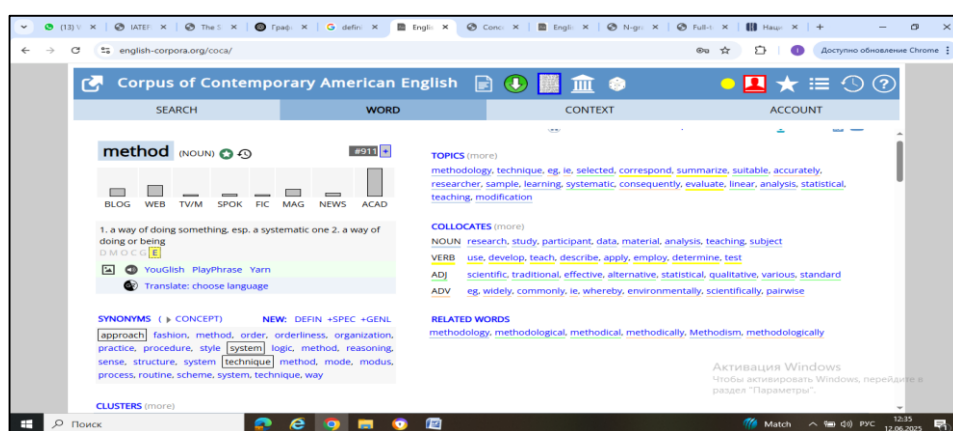


Figure 1 – Data from the Corpus of contemporary American English (retrieved from <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/> on the 12th of June, 2025)

Сурет 1 – Заманауи американдық ағылшын корпусынан алынған деректер (2025 жылдың 12 маусымында <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/> сайтынан алынған)

Рисунок 1 – Данные из Корпуса современного американского английского языка (получены с <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/> 12 июня 2025 г.)

Syrymbetova L.S. et al. describe the set of methods categorized into three main methodological approaches for effectively implementing Kazakhstan’s model of trilingual education, presenting the results of the various types of methods applied in language education (Syrymbetova, 2017:455).

The research conducted in language-related fields of study implies several major categorical types of methods. According to Snezana Obeyd (Obeyd, 2021: 54) different methods developed to collect and analyze data result in three research paradigms: qualitative, quantitative, and “mixed methods research.” Ramli Ramli and Kusmaryani Woro in their book summarize the research methods in the English language teaching and conclude on the quantitative and qualitative methods applied in analyzing foreign language acquisition efficiency (Ramli, 2024: 10).

Therefore, the term “method” is used in research as the basis for the classification of structured ways to further analyze specific objects. Nevertheless, the conceptual meaning of the term itself in its specific relation to language-related sciences has not been considered.

### Materials and methods

This study is based on a comprehensive analysis of theoretical and methodological sources related to the concept of “method” in language-related fields of scientific analysis. The research materials include scholarly works in linguistics, psycholinguistics, semantics, cognitive linguistics, linguodidactics, and methodology. The selection of materials was guided by their relevance to the multi-aspectual nature of the concept of “method” in language education.

This research uses a complex approach involving several theoretical methods. This implies examining a number of “method” interpretations and conducting a comparative analysis aimed at identifying similarities and differences in the selected definitions. The data obtained from the Corpus of Contemporary American English and the Google Ngram Viewer served to statistically study the linguistic features and conceptual characteristics of the analyzed term. Additionally, classification and systematization techniques structure the four key aspects of the concept.

As a result, the study identifies four distinct aspects of the “method” concept in a foreign language acquisition, which are analyzed in detail in the following sections.

### Literature review

The theoretical basis for teaching foreign languages is made up of interconnected data from such sciences as foreign language teaching methods, linguistics, pedagogy, didactics, psychology, and psycholinguistics – “... linguistics and foreign language teaching methods are closely related, since any

model of teaching foreign languages, according to Yu.N. Karaulov, is based on the “image of language” that exists in linguistics in each specific period of time” (Cherkasova, 2011). O.I. Trubitsina notes that the methodology of teaching foreign languages is considered an independent science since it has the characteristics inherent in any science: subject, object, scientific theoretical foundations, experimental data, and its own categorical apparatus (Trubitsyna, 2021: 80). The methodology can be considered a science about implementing this or that activity, ensuring positive results.

