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## **Foreign Language Communicative Competence Formation of University Students by Using Interactive Teaching Methods**

DOI: 10.15804/tner.2019.57.3.14

### **Abstract**

The article describes features in the developing of foreign language communicative competence by using interactive teaching methods. The directions of developing the students' foreign language communicative competence are determined. Experimentation on skills in the development of this competence was carried out on the basis of interaction between participants. A comparative analysis of the results in experimental and control groups is proposed. The scientific novelty of the article is that it describes the effectiveness of the experience of using cooperation technology and the online platform Technology Entertainment Design in the developing of foreign language communicative competence of students.

*Key words: foreign language, communicative competence, interactive technologies, online platform, teaching methods, educational process, teamwork*

### **Introduction**

The main goal of vocational education is to train a qualified specialist to an appropriate level and profile, competitive in the labor market, fluent in his/her profession and oriented in related fields of activity, ready for continuous professional growth, social and professional mobility.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of knowledge of a foreign language in the modern world of Internet technologies. It is almost impossible to imagine the life of a person today who does not know a foreign language, because the majority of modern means of communication are focused on people who speak a foreign language. Hence, L. Bulanova assumes that construction of the learning process in the context of cross-cultural dialogues along with the idea of forming communicative competence of the future specialist is at the core of modern pedagogical practice (Tugusheva et al., 2018).

The introduction of a competence-based approach to the system of higher professional education is aimed at improving interaction with the labor market, increasing the competitiveness of specialists, updating the content, methodology and relevant learning environment (Barth et al., 2007).

The basis for the formation of foreign communicative competence of students is the use of interactive technologies – dialogic forms of interaction based on the development and modeling of various situations of free communication in the framework of the communicative process; the mastering of cultural and linguistic-cultural knowledge; the ability to work with various information sources; and having the motivation to learn a foreign language (Barahovich, 2000; Lester, 2014).

In accordance with the requirements of the modern specialist, skilled-experimentation on the formation of the foreign language communicative competence of students of nonlinguistic faculties of the University studying English was proposed.

## **Literature review**

According to the Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Education “a competence” describes the specialist’s comprehensive readiness to use the knowledge, skills and personal qualities gained in standard and nonstandard situations of professional activity.

The formation and development of communicative competence plays an important role in the professional and personal development of the future specialist. Let us turn to the concept of “a competence” (Lee, Liu & Popovic, 2014).

According to the American approach the concept of “a competence” is defined through standards of behavior in the professional activity of a specialist, including behavioral indicators that reflect a specific algorithm of actions in the behavior of the specialist in a particular situation. This approach treats competence as the

main characteristic of a personality, which includes personal qualities, defining features of working with people, working with information, and achieving results of activity (Lester, 2014).

With the European approach the concept of competence is associated with the standards adopted in a particular organization (Ball, Thames & Phelps, 2008; Winter & Klotz, 2014). Within the framework of this approach, the emphasis is shifted to the description of professional tasks and is treated as a functional competence model, in which general professional and general cultural competencies are distinguished (Ball, Thames & Phelps, 2008). Assessment of the level of competencies is carried out in terms of the utility of a specialist for the organization, respectively, the specialist's competence model includes his/her personal qualities necessary to achieve the goals of the organization, their readiness and ability to perform their professional duties, and the ability to adapt their resources to changing organizational tasks (Johnson & Johnson, 2017).

Russian scientists' approach until recently considered the concept of professional competence as part of an aggregate of knowledge and skills. This approach does not reflect a focus on professional performance (Broadfoot, 1999; Zeer & Symanyuk, 2014). Difficulties of a sociocultural nature in understanding and translating texts include many different facts that cause communicative failures. Sociocultural features have a significant impact on understanding foreign-language texts (Telezhko, Biryukova & Kurilenko, 2019).

So five elements can be identified in the model of joint learning activities in a group: positive interdependence, personal interaction, individual responsibility, communication skills, and joint assessment of the progress of the work of both the individual participant and the group as a whole (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

The basic idea of learning in cooperation was developed in detail by three groups of American educators from the University of Johns Hopkins, the University of Minnesota, the group of J. Aronson, the University of California (Johnson & Johnson, 2017).

M. Canale and M. Swain identified 4 main types of competence, which in interaction with the system of knowledge and skills form communication:

- grammatical competence: vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, semantics and sentence formation;
- sociolinguistic competence: correspondence of statements in form and meaning in a particular situation, contextual background;
- discourse competence: the ability to build holistic, coherent and logical statements in oral and written speech; - Strategic competence: compensation by special means inadequate knowledge of the language, speech and

social experience of communication in a foreign language environment (Canale, & Swain, 1980).

