

# The Use of Cluster Approach in Teaching a Foreign Language in Secondary (9-11 Grade) School

Journal of Research in  
International Education  
2023, Vol. 22(2) 126–132  
© The Author(s) 2023  
Article reuse guidelines:  
sagepub.com/journals-permissions  
DOI: 10.1177/14752409222999108  
<https://www.jrie.org>



**E A Pazilov**

Gulistan State University, Republic of Uzbekistan

## Abstract

Modern Uzbek educational system is in many aspects focused today on the use of cluster approach. It is due to such objective factors as the possibility to enhance learning efficiency (especially in the ESP sphere); the possibility of assimilation per unit of time more training concepts; increasing the speed of assimilation of the material; encouraging the active participation of each student in the learning process; awakening students' interest in learning a foreign language; providing professional and multifaceted impact on them. In this regard, in the recent researches on pedagogy and psychology it is highly recommended to use cluster approach, which involves giving students the opportunity to individually expand and deepen their language skills, as well as forming their subject position in determining their educational path. The article reveals the essence of the use of cluster approach in teaching a foreign language and gives structurally-substantial characteristics of this approach on the example of modern FL teaching models; grounded didactic conditions for the implementation of cluster approach in teaching a foreign language in general; the content and methods of interactive learning at collaborative learning and the implementation of cluster approach in the professional development of students reflected in the practice of the school. The article proposes the model of foreign language teaching methodology of the secondary (9-11 grade) school students, due to the overall goal setting system of education in Uzbekistan, as well as the specifics of subject "Foreign Language".

## Keywords

Cluster approach; teaching model; foreign language; language skills; ESP; professional development; educational factors; educational resources.

## Introduction

Education today moves with the times and a modern foreign language lesson is a complex entity, preparation and carrying out of which requires teacher's efforts, energy and creativity. Teaching a foreign language itself corresponds to the current level of technological progress, so the effectiveness of cluster approach (often termed as "CA" in many spheres, including education) in the classroom is obvious. Scientists note that the greater the perception of the systems involved in the training, the better and stronger the material to assimilate. Active implementation of the interactive learning technology multiplies didactic capabilities, ensuring visibility, audio and video support, and control, which generally contributes to the teaching level. For example, computer application today relates to the mandatory introduction in learning activities in the study of a foreign language. That is why in recent years, the issue of the use of cluster approach in an educational institution at any level has increasingly risen. It is not only new facilities but also new forms and methods of teaching, new approaches to learning. This is due to the fact that it is the computerization and the use of cluster approach that create opportunities to help create a new education system.

---

## Corresponding author:

Elyor A Pazilov, PhD Candidate, Gulistan State University, 120100, 4<sup>th</sup>-microregion, Bo'ston mahalla, campus of GulSU  
Email: [elyor\\_pazilov@gmail.com](mailto:elyor_pazilov@gmail.com)

The aim of this study is to examine the use of cluster approach combined with modern models of teaching foreign languages so, in this connection, it is important to identify the specifics of professionalization and cooperation in the field of teaching foreign languages with the help of cluster approach, as well as the design of elective courses as a factor in professionally-oriented, student-centered and adaptive learning. The acceleration of progress in educational science and teaching models based on the introduction in the production of flexible systems charges the modern pedagogical science with the important task to educate and train the younger generation that can be actively involved in a new stage of development of modern society associated with foreign language proficiency through the use of professional resources. The solution to the above-mentioned problem fundamentally depends on the technical equipment of schools (i.e. computer technologies with the appropriate peripheral equipment, training, demonstration equipment) and on the willingness of students to perceive the ever-increasing flow of up-to-date professional information, most of which is usually in a foreign language.

The widespread use of cluster approach is such an educational approach as the intellectual basis for professional teaching creativity in the younger generation. For this reason, there is actual development of methodological approaches to the use of cluster approach for realization of the ideas of personality-oriented and adaptive training for the purpose of development of the student's personality. In particular, for the development of the creative potential of the individual, forming his ability to forecast the results of his operations, we need to develop a strategy to find ways and methods to solve problems, both instructional and practical. Hence, the relevance of teachers training for teaching a foreign language through the use of cluster approach depends not only on the social order, but also on the needs of the individual to self-determination and self-expression in the modern development of professional relations.