In its relation to teaching language D. Nunan. defines method as a “single set of procedures which teachers are to follow in the classroom” observing that “Methods are usually based on a set of beliefs about the nature of language and learning” (Nunan, 2003).

In their Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (2002), Richards and Schmidt claim that “different methods of language teaching... result from different views of: a. the nature of language; b. the nature of second language learning; c. goals and objectives in teaching; d. the type of syllabus to use; e. the role of teachers, learners, instructional materials; f. the activities, techniques and procedures to use” (Richards, 2002: 330) which obviously highlight the multi-sided nature of the “method” concept.

Back in 1994 identifying the 'postmethod condition' B. Kumaravadelu wrote about “the widespread dissatisfaction with the conventional concept of method” (Kumaravadelu, 1994: 43). Scott Thornbury claims that “rather than subscribe to a single set of procedures... teachers adapt their approach in accordance with local, contextual factors, while at the same time being guided by a number of macrostrategies” (Thornbury, 2025). The latter also implies the multi-level structure of the “method” concept.

The generalized abstract content of a particular method applied in teaching foreign languages seems heterogeneous in its composition and represented by pedagogical, methodological, linguistic, and sociocultural components that form a coherent structure. At the same time, the content of the method can be understood as a projection of the content of the discipline onto the method used, that is, what is presented explicitly and expressed, for example, in the verbal formulation of the task and the key words of the communication taking place in the classroom; and is also implied and consists in the expected background knowledge of the communicants and the results of their pedagogical or educational activities. Of course, methods do not exist and are not applied by themselves. The personality of the teacher and the personalities of the students are woven into the integral content of the educational process. Applying this or that method, they simultaneously reveal its content, which in its form is presented by the instructions for the task, the body of the task itself, and the expected result in a specific form of completion.

## **Results and discussions**

### *Linguistic aspect of the method's content*

In the context of teaching a foreign language, a task can be formulated in a foreign language or the language of instruction. Thus, when the teacher presents the instructions and task body to the students, its linguistic content is actualized. The denotative and significative meanings of words, which A.A. Potebnya called the word immediate and further meanings, referring students to the language system of the target language. “The immediate meaning of a word corresponds to that part of its content, which he called linguistic content, in other words, the information that all native speakers of the same language associate with this word because knowledge of this connection between the form and content of the word is part of knowledge of the language; the further meaning of a word corresponds to that part of its content, which A.A. Potebnya called extralinguistic content” (Kobozyeva, 2004: 63).

The language system of the foreign language is quite firmly connected in the speaker's mind with the first language system, which in turn is firmly connected with thinking. Linguistic thinking determines the ability of the first language to function in the depths of the learners' mind, no matter what language is used for communication. Such attachment to the first language is relatively stable at different levels of the foreign language acquisition – from beginner to advanced, but at the same time, has a different degree of intensity. The initial level of language acquisition assumes a greater connection between the first and the studied language, and the subsequent ones - a lesser one. At the same time, the connection with the first language is less realized by the learners themselves at the initial stage of learning than at the subsequent ones. Practicing teachers can observe the ease with which primary school students master the elements of another language system, which is explained by the more remarkable ability of primary school



students to remember, the flexibility of their linguistic consciousness, and the openness of the students to learning new language material. Supporting this idea, though, concerning teaching the phonetic structure of a language, E. Underhill speaks of liberation from the mother tongue grip necessity (Underhill, 2004).

A.R. Luria discusses the connection between language and thinking in the process of a new language acquisition: “as a result of social history, language has become a decisive tool of human cognition, thanks to which man was able to go beyond sensory experience, identify features, formulate known generalizations or categories. We can state that if a person did not have work and language, he would not have abstract “categorical” thinking” (Luriya, 2020: 25). Paraphrasing A.R. Luria, linguistic speech creation, the generation of speech in language, is one of the main ways of thinking.

