

Methodic assistance as a technological level of methodic guidance for professionally oriented foreign language education

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Abstract. The article deals with the problem of the methodic guidance for instructors who carry out professionally oriented foreign language education in non-linguistic universities. Based on the content-analysis of the concepts of "methodic guidance", "methodic assistance", "methodic support", the levels of functioning of methodic assistance are determined. Using the empirical research methods and the methods of mathematical statistics, the significance and the necessity of the methodic assistance as a technological component of the methodic guidance is confirmed. The main aim of the methodic assistance is to minimize the difficulties in the work of the instructor and thereby to create the conditions for his personal and professional growth. The article also provides an example of the methodic assistance to an instructor for specific didactic and methodic maintenance of foreign language education in German for technical areas of training.

1 A problem statement

Education today is characterized by rapidly changing conditions of the educational environment, the transition to new forms of functioning of the pedagogical process, the development of new technologies, and increasing trends towards the intensification and innovation of the educational system [1]. They all require instructors to have a high level of professional competence, as well as continuous improvement of their professionalism. An instructor today should be able not only to organize and manage the learning of educational material, but also to teach it in an interesting way, take into account all the characteristics of the audience, maximally individualize and differentiate the learning process, stimulate cognitive activity, maintain a positive climate in the student's group, use various didactic, methodic techniques and the up-to-date technologies, provide an effective acquisition of large amounts of information and etc. [2].

In the process of foreign language education, the teacher faces challenges due to the specifics of the discipline "Foreign language". Unlike other disciplines, the main feature of this subject is that the foreign language acquisition does not provide direct knowledge of

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reality, since for a long time it has been the goal of learning and only with a sufficient level of proficiency a foreign language can become a tool of obtaining new knowledge. In addition, the specific characteristics of this discipline include:

- limitlessness or absence of lexical and stylistic boundaries of practical use of the language;
- pointlessness due to the fact that language is only an information carrier, a tool of formation, a form of existence and expression of thoughts;
- heterogeneity and multilevel features, since the language includes a number of other phenomena that can be represented at the level of habits, skills, and competencies;
- integrative and cross-subject teaching, since the content of a foreign language speech may include information from different spheres of knowledge, such as literature, history, art, music, etc.;
- polyfunctionality, because a foreign language can act as a goal and means of learning, a tool of interpersonal and intercultural communication, a tool of acquiring new knowledge from other spheres [3, 4].

All this undoubtedly creates additional difficulties in the activities of foreign language teachers. Therefore, in the research of foreign language education, the questions of ways and tools of effectively overcoming various difficulties and improving the pedagogical skills of teachers are still relevant. Moreover, since the limits of personal and professional growth of a teacher practically do not exist, as well as the restrictions of their professional development, the studies in this area are particularly multidimensional. One of the important areas here is the research of the methodic assistance of the educational process as a factor in improving the level of professionalism of the teachers and the quality of education in general.

1.1 The objective of the work

The research was conducted using such methods as analysis of methodic, psychological and pedagogical literature on the problem, content-analysis, questionnaire, survey and the methods of mathematical statistics. Literature analysis has shown that a significant part of the research in this area is devoted to the issues of methodic assistance to teachers of different subjects (E.V. Aristova, E.O. Britskaya, E.R. bobrovnikova, E.O. Galitsky, N.N. Mikhailova, N.N. Sabinina, A.CH. Shagdurova, etc.) and features of methodic support for teachers of colleges and technical schools (L.N. Belotelova, G.V. Serozudinova, V.I. Sorokina, V.A. Shubnyakova, V.S. Shagan, etc.). In a number of works the scientific-methodical support is considered from the standpoint of the system approach (V.I. Gorovaya, N.F. Petrov, M.N. Pevzner, P.I. Tretyakov, T.I. Shamova, etc.). Another group of scholars discusses the issues of technologies for pedagogical support (L.V. Bayborodova, E.N. Bannikov, N.G. Bityanova, O.S. Gazman, I.V. Dubrovina, S.V. Dudchik, E.I. Kazakova, N.I. Klyuev, N.B. Krylov, E.G. Nazarov, M. Polanski, M.I. Rozhkov et al.), the conditions for its integration using new Federal Educational Standards, distance learning, innovations in the educational process, etc. (N.V. Bochenina, I.G. Zvereva, N.N. Sabinina, L.B. Samoylova, Z.A. Fedoseeva, etc.). At the same time, the problem of methodic assistance to University instructors in general, to foreign language instructors in particular and especially those who carry out professionally oriented foreign language teaching remains insufficiently studied.

