

The Peculiarities of Teaching Foreign Language Business Communication to the University Students of Economics

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Abstract: The article is dedicated to the study of the problem of teaching foreign language business communication that is of special importance to the university students of economics in conditions of the development of multilevel international contacts. The ability to carry out cross-cultural foreign language communication became professionally important and in many ways determining professional growth, career and competitiveness of the specialist in job market. Business communication is presented by the author as a type of communication that, being a basic condition of the existence of international professional community, is aimed at the exchange of professionally important information that is liable to transfer, storage, reproduction. The question of the necessity of the organization of business communication in foreign languages in the university by means of combining traditional and innovation methods based on the principles of communication, speech and intellectual activity, individualization of teaching, functionality, situatedness, novelty is analyzed in the article. The author describes the structure, functions, principles and the stages of the organization of teaching foreign language business communication in the context of future professional activity of the students. The creation of conditions of natural communication in a foreign language within the educational interaction is achieved by the use of communicative games, staging professional situations, conducting discussions, solving creative tasks etc.

Key words: Communication • Business communication • Communicative approach • Dialogue • Speech activity • Foreign language competences

INTRODUCTION

Social and economic progress and geopolitical processes intensively happening in the world in the last decades determine the necessity of improving the language training of specialists who provide the conduction of international business negotiations. With Russia's integration into all European and world cultural and communicative space the necessity in specialists able to solve their professional problems at the international level increases significantly. To know a foreign language for professional communication becomes an important component of future professional activity of the specialist in connection with it the role of foreign languages in the universities of economy grows considerably. Consequently, the social order of modern society determines the main goal of teaching foreign languages in the university as the preparation of

specialists who are ready to start business and interpersonal contacts, i.e. having the skills of foreign language business communication.

Main Part: The goal of higher education is not only in acquiring knowledge; it is also in the development of thinking in general and critical thinking in particular. Students should learn to think critically, to express their opinion on different subjects, understand the meaning of ideas and assumptions that are their base and also present their well-grounded arguments. Besides, it is important for students to acquire the skills of solving intellectual conflicts constructively [1]. According to FGOS VPO of the third generation the goals of teaching foreign languages to the students of Baccalaureate in economics are: the use of a foreign language in interpersonal communication and professional activity, mastering the skills of expression thoughts and opinions

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in interpersonal and business communication, mastering the skills of obtaining the necessary information from the original text in a foreign language on the problems of economy and business, mastering the skills of argumentation, conducting discussions.

Among the most significant competencies necessary for the graduate one can distinguish professional and communicative competences which help of the specialist to carry out effective professional and intercultural communication.

In the area of psychology and communication the term “cross-cultural competence” has such characteristic features as social effectiveness (the ability to reach instrumental and social goals) and relevance (the accepted form of communication in the given cultural environment). In the methods of teaching foreign languages cross-cultural competence is defined as an ability to keep being adequate and flexible confronting actions, precepts and expectations of the representatives of foreign cultures [2; 138]. The English scientists Canale and Swain considered communicative competence to be a synthesis of forming its basis system of knowledge and skills for carrying out communication. In their concept of communicative competence knowledge is limited to (conscious or unconscious) knowledge of the person about the language and the aspects of its use [3, 4].

The American scientist S. Savignon was the first to use the term of communicative competence for the classification of the types of activities that required both a large amount of scattered knowledge, for example, language patterns or quotations and “purposeful interaction” with other speakers [5; 14]. At the end of 80s a new model of communicative competence or to be more exact the model of communicative level of mastering the language was offered by Bahman and Palmer. According to the offered by the scientists model the significant characteristic is the language level of speakers combining in itself two broad areas: the knowledge of the language and strategic competency. The knowledge of the language is presented by two major components: organizational and pragmatic which complete each other for reaching effective speech communication. In the model of Bahman and Palmer the organizational component means abilities used in managing formal language structures i.e. grammatical and textual knowledge. The knowledge of grammar includes several rather independent areas such as vocabulary, morphology, syntax and graphology. This knowledge allows to identify and to build grammatically correct sentences and also to understand the context relevant to the statement [6].