Since the method can be represented as a complete thought formulated in words in an individual’s mind, the abstract linguistic content of a single method (content from the language systems: the studied foreign language and the native language) can be represented by the following components: systematicity and hierarchy; naturality and connection with thinking; symbolism, stability, polysemy, and mobility; concept-categorization and associativity. Bearing in mind the connection between language and thinking according to A.R. Luria, it can be stated that the study of a foreign language as a different, non-native system and the comprehension of the elements of this system also determine the development of thinking and a deeper simultaneous comprehension of the elements of the native language system of a learner through such components of abstract linguistic content as the connection with thinking, concept-categorization, and associativity.

#### *Pedagogical aspect of the method’s content*

The pedagogical content inherent in the method during its practical implementation is represented by the general positive attitude of communicants to the pedagogical (from the teacher’s point of view) and educational (from the student’s point of view) activities they carry out, a sufficient level of development of behavior skills by a given situation; sufficiently developed communication skills and the presence of selfless cognitive motivation. According to O.I. Trubitsyna, the pedagogical framework of the method’s content is represented by such didactic principles as: “purposefulness; scientific nature; developmental and educational nature of training; systematicity and consistency; consciousness; personally oriented focus of training; clarity; activity; accessibility and feasibility; durability” (Trubitsyna, 2021: 89).

Another important principle of successful implementation of pedagogical and educational activities should be considered truthfulness or otherwise sincerity as integral personal characteristics of the subjects of pedagogical interaction. In the activities of the teacher, this principle is most noticeably manifested in a fair assessment of students’ achievements and realistic goal-setting when planning educational activities. In the student’s activities, this principle is manifested in compliance with academic honesty and ethics in the performance of educational tasks and interaction with all participants in the pedagogical process. In our opinion, developing information and communication systems and Internet access technologies and the need to comply with ethics when working with them bring adherence to the principle of truth to a particular significance level. J. Scrivener, in his work “Learning Teaching” (Scrivener, 2005), writes about the need to achieve real teaching and real learning when implementing this or that method, the successful implementation of which is possible subject to the above pedagogical principles, including the principle of truth.

#### *Methodological aspect of the method’s content*

The direct methodological content of a particular method consists of a set of sequential educational actions of the teacher, and students applied to a given educational material at a specific time. The teacher’s educational actions are carried out in the appropriate order, from the standpoint of didactic and methodological principles, and determine the students’ reciprocal progressive actions in mastering new knowledge. There are a number of methodological principles that suggest specific descriptions of teaching a foreign language in more detail. “Among them are the principle of the communicative orientation of teaching; the principles of functionality and situationality; the principle of taking into account the peculiarities of the student’s native language; the principle of a differentiated approach to teaching a foreign language; the principle of the dominant role of conventional speech and speech exercises in the learning process; the principle of the complex organization of language material; the principle of oral advancement; the principle of taking into account the mutual influence of the main types of speech

activity” (Trubitsyna, 2021: 92-93).

In addition to the methodological principles given here, J. Scrivener, when implementing a particular method, recommends that teachers adhere to the inequality teaching  $\neq$  learning ( $T \neq L$ ), which means that teaching, as a teacher’s activity, does not necessarily lead to the acquisition of new knowledge by students, since: “Teaching anything and anywhere requires energy and attention from the student. Someone cannot learn anything instead of someone else. The personal efforts of the student achieve a positive result, and no one else can put understanding or knowledge into the student's head except himself” (Scrivener, 2005:17). The place of the “method” concept in the teaching  $\neq$  learning inequality appears to be taking the mediator position. Judging by the word frequency analysis of the Ngram Viewer online tool, the interconnection and joint frequency location in the graph presented in Figure 2 is explicit (Google, n.d.). The graph also presents the prioritization of learning over teaching, which signifies the crucial importance of active involvement in the process of learning and new skills acquisition, which is also discussed in the “Pedagogical aspect of the method’s content” section of this article.