2 Materials and the results of the research

Therefore, in this article, we set the following objectives: 1) empirically confirm the necessity and the significance of the methodic guidance for University instructors who are

engaged in professionally oriented foreign language education; 2) identify the most problematic points in their teaching activities and, based on this, determine the desired level of methodic assistance; 3) give an example of specific methodic products of the corresponding methodic assistance.

To solve the above problems, we should clarify the concept of "methodic guidance". The content-analysis of works on this problem allows us to conclude that the methodic guidance of the teacher is a system of specially organized collaborative interactions aimed at creating conditions for improving the level of methodic literacy of the teacher, his personal and professional growth, stimulating him to further professional self-development and self-improvement, thereby increasing the quality and effectiveness of his teaching activities [5-9].

It should be noted that along with the term "methodic guidance" in the methodic and psychological-pedagogical literature, such concepts as "methodic support" and "methodic assistance" are often used. We do not consider these concepts synonymous, and although the methodic guidance is a prolonged, complex and level process, including "activities within each of these procedures" [10], nevertheless, the level of methodic guidance will be different. At the global level, the methodic guidance sets itself the objective of constantly improving the general "methodic culture" of the teachers as the "integrative quality" of their personality, ensuring the effective use of "the methodic knowledge and the forms of transfer of advanced pedagogical experience" in their activities [11]. In turn, the methodic assistance as a support to personnel in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, clarifying their professional problems and possible ways to solve them is considered to be a personal level of the methodic guidance [12]. Consideration of the methodic assistance as a system of actions of an informative and recommendatory nature in order to overcome certain difficulties in pedagogical practice allows us to assert that it is a technological level of the methodic guidance [13].

In the system of school education, methodic guidance at all levels is mainly provided by methodic services and methodic organizations. With regard to the system of higher education, the methodic work of the relevant services is carried out mainly in the direction of improving the general methodic literacy of teachers, since it is not without reason that higher school teachers are considered to have a high level of competence (including methodic). Therefore, in order to determine whether teachers of a professionally oriented foreign language at the University really need the methodic guidance and at what level, we conducted a survey among teachers of the Department of foreign languages of non-linguistic specialties of Vyatka State University (consisting of 29 people). The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part consisted of closed-type questions and assumed monosyllabic responses of respondents "Yes" or "No" (13 questions). The second part included alternative questions, answering which the teachers could offer their own version (5 questions). The results showed that many of the respondents feel the need for the methodic guidance, namely at the technological level (67 %). This may be due to a number of reasons. Firstly, the complexity of the discipline "Foreign language" should be noted. Therefore, many general teaching and learning techniques require a certain correction in foreign language education. Secondly, the actual conditions for the implementation of this process are very important. For example, the initially low level of foreign language proficiency, which leads to the need to return to the basics of the language, repeat the school curriculum; a small number of hours for mastering the discipline, preceding foreign language training, profiling, etc. [14-16]. All this encourages the teacher to direct the student to adapt to professionally oriented foreign language education as quickly and painlessly as possible, which requires additional efforts. This statement is also confirmed by the results of the survey, since the majority of participants

(83%) noted that the teachers experience more difficulties in professionally oriented foreign language education than in foreign language education.

Taking into consideration the abovementioned, we consider it appropriate to view the components of the methodic assistance as a technological level of the methodic guidance for professionally oriented foreign language education. We also note that within the framework of higher education, the most appropriate form of its provision is supervision – a form of professional methodic interaction of one specialist (in our case, the instructor of a professionally oriented foreign language) or a supervisor with another in order to increase the effectiveness of their professional activities [17].

It should be noted that this understanding of the methodic assistance does not in any way call into the discussion the professionalism and professional competence of the teacher. The methodic assistance acts here as a way to reduce the intellectual and, for the most part, time costs of the teachers. Therefore, in contrast to the methodic guidance, it is needed not only by young teachers, but also by teachers with long experience, since the educational environment is changing rapidly, new technologies, methods, and techniques are coming (including professionally oriented foreign language education), which can cause difficulties for all participants in the educational process. This is also supported by the results of the survey, where all the participants confirm that methodic assistance saves time for preparing for classes, and 68% of respondents note that any teacher may need methodic assistance.

All the participants of the survey also agree that the methodic assistance contributes to the personal and professional growth of the teacher, as well as to the achievement of desirable educational results. Based on this, we can conclude that the methodic assistance to the teacher is of high importance for the effective and successful organization and implementation of the process of foreign language training of students in non-linguistic specialties.

At the same time, in the survey we found out that most teachers: a) have a fairly narrow view of the possible components of methodic assistance (75% of the respondents consider the methodic assistance primarily as guidelines in the plans of seminars or a collection of additional materials on a particular topic, collection of monitoring and evaluation materials, etc.) and b) do not provide the programs/modules of disciplines with the appropriate methodic assistance (78%).

