

Development of creative intercultural and communicative competence of USMU international students at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language

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Abstract. This article deals with the topical issues related to the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence of international students of the Ural State Mining University (USMU) in the process of their learning Russian as a Foreign Language. The article suggests the possibility to use various methods and techniques for the presentation of educational material in order to increase the level of formation and development of speaking skills, creative intercultural and communicative competence of the USMU international students at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language. The necessity to improve teaching methods for the development of grammar skills alongside with the formation and development of the communicative skills of the USMU foreign students is viewed as the key thing. Special attention is given to the importance of the methodology used to provide the pedagogical conditions necessary for a creative approach to the educational process, which, in its turn, results in the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence of the international students acquiring knowledge and skills in the field of both speech and intercultural communication at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language. Particular emphasis is made on the development of oral and written communication skills of the USMU international students at the Russian lessons under paradigm of the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence. Finally, the formation and development of the speech activity of the USMU international students at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language is considered to be an integral part of the overall educational process.

1 Introduction

In modern education the choice of methods and techniques for teaching Russian as a Foreign Language is the problem of special importance. The article studies this topical issue considering the experience gained as a result of teaching international students of the Ural State Mining University at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language, using the

methods for development of creative intercultural and communicative competence. It is known that the system of Russian education historically regards the general cultural development of the students, an increase in the previously acquired cultural level as one of the priority areas and an enduring value [1]. This lets a future specialist form and develop his personal culture and understanding of the main cultural values of the modern society [2].

Foreign students having insufficient language skills have serious difficulties in the process of obtaining professional and higher education. The lack of a sufficient level of communication skills, inadequate mastery of abstracting and note-taking, inability use functional styles of speech in a correct way, inaptitude to formulate a logical, detailed answer at the lessons, tests and exams make a teacher look for new ways to solve this problem. This problem formed the basis of scientific researches of many modern scientists called methodologists. A famous modern scientist and methodologist O.A. Skryabina considers written speech as the basis of cognitive and communicative development. The scientist sees the reason for the insufficient language skills of students in the “absence of systematic speech thinking”. [3]

The opinion of O. A. Skryabina cannot be denied. This problem has much in common with the problem of the foreign students’ not having important skills of oral and written speech.

It is known that the neurophysiological component of any skill is inextricably linked particularly with fine motor skills necessary for drawing letters and signs on paper or, in other words, writing. The modern education system is characterized by the freedom of writing and reading. The USMU international students increasingly make use of a computer keyboard rather than a pen; they are more reluctant to read and memorize poetry. All this negatively affects the speech activity of the USMU international students. Moreover, the inactivity of the speech system negatively affects the acquisition of new knowledge, the ability to use speech patterns, and the formation of the necessary communication skills. It should be noted that the low speech activity prevents the development of thinking, imagination, attention, long-term speech memory, etc. These factors affect the formation and development of cognitive and communicative skills of the foreign students studying at the Ural State Mining University. As a result foreign students often make lexical and grammatical mistakes when formulating their thoughts, violate spelling, punctuation and lexical rules when creating texts of various types, experience difficulties in a consistent and logical presentation of their thoughts in both oral and written forms.

New living conditions of a modern society have a strong impact on teaching, which develops taking into account the ongoing changes. Modern teaching requires the development and application of new methods for teaching foreign students at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language. The intercultural component of communicative competence suggests the ability to make utterances as units of speech and communication [4, 5, 6, 7, 8].

It is known that methodology occupies a special place in the process of teaching foreign students. As an independent science, the methodology explores the content, goals, methods, means, forms of organization, methods of education and training. It should be noted that methodology is based on psychology, so psychological, intercultural, and communicative characteristics and the patterns of acquiring information should be taken into account in the process of formation and development of the language competence of the USMU foreign students. It is known that thinking can develop from a practical and physical activity to a mental or psychic one, and it is considered to be the movement from an external action to an internal one. Gradual automation of actions is also possible by means of the transition from conscious training of individual actions to a general system of activity. Any action requires certain conditions. In teaching Russian as a Foreign Language, such conditions can

be goals and objectives (motives) contributing to the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence of foreign students. In this case, creative intercultural and communicative competence is viewed as a complex multilevel educational process that helps USMU foreign students constantly improve their speaking skills and skills necessary for productive participation in creative intercultural communication. The act of intercultural communicative activity of USMU international students begins from the moment when the goal and objectives are set and ends when the goal is achieved. According to L.S. Vygotsky, to develop creative intercultural and communicative competence, it is important to understand another person's speech. "To understand another person's speech it is not enough to understand the words but not the thoughts of the interlocutor. However, to understand a thought without understanding the motive for the sake of which the thought is expressed, is also insufficient for a complete understanding" [9, p.333].