Of particular attention is the use of different professional resources in the teaching of a foreign language, such as: mobile devices (phones and tablets) to learn and teach languages; the BYOD trend (bring your own device) applied to school practice and the study of languages; applying new ESP textbooks for language learning; learning platform and training in a virtual environment; virtual reality and augmented reality for language learning; video games as a learning environment for language learning; production and reception of digital devices (application) for the study of languages (blogs, podcasts, wikis), video, digital panel, etc. This helps ensure the prerequisites for the intensification of the educational process, as well as creation of methods focused on student's professional personality development.

All this, in turn, creates the following possibilities: immediate feedback between students and the teacher; professional visualization of educational process about the language as such and English-speaking countries; archiving sufficiently large volumes of language information with the possibility of professional transmission, as well as easy access and handling of students to the central data bank; automation of processes of self-activity, and monitoring of these activities with the ability to adjust and improve; automation of processes of information and methodological support of the educational process and control of the results of knowledge and skills assimilation of speaking in a foreign language. Foreign language teaching is no longer based on the traditional methods, where the passive way of acquiring knowledge predominates.

Now what is encouraged is more professionally-oriented search and deliberate evaluation of students' own results. It is training with the use of cluster approach that gives the opportunity to organize independent actions and professional experience of each student.

### **Structural and substantial characteristics of cluster approach in teaching a foreign language**

The 2020-s are characterized by the use of cluster approach in the world education. According to this approach, each student interacts with the three sources of obtaining educational information: a teacher, a workplace (professional academic discipline) and, formally, any class student. Hence, the cluster learning technology makes the process of learning productive that can be called a special form of organization of cognitive activities. It concerns very professionally specific and predictable objectives. One of these is to create a comfortable learning environment in which the pupil feels his/her success, his/her intellectual consistency of training connected to their future profession.

To date, the following technologies are popular in the educational process: professionally-oriented learning technology; problem-modular training technology; developing education technology; communicative training technology; ESP teaching/learning methodology, etc. In this context, cluster approach, for example, alter the learning style itself

Students acquire a variety of professional skills in all kinds of speech activity specific for a certain sphere at the same time. In teaching listening each student has an opportunity to hear the foreign language speech; at speech training each student can recite phrases in a foreign language; when learning grammatical phenomena each student can perform grammar exercises. Students can create a variety of texts in a foreign language: biography, greeting cards, questionnaires, as well as the problematic texts, essays, projects. At the same time different kinds of speech activity are activated, such as: reading and writing; in addition, the effect is achieved in the field of speech thanks to the expansion of professional vocabulary and text design skills.

In this regard, there can be distinguished the following methods and techniques, forms of organization in the course of employment with the use of cluster approach:

- work with the concepts – the method of self-learning, in which learners working individually, in pairs, in a group, interact with the information, where the teacher’s involvement is minimal;
- a “practical lecture”; specific form of organization of the lesson when the transfer of theoretical knowledge takes place on the place of professional activity;
- professional interactive communication (active interaction between all participants in the educational process around the specialty), which becomes an important source of knowledge and experience in the implementation of active and interactive learning methods (role playing, brainstorming, group discussion, analysis of the situation);
- the use of the cluster approach promotes different kinds of practical perception of information.

## Literature Review

In the pedagogical and psychological literature, the questions of teaching a foreign language through the use of cluster approach (“CA”) were considered from the point of introduction of this approach to the teaching of foreign languages by T.A. Polilova & V.V. Ponomarev (2007), B.S. Howard (2007), O.I. Right (2012); use of active teaching methods with professionally-oriented model by E.V. Yang (2012), E.G. Ashwood (2011); the use of modern learning tools by S.V. Allan (2022). The programs of experimental cluster-based ESP courses were developed by V.F. Gabbol (2005), V.S. Lewis (2011), P.S. Lerner (2014), K.G. Mitrofanov & K.N. Polivanova (2014), T.V. Charles (2005), N.V. Sharonova (2020), E.E. Shesternikov & M.N. Artsev (2022).

Representatives of reputed educational cluster approach to teaching insist on using “aid dosage”, “hint system”, where there are demonstrated theoretical positions of V.V. Davyn (2005), I.S. Yakimanskaya (2006) about the current and immediate development of cognitive abilities and personality. Followers of this trend such as I.V. Kowney & M.M. Segal (2014) argue and make extensive use of the principles of humanistic oriented professional education which does not exclude the application of advanced teaching technologies.

The cluster design of the organization and content of the educational material and the use of professionally-oriented methodology was reflected in the works of G.I. Igbo (2005), M.I. Oddoi, G.I. Igbo & M.A. Ayegbenie (2003), P.A. Yumimoto (2020).