Since communication became the goal of foreign language teaching, methodologists constantly address its psychological (A.A. Bodalev, L.S. Vygotsky, A.A. Leontiev, V.N. Panferov, G.M. Andreeva, L.I. Antsiferova, B.D. Parygin, A.V. Petrovsky, A.G. Kirpichnik, B.F. Lomov, R.S. Nemov, P.M. Jacobson, V. Bogoslovsky etc.), philosophical (L.P. Bueva, M.S. Kagan, V.S. Korobeinikova etc.), social and pedagogical (E.V. Rudensky, A.P. Panfilova, Y. Vasilkova etc.) studies.

The interest of psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, linguists to the phenomenon of communication is so great that the analysis of this concept is complicated by the differences in the interpretation of both the concept of communication and finding its place in the hierarchy of other social and psychological phenomena such as interaction, perception, relationships etc.

Generally, communication is understood as a complex and multidimensional process of creating and developing contacts and connections between people. In a more general sense by communication we mean the process of interconnection and interaction of social subjects (persons, groups), characterized by the exchange of information, experience, abilities, skills and also the results of activities that is one of the necessary conditions of the formation and the development of society and the person.

A.A. Bodalev suggests considering communication “the interaction of people the content of which is the exchange of information with the help of different means of communication to establish relationships between people” [7; 87]. It should be noted that in the studies of problems of communication by our psychologists the methodological base is the statement about the unity of communication and activity. Thus, the opinion of L.S. Vygotsky and A.A. Leontiev considering “communication as a type of activity” is supported by other authors, for example, by V.N. Panferov, G.M. Andreeva, L.I. Antsiferova etc.

The problem of communication is studied in the works of philosophers as well (B.D. Parygin, L.P. Bueva, M.S. Kagan, V.S. Korobeinikova etc.). Interpreting communication B.D. Parygin pays attention to the system understanding of communication content, its multifunctionality and its activity-based nature and notes that “communication is an informational process, the process of interaction of people, their attitude towards each other, their mutual influence” [7; 86].

With all the varieties of interpretation of communication the scientists that study it are unanimous in considering communication to be a specific form of

interaction of the person with other people, showing their subject-subject relationships. During communication the training and education of the person, mastering different forms of social experience, norms and rules of behavior, development of different characteristics and qualities take place.

Communication as a communicative activity is a system of elementary acts. Every act is determined by the subject- the initiator of communication, the subject-the addressee of the initiative; by the norms according to which communication is organized; by the goals of the participants of communication; by the situation where the interaction takes place.

According to the studies of foreign linguists communicative activities have the following characteristic features:

Purposefulness: Speakers do not just demonstrate the correctness of mastering the language, they pursue a certain communication goal (get the information, address with the request and give the instructions);

Interconnection: Judging by the above to understand each other interlocutors may need to ask questions and to make adjustments;

Synchronicity: The exchange of information, especially in oral communication, usually takes place in real time;

Unpredictability: Neither the process nor the result, nor the language used for the exchange of information are completely predictable;

Heterogeneity: Interlocutors can use any communication means that are at their disposal; in other words, communication is not limited by the use of predefined grammatical units [8; 8-9].

The given characteristics of communicative activity are mentioned by Viktor Froeze in his book "Introduction to whole-language teaching and learning". The author points out that "communicative actions should not only stimulate the events of real life but, if possible, be such events" [9; 8].

Analyzing the dynamics of the communication process G.M. Andreeva distinguishes the following components:

- Emerging demand in communication and clarification of the goals;
- The subject entering communicative situation;

- Orientation in the situation of communication and the personality of the speaker;
- Planning content and means of communication (phrases, gestures, facial expressions);
- The acceptance of a certain position towards the partner in communication;
- The phase of interaction, the exchange of speech activities;
- The perception and the evaluation of the feedback of the interlocutor, the control of the effectiveness of communication on the basis of the establishment of feedback;
- The adjustment of direction, style, methods of communication;
- The stage of exiting the contact [7; 154]

The main form of the educational activity and the leading method activation of reserve possibilities of the person are real and active communication of the teacher and students with each other. Entering active communication its participants enter collective interaction aimed both at reaching the planned result and at the creation of the atmosphere of friendliness, mutual help and attentive attitude to partners.