It should be noted that the main component of the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language is the foreign students' participation in intercultural communication with a full understanding of the speech and social behavior of native speakers of the Russian language. It happens due to the foreign students' speech activity, which includes the choice of speech structures, appropriate grammatical forms, etc. The choice of an operation for the foreign students' speech activity depends on the proposed pedagogical conditions. At the first stage of any speech activity foreign students are introduced to a future speech activity and theoretical material. The next stage of a speech activity includes planning or developing an algorithm of actions. This stage is followed by the implementation of the planned actions. The final stage of the foreign students' speech activity at the lessons of Russian as a foreign language is the control (or self-control) of the work efficiency and the obtained result. All the stages of the speech activity at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language develop creative intercultural and communicative competence, thus making it possible for the international students to increase the mastery of the subject matter and to obtain the desired result. The development of creative intercultural and communicative competence of the foreign students at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language creates conditions for the foreign students' self-realization, increases their motivation and interest in learning the Russian language, brings them closer to intercultural communicative success. "Intercultural communicative competence is a complex multicomponent and multilevel education that allows a person to improve his communicative skills with the aim of more productive participation in intercultural communication on the basis of a better understanding of speech and behavior of an interlocutor ..." [10, p. 7].

There are various alternatives to the sequence of the above named stages of the foreign students' speech activity at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language. Frequently the activity takes place with a parallel plan revision and control of the effectiveness of the obtained result. It is known that any training is training in a certain type of activity. The task of the Russian as a Foreign Language teacher is to create conditions for the correct planning of the foreign students' speech activity, to control the performance of the planned operations and to combine all the actions into a single system that develops creative intercultural and communicative competence.

The main task in the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language at the Ural State Mining University is to perform the necessary speech operations and to make their transition into the corresponding speech actions. The teacher is required to teach foreign students to perform the necessary speech operations and apply them in speech activity. The teacher can offer foreign students to use the existing model (imitation), or set a goal for them and control the performance of certain operations. In this case, the USMSU foreign students are taught how to speak Russian according to the well-known psychological principle, i.e. from

conscious (cognitive) purposeful action to unconscious automatic operation. In modern teaching, there is a tendency to use the conscious (cognitive) method to form and develop speaking and communicative skills of the foreign students at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language. The development of creative intercultural and communicative competence at the lessons of Russian as Foreign Language implies the creation of special pedagogical conditions that allow foreign students to express their individuality to a full extent, to expand their horizons, share knowledge about their own culture and receive new information about other cultures. "... Indeed, our ability to create increases our possibilities to adapt to various ecosystems and allows us to find the most successful ways to "live together "" [11, p. 5].

"The process of interaction with other cultures generates sparks of creativity ... In its turn creativity becomes the source of cultural diversity, including the variety of ways which help cultures of different groups and countries to express themselves. It opens up new forms of dialogue, changes the view of the world, and establishes new relationships among people, countries and generations around the world. In other words, creativity is a constant process that supports, enhances and regenerates cultural diversity in time and space ... "[9, p. 18].

In the works of the scientist and methodologist O. A. Skryabina speech is considered to be communicative in its functional purpose and cognitive in its nature and participation of psychological aspects. Speech translates thoughts into words. This creates a special condition for a deep understanding of another person's speech and speech behavior, which is necessary for the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence of the foreign students learning Russian at the Ural State Mining University [3] .