In “Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, Assessment” are identified the following types of communicative competences:

Linguistic (language) competence is a set of speech skills in four types of speech activity (listening, reading, writing, speaking) and language knowledge and skills (phonetic, lexical and grammatical).

Compensatory (strategic) competence is the ability of the student to apply their knowledge, skills, speech and social experience to fill the missing knowledge of a foreign language in the process of communication.

Sociolinguistic (speech) competence is the ability to use and transform language forms depending on the purpose, objectives and nature of the language situation (knowledge of semantic features, dialect, paralinguistic features).

Social competence is the ability to build interaction with native speakers based on knowledge of social reality (knowledge of behavioral scenarios in typical social situations).

Sociocultural competence is a set of linguistic-cultural, sociopsychological, and cultural knowledge (Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, 2012).

Based on the analysis of theoretical sources relating to the topic under study, it is noted that communicative competence is one of the key elements in the professional development of a future specialist. It is important to train people in comparing two cultures and reflecting them in a language (Guzhelya et al., 2018). Certainly, it is better to this do in their childhood, especially when talking about the bilingual children, but it is still possible in all ages (Khayrutdinov et al., 2017).

Communicative competence is based on three types of communicative activity: communication as influencing on the opinion or position of the interlocutor; cooperation; awareness of the spoken and perceived content of the thought, text (Spencer-Oatey, Franklin, 2009). At the executional level understanding is realized as a result of comprehension of the statement subject matter. According to psychologists, in the process of translation at the executional level, “the intention of the statement in the target language is formed” (Dolzhiikova et al., 2018).

## **Methodology of Research**

The sample of the study consisted of 200 students of nonlinguistic University faculties studying English. Both experimental (EG) and control group (CG) consisted of 100 people.

The survey was conducted in order to identify the foreign language communicative competence importance of the future specialist in their chosen profession. The questionnaire consisted of two blocks of open questions.

The first block was aimed at students' self-assessment of their level of communicative competence in a foreign language and its significance for professional activity and personal development.

The second block is aimed at identifying the level of organizational and methodological training in the development of communicative competence in a foreign language by students.

The assessment of the level of organizational and methodological training in the development of this competence by students revealed dissatisfaction with the process of organizing interaction between students, the pattern and lack of realism of communicative situations, their inapplicability in real life.

To assess the level of development of communicative competence, testing and solution of case studies were carried out. Testing included a series of test tasks for each component of communicative competence. Students carried out 40 test tasks in listening, reading, writing, speaking to assess language knowledge and skills (phonetic, lexical, grammatical) and 5 case tasks to assess sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence in native language situation. The correct execution of each task was estimated at 5 points.

The decision of the case was evaluated by the following criteria:

- discussion of the information received in the case;
- the ability to highlight important information;
- ability to exchange views and draw up a plan of work on a problem;
- the ability to find solutions to problems and discuss each of them;
- the ability to negotiate, answer questions;
- the ability to give a reasoned answer.

According to this distribution the level of formation of foreign language communicative competence of students of the control and experimental groups did not differ significantly in the testing results.

The formative stage lasted for one semester. During one semester traditional teaching methods were using in the control group, the pilot group carried out purposeful work on the formation and development of foreign language commu-

nicative communication based on cooperation technology. It was organized group work where student had to discuss various communication situations and cases on the Technology Entertainment Design (TED-ed) online platform.

The choice of cooperation technology for the developing foreign language communicative competence of students is based on ensuring the transition from the traditional teaching system to the effective interaction of all students with each other and with the teacher.

In small groups information is exchanged between all participants in the activity, which ensures the effective development of the communicative competence of each of the students.

Training on this technology was carried out in the following topics of the course: "Generation Z: What Is Special About the Young Generation?", "How Do Young People Express Their Individuality?" (Saleh, 2013), "Why Do Young People Choose a Subculture?", "Is the Social Security System Fair?" (Macsga Gage et al., 2012), The Perfect Social State? (Narag, 2016).

At the end of the semester was conducted a post- test.

## **Results of Research**

According to the questionnaire, 63% of students believe that the communicative competence of a modern specialist is the most significant in the professional sphere. Knowledge of a foreign language allows them to actively participate in both personal and professional communication with native speakers.

Nevertheless, 67% of students pointed to a rather low level of development of their skills in foreign language communicative competence, explaining this by the low quality of the methodological organization of the educational process.

About a half of the students (44%) were completely satisfied, because they give following answers "focus on reading and translating information, and not on communication in educational process", "insufficient practical knowledge", "a language and psychological barrier."

24% of the students noted that the existing training is not enough to develop communicative competence in a foreign language, while the reasons were as follows: "insufficient knowledge of a foreign language in the field of grammar, vocabulary" (32%), "insufficient linguistic and cultural knowledge" (36%), "lack of communication skills" (49%).