In this article, the author used the theory of professional/educational content by S.L. Davidson (2014); theory of clusters in educational activity by I.E. Unt (2020); professional learning as part of a student-centered education by G.K. Seagull (2016). Using the cluster approach in building training was considered by A.M. Gastonee & A.M. Franco (2011); while the new methodology in teaching foreign languages with the consider of cluster approach was studied by L.P. Vong (2012). Special attention was paid to the methods and methodology of didactic professionally-oriented study developed by V.I. Zheong (2022) who took pedagogical goals (educational, developmental and professional) as a basis for the selection of educational material, determined their specific content: fact-finding systems, concepts, laws; deepening the system of ideas of ideological character, attitudes and assessments; mastery of a set of actions and operations; development of personal qualities of the student (development of thinking, memory, imagination, will, abilities, feelings, interests, needs, ideals, etc.).

## Hypothesis

In this paper, the author proceeds from the hypothesis that the implementation of cluster approach in the learning process will be successful if the following provisions are implemented: the construction of an cluster approach-based modification of the structure of the lesson (motivation, knowledge - reproduction, comprehension - transmission, transfer, creativity, monitoring - evaluation); provision of educational-methodical and information and computer equipment of elective courses; increasing the information content, the systematic detention of

humanities through the provision of invariant knowledge of stylistics, increase in the theoretical generalization, systematization of knowledge on concepts; development of emotionally-valuable relations of pupils to purity of the foreign word; organization and development of dialogue communication in the classroom aimed at cooperation in the joint solution of common problems; the use of the mechanism of interaction with the teacher (self-advisory); independent selection of individual materials adapted (by the teacher and tutor) to the specific professional training tasks in a particular group of learners; and, moreover, the inclusion of self-monitoring and self-evaluation functions.

### **The essence of the use of cluster approach in teaching a foreign language**

The use of cluster approach currently provides huge professional capabilities, which includes organizational forms and methods of providing for the use in the educational process of modern pedagogical technologies. The pedagogical technology itself means the totality of methods and means of collecting, organizing, storing, processing, transmission and presentation of professional information, enhance professional knowledge of the people and developing their ability to manage the professional processes in the future. Thus, cluster approach is unique in that it gives the opportunity to create a real language professional environment, where the language acts in its direct function: as a means of forming and formulating thoughts. It is genuine teaching environment, where there is space for immersion not only in the problem, but in the professional foreign language activity, in another culture (if the profession is the foreign language itself). The study of any academic topics (environmental, political, historical, literary, etc.) is carried out on the basis of the students' professionally-oriented study, discussion and problem solving in a foreign language with a wide employment of various opportunities and resources.

On this basis, the professional intensification is carried out at all levels of the educational process: there's increased efficiency and quality of the learning process through the implementation of professionally-oriented knowledge and skills; there are provided incentives that contribute to the activation of cognitive activity (e.g. through interpretation of educational information according to the professional needs). In this regard, the real usage model of cluster approach is based on the following assumptions: a specific model of learning a foreign language is only one way to organize new type of training; cluster system is regularly used in the learning process with a different student population; cluster pedagogical technology is used by teachers as much as they need to implement the curriculum; therefore, pedagogical tools in these situations have to move away from traditional forms and methods of teaching.

### **Didactic aspects of cluster approach implemented in teaching foreign languages**

For the scientific substantiation of didactic conditions for the realization of cluster approach in the process of learning a foreign language in secondary/high (9-11 grade) school there was proposed the following set:

1) The construction of an cluster approach-based modification of the structure of the lesson: motivation (creating interest in the study of a foreign language by means of situations taken from real life, or relating to a particular profession); knowledge (the interaction of students with educational professionally-oriented material in the process of self-study); playback (focus on new material by applying a method "work with the concepts"); comprehension (understanding of the knowledge gained by analysis); transfer (transfer information to each other in the process of group work through oral monologues); transfer (transfer of solutions from analysis of texts, situations, discussions on the difficulties of the students practice); creativity (creation of own creative work - miniature works, essays, articles and analysis etc.); diagnostics (self-realization of students);

2) The creation of a full-fledged cognitive process at foreign language lessons: students acquiring not only the linguistic understanding of software, but also the formation of a picture of the world by familiarizing as authentic verbal so substantive values of the new world vision systems; i.e. the formation of the student's ability to relate their "own" and "others", to realize what unites the original culture and the culture of the country of the studied foreign language;

3) The use of appropriate forms, kinds and means of organizing the learning process taking into account the psychological support a student: it's directed to avoid a student's fatigue during the lessons, for which different forms and types of educational activity are used (in groups, including pair work, stirring up monologue, dialogue speech, writing, listening, reading); creating a comfortable atmosphere in the class or out of it through the use of modern pedagogical technology);