The analysis of the peculiarities of communication in the area of business relations shows the multifunctionality of this phenomenon (A.P. Panfilova, E.V. Rudensky, Y. Vasilkova, V.N. Komissarov, S.V. Pavlova, N.I. Gerasimova). The scientists A.P. Panfilova and E.V. Rudensky point out the following functions of communication:

- Instrumental function, characterizing communication as a social mechanism of regulation that gives possibility to receive and to report the information necessary for carrying out certain actions, making a decision etc.;
- Integrative function that is the means of uniting business partners for the joint communicative process;
- The function of self-expression demonstrating personal intellect and psychological potential;
- Broadcasting function serving to transmit certain ways of activity, evaluation etc.
- The function of social control regulating the behavior, activity and the language acts of the participants of business interaction;
- The function of socialization contributing to the development of the skills of the culture of business communication;

- The function of expression expressing emotional experiences of the partners of communication [10; 102].

By business communication we understand such a type of communication that is the main condition of the existence of professional community and constant integration in it of young people and in case of our study these are university students of economics. In the process of creation of professional competence in the area of economical activity specific language personality is formed that has a number of differences. Communication with the help of the language is carried out in a complex way and sufficient language skills are one of the conditions of communication. The followers of Halliday's approach stick to the opinion that to learn the language reasonably it is necessary to treat it as a process of building meanings and meanings depend on the context (including the speaker and the listener) in which words are written or pronounced [11]. G.V. Borozdina defines business communication as "a process of interconnection and interaction during which the exchange of activities, information and experience including the achievement of a certain result, the solution of a specific problem or the realization of a definite goal" [12; 56].

The style of business communication includes: 1) maximum clarity that is achieved by the use of terms (widely spread and narrow specialized); 2) objective information; 3) the compactness of representation (briefness, the economy of language means); 4) the structuring of speech. The combination of all the components contributes to the main goal of business communication-to bring the information to the subjects of communication [13].

Business communication can be analyzed according to the same structure, levels and components as communication in general. However, business communication has a number of specific characteristics. For business communication the role character and situatedness are characteristic. Speech acts of the participants of communication are characterized by regulation, established rules of communication. The aim of business communication is to solve professional and social tasks and it includes the following stages: establishing a contact, orientation in the situation, discussing the problem, making a decision, finishing the contact.

Learning the norms and the rules of behavior in the process of foreign language communication contributes to the effectiveness of training business communication to the students of economics as a basis of purposeful

interaction of the subjects of educational process with adequate choice of forms and methods. Communication, according to E.V.Rudensky, is built from separate actions, each of them includes the following elements: the active subject, the passive subject, means of influence, methods of action, the result of action [14; 46].

Traditionally, teaching a foreign language in a non-language university is aimed at reading, understanding and translation of professional texts. Now it is necessary to think about changing the accent in education to the development of speech communication skills on professional topics and conducting business discussions. The teacher of the university confronts a complex task-to teach students during the period limited by the educational borders of the period to express their thoughts orally and in writing on the questions of specialty. The organization of communication in a foreign language in the university is possible by combining traditional and innovation methods based on the communicative principle both in education and in building educational materials and textbooks [15; 56].

The most effective form of business communication, as stated in most of the studies, is a dialogue that represents communication of two or more subjects by means of the language. As a complex social phenomenon the dialogue may be understood from the point of view of the systematic approach including in its characteristic gnoseological, social, linguistic, pedagogical and psychological aspects. The dialogue is at the same time both a type of communication and a means of interconnection. It is a small-scale communicative process the participants of which can say or hear something that they have never said or heard before. And this "something" can lead to changes considerable for them [16; 21].

The analysis of scientific literature allowed to choose different types of dialogues as an optimal system of teaching business communication in a foreign language: a discussion, a polylogue, a role playing game and a business game and staging.

The dialogue form of teaching speech communication in the university as a process of subject-subject interaction is an important means of the student's personality and the improvement of training and educational process. The dialogue at the lessons of foreign languages motivates students of the university to protect their point of view on the discussed problem, teaches them to be polite to the opinions of other participants of the dialogue.