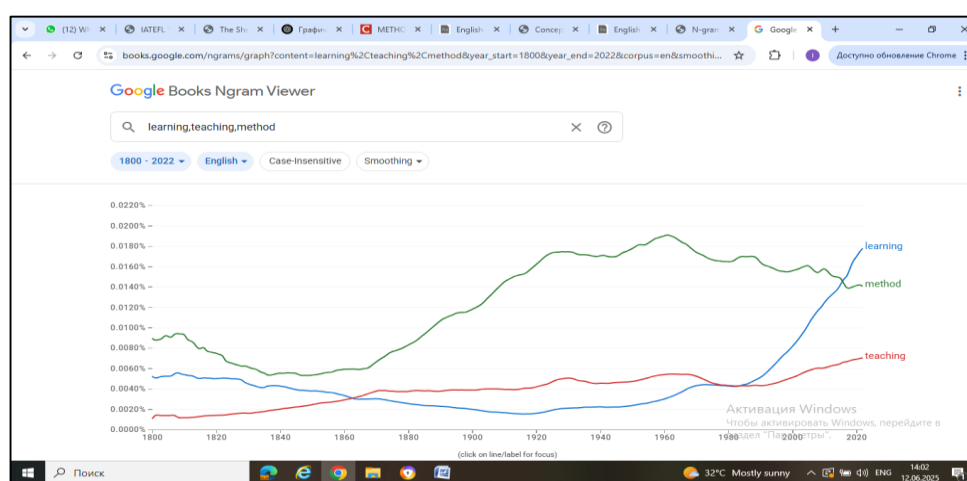


Figure 2 – Data from the Google Ngram Viewer (retrieved from [https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=learning%2Cteaching%2Cmethod&year\\_start=1800&year\\_end=2022&corpus=en&smoothing=3](https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=learning%2Cteaching%2Cmethod&year_start=1800&year_end=2022&corpus=en&smoothing=3) on the 12th of June, 2025)

Сурет 2 – Google Ngram Viewer деректері (2025 жылдың 12 маусымында [https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=learning%2Cteaching%2Cmethod&year\\_start=1800&year\\_end=2022&corpus=en&smoothing=3](https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=learning%2Cteaching%2Cmethod&year_start=1800&year_end=2022&corpus=en&smoothing=3) сайтынан алынған)

Рисунок 2 – Данные из Google Ngram Viewer (получены с [https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=learning%2Cteaching%2Cmethod&year\\_start=1800&year\\_end=2022&corpus=en&smoothing=3](https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=learning%2Cteaching%2Cmethod&year_start=1800&year_end=2022&corpus=en&smoothing=3) 12 июня 2025 г.)

### *Socio-cultural aspect of the method’s content*

The socio-cultural content of the method is represented by information in the consciousness of communicants, located in the area of their worldview, which V.I. Karasik and O.G. Prokhvacheva characterizes it as "an interconnected integral formation in equilibrium, in which a person comprehends reality." Studying a foreign language is most directly related to the comprehension of the meanings of another linguaculture. Much of the foreign linguaculture is presented in the studied language in the semantic content of words and statements, which, as a rule, differ from the verbal content of the native linguaculture. Understanding these cultural differences “allows one to see interconnected semantic lines in a foreign culture and, accordingly, to understand better such lines in one's own culture” (Karasik, 2005).