4) Organization and development of the dialogue communication in the classroom: it's aimed at cooperation in the joint resolution of linguistic aspects of the given communicative orientation, i.e., involvement of students in an oral (listening, speaking) and written (reading and writing) communication; in this case, the selection and organization of educational material is determined by themes, communication sphere, communication situations, possible under specified conditions and approaching on the basic parameters of one's real professional communication;

5) Formation of the student's autonomy in educational activity: it involves teaching students for different strategies of work in learning the language based on the structured individual responsibility (students study together what can subsequently be used individually with the aim to make each participant individually stronger in his/her own position);

6) Learning a foreign language on the basis of the creative process: the reduction of the front work to a minimum, i.e. paired, group types of work, joint creative activities and projects in the educational process take a significant place; at the same time, it is important to create situations that allow the students to carry their own lessons prior knowledge and skills in a new context of their use, not requiring mechanical assimilation of knowledge but creating an opportunity for intellectual and creative processing and interpretation;

7) The system monitoring the development of a foreign language: the implementation of interactive learning technology in the framework of the monitoring is carried out the identification and evaluation of the actions undertaken; while providing feedback, it informs about students' actual operating results in adequacy of their ultimate goals.

## **The content and methods of interactive learning in the context of collaborative learning**

Implementation of cluster approach in the process of ESP learning involves the use of interactive teaching methods (teaching students how to analyze situations in life, make their own decisions, to defend their own and respect other people's point of view, when in a relaxed environment, they have the necessary communication skills) in terms of cooperation when learning a foreign language with the help of technology. The most productive in the process of learning a foreign language are the following group methods: information methods (working with linguistic concepts), discussion methods (interactive training based on the organization of effective communication), game methods (specially organized dramatic situations), analytical methods (acquisition of comprehension skills and analysis of materials), video conferencing method (the possibility of merging the participants not only from different cities, but also from different countries); creative methods (create one's own video games to facilitate language learning). Thus, with the use of these methods students learn to understand complex linguistic realities of the target language, terminology, concepts, etc.; to work productively with dictionaries and reference materials; to qualify the concepts in terms of their importance and by category; to compose short texts using the concepts in question, etc.

Discussion method aims to discuss possible professional challenges in the context of theoretical and applied; on the ability to see the problem from different angles; on the development of the group decision, etc.

Interactive teaching methods include: role-playing game (getting used to the role of others in conditions as close to practical); situational game (scenes of an arbitrary nature, reflecting life situations the model); game-trip (has the character of geographical, historical, local history, ethnographic expeditions); intellectual games, etc.

Analytical method is aimed at developing the ability to make a summary of the basic ideas for the purpose of organization of independent analytical work in the classroom.

Creative method is a creative task, containing more or less unknown elements and having, as a rule, several approaches; at the same time, it must meet the following criteria: it has no definite answer or solution, it is practical and useful for the students; it is connected with students' lives, future profession and is interesting to them.

## **Discussions**

Thus, the use of cluster approach contributes to solving the following problems in teaching a foreign language for a specific purpose: the identification of the interests and aptitudes, abilities of students and formation of practical experience in various fields of cognitive and professional activity focused on the choice of language learning in secondary/high (9-11 grade) school; provide psychological and educational assistance in the acquisition of the students' ideas about life, social values, including those related to the professional/linguistic/intercultural competence; the development of a wide range of cognitive and professional interests, core competencies that

ensure success in the future foreign language activities; the formation of the ability to make appropriate decisions in the choice of the future direction of education, ways of obtaining profession. And this is possible only when the implementation of the following didactic principles is realized in the teaching process: the principle of consciousness and activity of students in training (in this case the use of a computer contributes to the development of cognitive activity and the formation of the student as a subject of educational activity); the scientific principle (inclusion in curriculum of objective scientific facts, theories, laws, which can be found in the database of the Internet); the principle of communication training and practice (using the computer's capabilities for testing the knowledge acquired through the implementation of multi-level tasks); the principle of consistency and order (teaching and learning in a specific order, system, logic of construction, both the content and process of learning); availability principle (taking into account the peculiarities of development of students while working with their professional tools in the classroom or outside of the classroom when the student has the opportunity to determine the ways to study the topic); visibility principle (attracting the senses for perception and processing of educational material, which is used for the profession to be included in the work of the maximum number of senses: visual, auditory and tactile); the principle of developing and bringing up training character.