Undoubtedly, the cognitive and communicative method is regarded to be more appropriate for the application at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language. Thus it is important to consider the ways of putting the cognitive and communicative method into practice of USMU international students' linguistic activity at the lessons of Russian as a foreign language. As is known, teaching Russian as a foreign language makes use of various didactic principles. One of the commonly used principles is the principle of collectivity, which requires close collaboration of foreign students under the guidance of a teacher. The principle of collectivity implies close contact with a teacher who competently organizes the educational process, motivates, and controls the foreign students' cognitive activity at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language. For the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language it is necessary to use an independent creative approach to the foreign students' cognitive activity. The principle of activity implies that the teacher should create an atmosphere of active learning of the Russian language most often by means of a problem solving situation. Solving a problem situation, foreign students are required to use knowledge and skills acquired in the course of study of the Russian language. As has already been noted, the most important thing in the process of teaching Russian as a Foreign Language and solving the assigned tasks is the motivation of the foreign students. Maintaining a high level of foreign students' motivation is possible due to the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language. In the process of education it is one of the main tasks of the teacher. Besides, the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence of international students at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language makes it possible to apply the principle of developmental learning, the principle of an individual approach and the principle of conscious systematization of the language material. It should be noted the importance of the principle of self-control and self-correction, which allows foreign students to assess their knowledge independently.

It seems important to consider the main things and methods of teaching Russian as a Foreign Language as regards to the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence of the USMU international students at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language. It should be taken into account that international students often have poorly developed communicative competence, which results in the insufficient level of development of their oral and written speech, poor note-taking skills, limited vocabulary, frequent semantic and grammatical mistakes, etc. In this case, the teacher's task is to organize an educational process with account taken of the level of the USMU foreign students' language skills. To complete the task, it is necessary to develop didactic materials, teaching aids, practical and test assignments, etc. It is necessary to apply the principle of collectivity and the principle of developmental learning.

The USMU international students participate in group discussions and projects owing to the principle of activity applied at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language. Among other principles used in teaching Russian as a Foreign Language are the principles of motivation and problematization which are functionally interrelated and interdependent. The principle of motivation is often used when students do training exercises. The use of competitive components and game elements is relevant when foreign students work in pairs or groups. Speed and time exercises speed up the process of teaching Russian as a Foreign Language. The tasks for such exercises can be as follows: which of the foreign students will be the first to make 5 sentences with phraseological units; who will be the first to find all synonyms in the text; who will be the first to write an essay on a given topic, etc. Joint linguistic activity of USMU international students at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language becomes even more evident at the seminars, thematic meetings and scientific conferences. These forms of teaching Russian as a Foreign Language are especially important for the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence of USMU international students.

An important role in the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language is played by a teacher who assesses the level of the foreign students' language skills, develops teaching material, pays more attention to low-achieving foreign students, illustrates educational material with examples, asks high-achieving students to perform more difficult tasks, etc. The constant use of complex exercises gives an opportunity to repeat the phonetic and morphemic analysis of a word, the syntactic structure of a phrase and a sentence, the analysis and structuring of a text. Visual aids such as tables, diagrams, maps, drawings, presentations, projects, etc. are a particularly effective means of improving the process of teaching Russian as a Foreign Language at the Ural State Mining University.

Doing training exercises, USMU international students work with various educational materials. For example, they read a text and give it a title, determine the functional-semantic type of speech, determine the style of speech, do vocabulary work, retell a text, etc. The quality of these tasks performance enables the teacher to assess the speaking skills of the USMU international students. In the process of developing creative intercultural and communicative competence at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language, the best works of Russian classical and modern literature such as the works of A.S. Pushkin, M. Yu. Lermontov, I.S. Turgenev and others are often used as classical examples of Russian literature. The texts about Russian cultural customs and traditions, Russian cuisine and holidays, Russian cities and symbols are of particular interest to foreign students. The texts to be used as educational material should be considered as classical examples of Russian literature and be of interest to foreign students in order to have a positive effect on the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language. The appropriate educational material helps a teacher to

create an atmosphere of trust and mutual understanding, to build a dialogue of cultures, and thus to develop communicative skills of USMU foreign students.

Texts can have pre-reading and post-reading activities. Pre-reading activities are cognitive in nature. A foreign student can be expected to read a text carefully, to formulate its main idea, and to develop an algorithm for his / her further independent work. Independent work at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language may include writing a short summary of what has been read or heard, formulating a title to a text, determining a functional style and a type of speech, self-correction, etc.