In our opinion, such content of the methodic assistance to an instructor of a professionally oriented foreign language is insufficient. Therefore, in order to identify other possible areas of assistance to teachers, we will first turn to the main practical difficulties faced by teachers who implement professionally oriented foreign language education. This will allow us to further present a specific set of the methodic assistance tools that create conditions for removing / minimizing various kinds of difficulties. After analyzing the methodic and psychological-pedagogical literature on this issue, as well as taking into account the specifics of foreign language education in non-linguistic universities, we came to the conclusion that in their activities for organizing and implementing the process of foreign language training in non-linguistic specialties, instructors face the following main groups of difficulties [18-20]:

- psychological;
- subject;
- linguistic;
- organizational and methodical.

Psychological difficulties include:

- lack of clear understanding of current goals and objectives, both for the instructors' and students' activities;
- authoritarian tendencies;

- negative attitude to work, "professional burnout" [21], etc.

The category of subject difficulties includes:

- insufficient knowledge of the subject in the relevant training profile;
- imperfect level of academic and didactic abilities, etc.

Linguistic difficulties consist in the instructor's lack of proficiency in professional terminology. And the following organizational and methodical difficulties have a direct impact on the quality of the educational process implementation:

- information overload, both for the instructors and the students;
- frequent need to rework and adapt existing teaching programs that are used in the learning process;
- the problem of choosing the most effective methods and techniques of foreign language education;
- the problem of organizing independent and classroom work of students, etc.

Note that during the survey, it was important for us to identify which groups of difficulties are most often experienced by instructors. As a result, we found that the most frequent are subject and organizational and methodical difficulties, they are experienced by 59% and 67% of respondents. 10% of respondents face psychological difficulties, while 17% of survey participants are inconvenienced by linguistic difficulties (see Figure1).

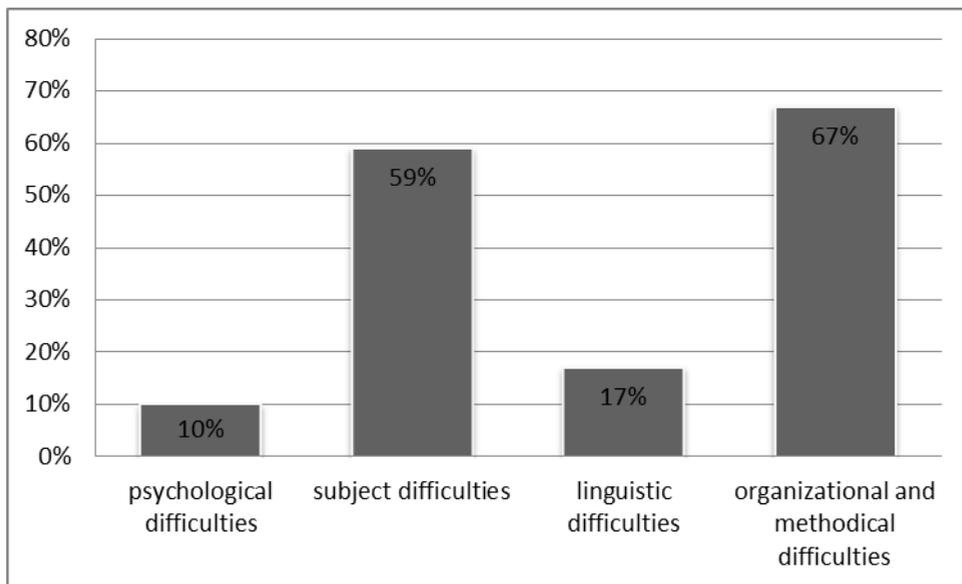


Fig. 1. The most common difficulties of instructors in professionally oriented foreign language education.

Therefore, the methodic assistance to instructors of professionally oriented foreign language education should include those tools that are able to eliminate or minimize these groups of difficulties to a greater extent. As for the tools or products of methodic assistance, depending on their functional purpose, they are divided into informational, organizational-methodical and practical. Informational tools for the methodic assistance to the instructor are methodical descriptions, comments, annotations, reviews, newspapers, essays, leaflets, reference books, information, analysis, etc. The organizational-methodical tools are instructions, instructional-methodical letters, memos, manuals, programs, algorithms, methodical notes, guidelines, thematic folders, and so on. Scenarios, catalogs, graphs, visual materials, collections of thematic materials, problem books, collections of exercises are practical tools for methodic assistance to the teacher [22].

In accordance with the above, we give an example of the tools of the methodic assistance to the teacher, developed on the basis of specific didactic and methodic support for students of technical specialties (in German) for the module "Technical professions – professions of the future!". The module structure includes 5 units on the following topics: "What is technology?", "Technical professions", "Stereotypes about technical professions", "Demand and prospects for technical professions", "Profile of my future profession", the purpose of which is the formation of professionally oriented communicative competence. We indicate at the same time the removal/minimization of the groups of difficulties which these tools are used (see Table 1).