## Conclusion

As a result of our study, the author concluded that the use of cluster approach in teaching foreign languages is likely to largely solve the same methodological problems as traditional teaching aids do. But implemented in the process of ESP training, it is done on a faster basis, for such kinds of pedagogical technologies have the following facilities: they have a significant practical approach; they provide an opportunity not only dissemination of educational material and recording the responses, but also the analysis of the responses and requests of students, which is very important for independent work; they connect the educational material with the student in a dialogue mode, simulating some of the functions of the teacher and, to some extent, professional communication. Besides, cluster approach containing a huge cultural and didactic potential is currently used worldwide. However, for the efficient and effective use of cluster approach in teaching ESP there is required a huge scientific research, the results of which allow us to define general and specific principles of it, materials selection criteria, as well as significantly update logistics methodological tools and methods of instruction.

## Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## References

- Allan, S. V. (2022) *Cluster approach tools*. New York: BHV. 96 p.
- Ashwood, E. G. (2011) Professionally-oriented materials in the English language classroom. *Foreign Languages and Linguistics*, 43(1), pp. 96-101.
- Charles, T. V. (2005) Guidelines for the development and execution of programs of cluster courses. *The Profile Journal*, 5(40), pp. 11-16.
- Davidson, S. L. (2014) Challenges and risks of self-determination of senior pupils in the selection of a profile of training. *The Profile Journal*, 5(40). pp. 5-10.
- Davyn, V. V. (2005) *On the concept of developmental and professional education*. London: Longman.
- Gabbol, V. F. (2005) *Elective experimental courses on rhetoric in the modern system of innovative cluster-based education in school*. New York: Macmillan Press. 245 p.
- Gastonee, A. M. & Franco, I. P. (2011) *Innovative approach in the construction of learning*. Dublin: Marco Inc. 64 p.
- Howard, B. S. (2007) *'Clusterization' of modern education*. Boston: InCom Press. 264 p.
- Igbo, G. I. (2005) *Educational technology in secondary vocational school*. Liverpool: Lake Press. 31 p.
- Kowney, I. V. & Segal, M. M. (2014) *New pedagogical technologies in teaching foreign languages*. New York: Macmillan Press. 137 p.
- Lewis, V. S. (2011) *The content of education: essence, structure and prospects*. New York: HEP Publishing. 224 p.
- Lerner, P. S. (2014) The role of elective courses in profile training. *The Profile Journal*, 3(38). pp. 12-17.
- Oddoi, M. I., Igbo, G. I. & Ayegbenie, M. A. (2003) *Pedagogical technologies of the students thinking development*. Liverpool: Lake Press. 88 p.
- Mitrofanov, K. G. & Polivanova, K. N. (2014) *The specificity of the content and methods of teaching of elective courses in the social sciences*. Moscow: Vita-Press. 24 p.
- Polilova, T. A. & Ponomarev, V. V. (2007) The introduction of new pedagogical technologies in teaching foreign languages. *Foreign Languages at School*, 6, pp. 34-38.

- Right, O. I. (2012) Cluster approach in education as a new form of training. *Education and Technology*, 7(21), pp. 303-311.
- Seagull, G. K. (2016) *Encyclopedia of Educational Technologies*. New York: National Research Institute of School Technology. 816 p.
- Sharonova, N. V. (2020) Guidelines for the development of the training course of the author's program. *Zavuch*, 4, pp. 88-91.
- Shesternikov, E. E. & Artsev, M. N. (2022) Guidelines for the development of copyright and training programs. *Praktika*, 5, pp. 3-11.
- Unt, I. E. (2020) *Personalization and differentiation of professional training at school*. New York: Macmillan Press. 192 p.
- Vong, L. P. (2012) The organization of a foreign language lesson: Cluster-based approach. *Innovative Teaching*, 3(12), pp. 33-41.
- Yakimanskaya, I. S. (2006) *Person-oriented education in the modern school*. Moscow: September. 156 p.
- Yang, E. V. (2012) *Methods of teaching foreign languages in purely professional environment*. PhD Thesis. Hong-Kong, HKUP. 196 p.
- Yumimoto, P. A. (2020) Creation of modular programs. *Japan Pedagogy*, 34(2), pp. 28-35.
- Zheong, V. I. (2022) *Methods of didactic research: different implementation and basic challenges*. Shanghai: International University of the South Harbor Press. 83 p.

### **Auhtor biographies**

Elyor A Pazilov is the PhD candidate at Gulistan State University, Gulistan City, Republic of Uzbekistan.