ABOUT THE COMPETENCE APPROACH IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Research article

Sergeeva E.N.¹ * , Bajburina R.Z.²
¹,² Ufa Law Institute of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, Ufa, Russia

* Corresponding author (lenockin[at]rambler.ru)

Abstract

The purpose of this work is to analyze the key competencies in the process of teaching foreign languages. Special attention is paid to linguistic and cultural competence, and it is emphasized that its formation is one of the mandatory conditions for comprehensive training of foreign students and improving the professionalism of future specialists. The results of this study can be applied for creating of the system of tasks and exercises in teaching Russian as a foreign language, and foreign languages in higher educational establishments of the MIA of Russia.

Keywords: linguodidactics, system of competences, a communicative competence, a linguoculturological competence, training methods.

Nowadays, the anthropocentric and linguoculturological orientation of language teaching is becoming more and more emphasized in linguodidactics. In this regard, new requirements on training of students of various specialties are being imposed. The anthropocentrism of science and its interdisciplinary nature required the study of the human phenomenon from various points of view. As a result, such interdisciplinary fields of science as psycholinguistics, ethnolinguistics, sociolinguistics and linguoculturology have appeared.

In the modern world, the requirements for learning of any foreign language are extremely high, so a good level of a foreign language proficiency contributes to the competitiveness and professional mobility of a future specialist of any foreign country. The disciplines "Russian as a foreign language", "Russian as a foreign language (in the framework of professional activities)" and "The Foreign language" (English, German) are studied on the first and the second courses of training. They are the disciplines of the basic part of the educational program of Ufa Law Institute.

As a result of studying these disciplines, future specialists should master not only a communicative one, but also general cultural and professional competencies. The set of these competencies is called as the key competencies.

This term was introduced in the early 90s of the XX century in the qualification requirements for specialists in the system of postgraduate education, advanced training and retraining of managerial personnel by the International Labor Organization [see: 1, P. 33]. And now it is used along with the synonymous terms as: key, basic, general, universal, nuclear competences.

“The key competencies are partly cross-cultural and cross-sectoral knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for a person’s productive professional activity” [2].

In our opinion, the formation of such key competencies is the exact purpose of teaching foreign languages. Let’s discuss them in more detail.

The competence approach which is widely used in methodology of teaching foreign languages defines the purpose of training as the formation of a communicative competence, i.e. a set of knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for successful verbal communication.

In our previous works, we have already defined the competence approach and the language personality, and given examples of the formation of competencies necessary for foreign language communication [3], [4], [5]. In this article, we discuss such basic components of the communicative competence as a language, a discursive, a pragmatic, a subject, a sociocultural [6, P. 108], as well as a strategic and social one, which are highlighted by such scientists as I.A. Zimnyaya, E.I. Passov, V.E. Antonova, S.V. Shatilov, V.V. Safonova etc. In addition, we emphasize a professional competence in the structure of a communicative competence of future law enforcement officers, as a profession of a lawyer, of course, is associated with speech activities. The ability to conduct a constructive dialogue, to use different speech-patterns in accordance with a communicative situation, to compose and edit various documents, as well as to speak in public is one of the main qualities of the professional activities of employees of law enforcement bodies. Professionally oriented language training allows them to get language and professional education. So the training process should be based on professionally-oriented
texts that will help to form and develop skills of verbal and non-verbal communication in the professional activities of a future lawyer.

Its formation is one of the mandatory conditions for comprehensive training of a foreign listener and the formation of the language personality of a future lawyer.

A language (linguistic) competence is “theoretical knowledge of the language, i.e. knowledge of phonetic and grammatical norms of a foreign language, as well as a set of specific skills and abilities to use them” [7, P. 178]. This competence is, of course, the basic, the main one in the training process. However, it should be emphasized that when you are working on grammar, you should develop all types of speech activity: speaking, listening, reading and writing. And you cannot talk about mastering any language without basic theoretical knowledge in the field of grammar (and partly phonetics), of course. At the same time, according to modern methodists of the discipline “Russian as a foreign language”, “no more than 30% of the time should be devoted to the explanation and primary learning of the theory, and 70% should be devoted to the development of speech skills and phonetic and grammatical skills” [8, P. 115]. The task of our students at all stages of learning foreign languages is to form knowledge, skills and abilities of all types of speech activity. Thus, students should not only master rules of grammar, but also learn how to apply these rules, i.e. correctly build up their speech. The knowledge of pronunciation features, the pragmatic features of use of language forms, and the stylistic possibilities of their use are of great importance. The formation of a discursive competence (“knowledge of rules of constructing of a coherent oral or written text using appropriate strategies and tactics of speech behavior”) will help greatly to overcome the language barrier [3], [7].

A pragmatic competence is regarded as the ability to engage in verbal communication in accordance with communicative tasks and needs, taking into account the conditions of a speech act.

The formation of a professional competence is also one of the basic skills for certain specialists. A professional competence is understood as “a set of knowledge in professional sphere of communication (terminology, scientific and professional texts, situations of educational and professional communication, etc., an ability to enter into professional communication)” [10, P. 101]. Thus, in law institutes and academies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia, teaching Russian to foreign students is always based on the features of the legal specialty of future professionals in the specialty «Legal support of national security» [11].

Thus, students should master foreign languages not only for social and everyday life, but also for professional communication. So, the formation of a strategic (compensatory) competence is of great importance. It is considered as "the ability to use the most effective strategies to solve various communication problems, in particular, to compensate gaps in communication with the help of verbal and non-verbal ways”.

The formation of a social competence, i.e. “the ability and desire to enter into communication using a learning language, due to the presence of needs and motives” will contribute to a more successful mastering the language as a whole.