Performing post-reading activities, foreign students can analyze a text, identify the main parts of a text and make a plan, complete the text with appropriate words, think up a new speech situation, come up with new grammatical forms, etc. The most popular activities at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language at USMU require the use of standard speech structures. The performance of these activities results in the implementation of the principle of developmental learning. The activities of foreign students develop from imitation to conscious and independent reproduction of linguistic units.

The principle of combining various types of activities in one task helps to memorize typical speech structures. The performance of cognitive activities at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language contributes to the formation and development of logical thinking, develops the USMU foreign students' ability to create their own texts, and develops their creative intercultural and communicative competence.

Currently, the need for well-educated specialists competent in intercultural communication is constantly growing. That is why modern methods of teaching Russian as a Foreign Language aim at developing analytical skills, logical thinking, a high level of intercultural communicative competence and creativity of international students.

The course of Russian as a foreign language at the Ural State Mining University is based on the principle of developing the creative intercultural and communicative competence of international students through the development of general speech culture and speech behavior. A special place in the course of Russian as a Foreign Language is occupied by the sphere of scientific and business communication. The main emphasis in studying genres of business style is placed on drawing up contracts, statements, resumes, business letters as well as organizing and conducting business negotiations, etc. Educational materials and assignments for international students are developed with account taken of the specialities being acquired by the international students.

Methods of teaching USMU international students at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language require improvement and diversity. At the Ural State Mining University, teaching Russian as a Foreign Language aims at the formation and development of professional and communicative competence and creative intercultural and communicative competence of foreign students. Foreign students' learning activity is combined with their speech activity. This fact makes it possible to turn education into creative activity and provide conditions for the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence of USMU foreign students and the application of the acquired knowledge in speech practice.

The Ural State Mining University uses traditional methods of teaching Russian as a Foreign Language. Traditional lectures and practical classes give international students an opportunity to hear a logical, emotional, correct and lively Russian speech of a teacher.

One of the widely used methods of teaching Russian as a Foreign Language at the Ural State Mining University is a business game. It allows foreign students to acquire the skills necessary for group discussions and to show their creativity in intercultural communication. Along with typical communicative situations, discussion topics can be from various fields of knowledge and human activity, thus allowing USMU foreign students to learn new rules and terms. USMU international students especially like the eloquence competition which

helps them to get acquainted with the art of oratory. Before the competition, it is possible to choose a jury which will judge the quality of participants' speech.

In the process of developing creative intercultural and communicative competence, test control helps the teacher quickly assess the degree of mastering new material, check grammatical and orthoepic skills of the foreign students. At the Ural State Mining University, the main kinds of classes in Russian as a Foreign Language aim at increasing cognitive interest and intellectual level of the international students as well as at developing their intercultural communicative skills, creative intercultural and communicative competence and the ability to speak clearly and distinctly.

At the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language at the Ural State Mining University, it is advisable to check students' knowledge on spelling and orthoepic norms. Foreign students of the Ural State Mining University can be asked to write a thematic vocabulary test and put stress in words. To enrich the vocabulary and knowledge of the lexical system of the Russian language, foreign students can be given tasks to make synonymic sets for the given words or to find their antonyms and homonyms. To test the foreign students' ability to use words correctly, taking into account the norms of their lexical compatibility, they can be asked to make phrases or sentences with paronyms. The use of various types of dictionaries also contributes to the increase in the general intellectual level of USMU foreign students, the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence, thus gives an opportunity for independent search for information and research activities.

The conducted research has resulted in the following conclusions. Teaching Russian as a foreign language requires the development of a special methodology. The Russian language is complex and multifaceted, so there are certain difficulties in the study of the Russian language by foreign students. The approach to the study of Russian as a foreign language from the point of view of the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence of foreign students makes it possible to simplify the learning process. It contributes to the formation and development of speaking skills, increases the speech culture and intercultural communicative competence of USMU foreign students.

2 Conclusion

It should be noted that the study of Russian as a Foreign Language at the Ural State Mining University plays an important role in the training of modern creative specialists competent in intercultural communication. Language, being the most important means of understanding people in society, serves as an indicator of an individual's communicative competence. To obtain the maximum result in the process of teaching Russian as a foreign language, it is necessary to use combined methods and techniques contributing to the development of creative intercultural and communicative competence of USMU international students.

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