Only 33% were satisfied with the educational process for developing communicative competence, explaining this by the opportunities provided for self-development.

The professional motives for communicative activities in a foreign language were chosen by 65% of students (“career”, “work abroad”, “freelancing at the international level”, “communication in social networks”, “opportunities in the future”). The motives for cooperation were chosen by 35% of students (“understanding the culture of native speakers”, “the ability to understand a wide range of information in a foreign language”, “understanding the mentality of native speakers”) (Podesta et al., 2014).

The comparative results are presented in the Table 1.

**Table 1.** The results of the study of the level of development of foreign language communicative competence in the experimental and control groups at the beginning and at the end of the semester

Level of development	At the beginning of the semester		At the end of the semester		The overall dynamics EG / CG, %
	EG, %	CG, %	EG, %	CG, %	
Testing					
High level	16	12	32	15	+16 / +3
Medium level	36	37	48	45	+12 / +8
Low level	48	51	20	40	- 28 / - 10
Case tasks					
High level	14	15	26	18	+ 12/ +3
Medium level	29	31	43	35	+14 / +4
Low level	57	54	31	47	-26 / - 7

## Discussion

The positive dynamics of the development of foreign language communicative competence of students in the experimental group suggests that its development allows not only to improve foreign language communicative skills in group communication, but also to realize the principle of individualization of learning, to create a comfortable psychological climate that contributes to the effective application of various activities, as well as the development of creative thinking, skills independent work. It is worth noting that practice based on interactive methods as a whole is of vital importance in the process of minimizing the language barrier and intensifying intragroup speech activity (Tugusheva et al., 2018).

The functional components of the methodological organization of the educational process in the framework of the formation and development of foreign language communicative competence can be highlighted:

- Analytical: search for possible actual communicative situations for professional and personal communication, options for the development of the situation and analysis of the results obtained;
- Design: modeling of communicative situations, consideration of complexities, possible consequences, etc.;
- Communicative: organization of the communicative process and effective interaction between its participants, providing students with constructive feedback, developing the ability to ask questions, argue their position, exchange information and establish and maintain constructive relations with the participants of the communicative process on this basis.

According to the results of the study it is advisable to conclude that the problem of choosing one or another interactive technology focused on foreign language communicative interaction is that the learning process provides practical skills development. Moreover, a teacher should pay special attention not just to the minimal lexis for the chosen topic but also to phraseological units which contain the national character and convey it much more vividly than common vocabulary (Kajumova et al., 2017).

Thus, in view of the analysis of the results obtained during the experiment, let us highlight the main recommendations for modeling the educational process in the process of further learning a foreign language at the University:

- Full compliance of textbooks, handouts and their adaptability for educational institutions in accordance with the personal and professional needs of students, international standards and the requirements of the labor market;
- Compliance of the structure and content of the material with the goals and objectives of the students' communicative activities;
- Focus on the development of foreign language communicative competence, the acquisition of knowledge and skills, which is ensured by the presence of interactive tasks to systematize and summarize the knowledge gained, enhance skills and skills in the process of application of the studied material in practice.

## **Conclusions**

Active teaching methods used during the semester allows learners to be subjects of the communicative process: to set a goal, to plan its achievement, to independently acquire new knowledge, to evaluate the results of the activity of



themselves and the interlocutor. Organizing the development of foreign language communicative competence of students based in the University using interactive technologies, in particular, cooperation technology and the online platform TED-ed, allows students to be involved in active communication activities.

Also, this technology prepares students for activity in the conditions of constant variability of the social environment by developing their awareness; provides high foreign language knowledge, repeated repetition of the material being studied, teaching each other in a dialogue, allowing them to develop their individual skills, communication skills and skills of analysis, synthesis, comparison.

A variety of forms of cooperation allows students to develop new roles for them: a participant in the communicative process, a consultant, and an opponent. In the framework of using the technology of cooperation with the aim of developing foreign language communicative competence the individual independent work of the student is included in the team work and follows from it.

The result of cooperation technology affects the result of individual and collective work of the whole team, which allows them to apply existing knowledge and skills and improve them in the process of discussion, decision making, problem analysis, and formulation of solutions to it. The possibility of using interactive technologies allows us to develop two types of motivation: self-motivation which improves knowledge and allows you to put it into practice, motivation is formed and enhanced through individual and teamwork, as well as demonstrating that a student can use a foreign language for communication purposes.

Thus, modern foreign language teaching in the university within the framework of learning technology in cooperation is the implementation of the principle of individualization of education, it takes place in a comfortable psychological climate, it includes the effective use of various activities, as well as allowing for the development of creative thinking, skills of independence, team, group work and communicative competence.

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