Table 1. Methodic assistance to the teacher in the module of didactic-methodic support of professionally oriented foreign language education.

The tools of methodic assistance to the instructor	Group of difficulties that these tools are intended to remove or minimize
<p><u>The visualization of the goal in the form of an annotation to Unit:</u> Unit 1. Goal: In this lesson, you will get an idea of what the concept of "technique" includes. You will determine the role of technology in Your life. Finally, you will define for yourself what technology means to you.</p>	<i>psychological</i>
<p><u>Information reference:</u> <u>Follow the links below to find detailed information on the topic</u> https://www.azubiyo.de/berufe/technische-berufe/ https://www.goethe.de/de/spr/ueb/daa/brf/dit.html https://www.stern.de/digital/technik/technik-technikbegriffe--a-bis-k-3516336.html ... <u>Memo "How to organize work with the professionally oriented text":</u> How to work with professionally oriented text: Preparatory stage: work at the language level. Motivation: removing the lexical difficulties, addressing to the emotional and personal sphere of the student in order to create an interest, a motive and a desire to read the text Actualization - preparation and implementation of exercises necessary for using the previously studied grammatical and lexical material. ...</p>	<i>subject</i>
<p><u>Handbook of professional terms:</u> <i>Horst Görner. Fachwörterbuch Kompakt Technik. Russisch-Deutsch. Deutsch-Russisch. Verlag: Langenscheidt. 2006.</i></p>	<i>linguistic</i>
<p><u>Recommendations:</u> Before working on the module, students should update the following grammatical topics: 1) subordinate clauses of reason with the conjunctions "weil" and "denn", the order of words in them, 2) infinitive sentences and the use of infinitives with and without the particle "zu". <u>Methodical instructions for tasks:</u> <i>Unit 3. Task 3.</i> <i>For a more in-depth analysis of the reasons for misconceptions about technical professions, offer students to read the following table:</i></p>	<i>organizational and methodical</i>

<p>The tools of methodic assistance to the instructor</p>	<p>Group of difficulties that these tools are intended to remove or minimize</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Subjektive Gründe für den Ansehensverlust der Technikberufe (TA-Umfrage, Angaben in %, n=664)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>mangelnde Vermittlung technischen Wissens in der Schule 51 zu starke Orientierung an Konsum und Reichtum 40 Fehler in der Wirtschaft (Arbeitsbedingungen, Entlassungen) 39 junge Leute zu konsumorientiert, zu bequem 34</p> </div> <p><i>Unit 3. Task 4.</i> If it is difficult for students to determine the advantages of technical professions, the following figure can be used as a hint:</p>  <p><i>Unit 4. Task 1.</i> For a better understanding of the material, ask students to visualize the results of the group's work (write out key points on the board or present them as a cluster). If the team has problems working in a group, you can invite students to read the following memo:</p> <p>How to work in a group: Follow these rules to work successfully in a group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - group members help and support each other; - the opinions of all group members are taken into account; - the students discuss the stages of solution and exchange the ideas during their work <p>....</p> <p><u>Thematic selection of materials:</u> Additional materials on this topic can be found at the following links (in pdf): https://abi.de/data/Image/UE/140316_abi_Unterrichtsideo-Typisch_U_Reader.pdf https://www.ams.at/content/dam/download/flyer-folder-broschueren/oesterreichweit/abi-broschueren/001_berufswahl_technik.pdf https://www.wko.at/branchen/t/industrie/ibw_technik_21x21_industrie_low_1001_2.pdf </p>	

3 Conclusions

In conclusion, we prove the reliability of the conclusions made on the basis of the questionnaire and survey, using the formula of E. Borel [23]. This formula is used for analyzing answers to the closed-type questions:

$$x^{p+}/p- = \frac{(\sum xn...) \times 100\%}{N \times i} \quad (1)$$

Where:

x^{p+} – total percentage of positive responses;

x^p – total percentage of negative responses;
 xn – number of positive / negative responses (241/136);
 i – number of questionnaire questions (13);
 N – number of instructors who participated in the survey (29).

The error in the results is $\approx 3\%$, which confirms the objectivity of the conclusions made. This means that the methodic assistance as a technological level of the methodic guidance for the instructors contributes to their rapid adaptation to various conditions of the educational environment, ensures effective achievement of educational results, allows to organize and manage the process of professionally oriented foreign language education in the most optimal way, and also contributes to the personal and professional development of instructors, improving their professional competence. Therefore, the prospect of research is the simultaneous development of the program design of the discipline and the methodic assistance to the instructors.

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