“The fundamental idea of the socio-cultural basis of teaching foreign languages at school is the relationship between culture and language, as well as the interpretation of this interaction, which in the theory and practice of teaching foreign languages is called the co-study of language and culture. In this case, language is considered as a way of realizing the creative beginning of the human spirit, as well as a reflection of the cultural values of a certain ethnic society” (Trubitsyna, 2021: 97). N.D. Galskova notes the methodological principle according to which “teaching a foreign language in the context of an

intercultural paradigm will be successfully provided that it (teaching) is oriented toward the student's native lingua culture... the idea of relying on the student's existing experience in the native language and transferring several skills from the native language to the process of mastering foreign language skills and abilities is important. Implementing the orientation principle toward the original linguaculture contributes to the fact that the student, mastering a new language, expands the boundaries of his worldview and worldview" (Galskova, 2004: 154).

Comparison and juxtaposition of foreign and one's linguaculture, being the part of words' and utterances' semantics, is carried out through the process of recoding knowledge from one language to another, which is undoubtedly directly related to the process of thinking. Therefore translation, in educational bilingualism, presents linguistic and socio-cultural contextual essence. At the same time, translation is distinguished by some autonomy among other substantive aspects of the method used, and the teacher is not always able (in general, and should not) control the translation. What is meant here is that the task may not be translated in the lesson, or rather, the translation will not be voiced, which, however, does not mean the absence of the translation process in the consciousness of an individual student, which refers us to inner speech as a mechanism of speech-thinking activity, "which is a necessary translator for mutual understanding" (Zalevskaya, 1999: 47). Thus, the translation aspect of the method is not always "recognized by a person, functioning at the intersection of speech and intellect" (Zalevskaya, 1999: 56), where "the translation of thought into human language is carried out" (Zhinkin, 1982: 54).

In our opinion, the aspects of the method content discussed here (linguistic, pedagogical, methodological, socio-cultural) are fundamentally interconnected and form unity and integrity (Table 1).

Table 1 – Aspects of the method's conceptual content as applied to the process of mastering a foreign language

Кесте 1 – Шет тілін меңгеру үдерісінде қолданылатын «әдіс» ұғымы мазмұнының аспектілері

Таблица 1 – Аспекты содержания понятия «метод» в применении к процессу овладения иностранным языком

Aspects of method	Realization principles	Anticipated difficulties	Expected results
Linguistic	systematicity, hierarchy; naturalness, connection with thinking; symbolism, stability, polysemy, mobility; concept-categorization, associativity	Attachment to the mother tongue	Liberation from the attachment to the mother tongue
Pedagogical	purposefulness; scientific character; developmental, educational nature of training; systematicity, consistency; consciousness; personally oriented focus of training; clarity; activity; accessibility, feasibility; durability; truth	Compliance with academic ethics	Real learning
Methodical	the communicative focus of training; functionality and situationality; consideration of the peculiarities of the student's native language; differentiated approach to teaching a foreign language; the dominant role of conventional speech and speech exercises; comprehensive organization of language material; oral advancement; consideration of the mutual influence of the main types of speech activity	$T \neq L$	Learner's autonomy and subjectivity
Socio-cultural	orientation towards the student's native linguistic culture; reliance on the student's existing experience in the native language; transfer of several skills from the native language to the process of mastering foreign language skills and abilities	Co-study of language and culture	Expanding the worldview and perception boundaries

## Conclusion

Therefore, the internal structure of the "method" concept has open boundaries between content types, which ensures their ability to regroup and interact dynamically. In practice, this can manifest in the teacher's ability to influence the pedagogical component when implementing a method through the methodological, socio-cultural, or reverse order. When the pedagogical situation changes, the mobile

content of the method used can also change its content.

Thus, having analyzed the linguistic, pedagogical, methodological, and socio-cultural aspects of the method in a generalized abstract form, we revealed their content and pointed out each aspect's specific contribution to the communication in the lesson. We have provided the principles for implementing each methodological aspect and also derived the principle of truth as a necessary condition for the participants in the pedagogical process to observe academic honesty in achieving real learning, considering the previously established inequality  $T \neq L$ . Also, from the previously established connection between language and thinking in linguistics, we formulated the concept of the subject's attachment to the first language, which results in the need to observe and maintain the connection between the first and the studied foreign language through educational activities related to the translation and actualization of the content of the native and studied linguaculture.

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