The technological element of teaching foreign language speech communication to students is an educational speech situation. There are several methods of creation of educational speech situations at the lessons of foreign language: 1) with the help of natural speech situations; 2) on the basis of educational texts; 3) on the basis of the use of visual methods; 4) on the basis of communicative games; 5) on the basis of the verbal description of the fictitious situation [17]. For communicative situations not to be unexpected for students and the tasks not to be hard to complete they are developed in parallel with grammar material and speech (lexical) topic of the lesson on the basis of professional texts. The creation of conditions of natural communication in a foreign language within the limits of educational interaction is achieved by the use of creative tasks and problem situations based on the critical analysis, supposition, guess, finding similarities and differences etc [18].

Phased teaching speech communication should be carried out on the basis of presenting material in blocks with growing difficulty. The aim of the first (initial) stage of education is to teach students to exchange thoughts, points of view formulated as questions and answers, in the form of a dialogue, in stylistically neutral area of everyday communication. At the initial stage the formation of the skills providing communicative minimum of the student of the university is carried out.

The aim of the second (main) stage of education is in acquiring by the students the content-conceptual basis of the primary education in their profession. The efforts of the students are directed at the maximally distinct expression of the content of the text and the ability to express it differently. At this stage it is advisable to use at the lessons such forms of teaching as discussions, conducting business and role games in a foreign language etc.

At the third (final) stage the formation of skills of conducting business discussions and negotiations takes place. Students should learn the main professional terminology and be able to present their point of view, make comparisons, stage professional situations. Educational texts, dialogue and professional scenarios, reference literature on their specialty, newspapers and magazines on professional topics are characteristic for the educational material of this type.

E.I. Passov formulated the principles of communicative training of the students to communicate in a foreign language:

- The principle of speech and thinking activities including the organization of education on the basis of problem situations. The solution of problem situations activates thinking activities of the students.
- The principle of individualization of education i.e. considering all the qualities of the student as a personality: abilities, skills to carry out speech and education activities, personal characteristics.
- The principle of functioning recommends the functional selection, the organization of speech means. In the process of teaching communication in a foreign language students cannot master all the system of speech means in full volume. That is why it is necessary to create the functional model of the language system that would be simplified, minimized but in a functional way could replace all the system of speech means.
- The principle of situatedness ensures the acceptance of the situation as a unit of the organization of the process of teaching communication in a foreign language.
- The principle of novelty. Novelty ensures the necessary development of speech skills, the ability to paraphrase, combine, to change the tempo of speech, the strategy and the tactics of the speaker [19; 173].

Exercises aimed at oral speech should include the following: the presence of the original material or the pattern; the imitation of the pattern; the representation of this or that pattern without any change or with a change; communication itself [20; 35].

Teaching foreign language business communication at the lessons of a foreign language at the University of Economy is carried out in the logics of the following stages:

Preparatory Stage: At this stage students acquire the skills of speech interaction (addressing, greeting, request); they analyze grammar patterns, study clichés of business character; learn how to conduct discussions over the telephone, how to make contacts and exchange the information, how to organize trips and meetings.

Main Stage: During this stage students get to know methods and techniques of professional communication, express agreement/disagreement, gratitude, their point of view; discuss professional situations and the methods of their solution; organize business meetings and negotiations with the use of professional economic vocabulary.

Final Stage: Includes dialogues and questioning, discussions of economic topics, carrying out business and role games, staging professional situations with the use of economic vocabulary.

All mentioned stages of teaching foreign language business communication are logically connected with each other: every preceding stage is a preparation for the next stage and every subsequent stage includes the previous ones and potentially brings qualitative changes in foreign language competences of future economists.

CONCLUSION

Thus, on the basis of the conducted analysis of the problem of teaching foreign language communication to students of economics one can make a conclusion that the modern approach to searching optimal and effective methods of teaching foreign languages in the university is in combination of traditional and intensive methods. It seems necessary to consider in teaching process such didactic principles as the principle of speech and thinking activities, individualization of teaching, functionality, situatedness, novelty as well as communication oriented teaching materials, speech situations, professional texts, communicative games and the integrated system of teaching speech communication on professional topics to the students of economics.

Summary: Teaching foreign language business communication to the students of economics is a specially organized speech interaction of teachers and students, aimed at the development of foreign language business communication skills allowing the specialist to fully, logically, distinctly, linguistically correctly build statements and to adequately understand the speech of other people. The communicative component is conditioned by the necessity to carry out a dialogue in a foreign language in business communication and

collective interaction, to resolve conflict situations, to enter the complex systems of communication and cooperation.

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