A social competence is closely related to a socio and linguistic competence, i.e. “the ability to take into account the socio and linguistic context of a communicative act, the specifics of communication situations, a social status of a partner” (N. A. Akhmetova, M. R. Kondubayeva, T. I. Kapitonova, L. V. Moskovkin, etc.).

Modern scientific researches often write about the formation of a lingua and cultural competence, i.e. “the formation of knowledge of ethno-cultural peculiarities of a specific language, rules of speech and non-speech behavior in typical situations and an ability to exercise their verbal behavior in accordance with that knowledge”. This is “the knowledge of the socio-cultural context, which presupposes the presence of "background knowledge" of a country-study and linguistic-cultural nature, which dictates the choice of language forms and their use in verbal communication” [13, P. 53].

The importance of the formation of a linguistic and cultural competence is also emphasized by leading methodologists (E. M. Vereshchagin, V. G. Kostomarov, V. V. Vorobyov, O. D. Mitrofanova, I. P. Lysakov, E. I. Passov, L. V. Kibireva, E. Kollarova and others), which is the reason of developing of a new scientific direction – linguoculturology. Thus, V. A. Maslova identifies “the following objects of study in linguoculturology: 1) non-equivalent vocabulary and lacunae; 2) mythologized language units: archetypes and mythologems, rites and beliefs, rituals and customs fixed in the language; 3) the paremiological fund of the language; 4) the phraseological fund of language; 5) standards, stereotypes, symbols; 6) metaphors and images of the language; 7) stylistic way of languages; 8) speech behavior; 9) area of speech etiquette” [13, P. 36-37]. The central problem of a new scientific direction is the relationship of language, ethnicity and culture.

The task of the formation of the linguistic personality in the process of learning language in high school raises the methods of teaching to higher levels. They are connected with intellectual development of a person, his thinking, his figuratively-emotional sphere (the level of thesaurus — subject-logical knowledge about the world and the language picture of the world and the level of motives, needs of a linguistic personality, and the formation of her linguistic and social identity).

Thus, in the classes on foreign languages for students of a legal specialty, the following aspects are considered: 1) the study of a language as a sign system (the structure and laws of language functioning); 2) the development of a language ability, teaching speech communication, an ability to compose (and edit) texts of various genres and styles (including professionally oriented); 3) the study of a language in a stylistic aspect, 4) the study of culture and history of countries of learning languages, as well as the basics of speech etiquette and interpersonal interaction.

The specialized speech training creates a favorable basis for education of creative personalities who are capable of professional speech communication and especially professional dialogues, as well as to develop, adopt and adequately express responsible decisions.

In our opinion, the task of a teacher, nowadays is to form a respectful, careful attitude to the language among students. They should clearly understand that the language fixes the historical experience of the people in its units, and above all in vocabulary and phraseology, reflects its mentality, and ensures the unity of cultural tradition. The language is as a repository of knowledge, a treasury of culture. The relationship between language and culture can be described as a relationship of mutual penetration. The language is one of the means of expressing culture, the material basis for creating its values. Any cultural
phenomenon enters the consciousness of people only when it receives a nomination and a signification, i.e. it is fixed in the language. Culture is included in the language in the sense that all of it can be displayed in the language.

In a linguodidactic aspect, the interconnected studying of language and culture can be interpreted in the following way. Language mastering is the simultaneous acquisition of native culture or entering the culture of a native speaker of the learning language. The communicative principle of language teaching actualizes this problem, since language communication is a necessary condition for the existence and development of human culture, ensuring the unity of cultural processes within this community: creation, storage and transfer of cultural values. Communicative activity (communication with the help of language) is the link in which the language as a sign system and the culture intersect and interact, in which the language exists and which the language is a necessary component of.

The dominant type of culture forms the type of consciousness of people who were born and live within this culture. The mastering of a learning language involves mastering the linguistic picture of the world, the linguistic consciousness of native speakers, which is manifested in the ways of division of the world, in the ways of nomination and the internal form of words and idioms in the vocabulary with national-cultural component of meaning: non-equivalent, background, connotative, symbolic, and mythological.

Modern linguoculturology has essentially become comparative [5], [8], [13] since it aims to provide a communicative competence through the study of the national culture expressed in the language. It has its own object of research – the idio-ethnic facts of languages and cultures. It uses a contrastive analysis as a main method of research, i.e. the description of language pictures of the world, language personalities, their communicative behavior, etc., of one linguistic culture, in the mirror of another. The study of cross-cultural communication allows to identify the causes of communication failures and prevent mistakes in the speech behavior of communicants — speakers of different languages and representatives of different cultures (Eastern and Western cultures).

The comparison of peculiar and sometimes unique cultures requires reference to something, which would be a kind of basis for comparison. Researchers see such a thing in mental structures, which reveal the uniqueness of the representation of the same non-linguistic content in different linguistic cultures, i.e. in cognition as a way of knowing the world. This genesis of science is quite natural, since it is impossible to understand the idio-ethnic aspects of your own languages and cultures without referring to others.

The formation of the above-mentioned components of a communicative competence should be determining in the choice of means, methods and technologies of modern language teaching in the system of higher education of the MIA of Russia. These questions are widely discussed on professional conferences, e.g.: "Issues of improving work with professionally-oriented text" (February 27, 2020, Orel), "Training for law enforcement agencies: modern trends and educational technologies" (February 27, 2020, Irkutsk), "Communicative competence of a modern lawyer" (March 18, 2020, Volgograd), "Actual problems of linguistics and the formation of linguistic competence of a lawyer in modern conditions" (March 20, 2020, Rostov), "Communicative competence and linguistic aspects of intercultural communication" (using videoconferencing) (March 26, 2020, Barnaul), "Actual issues of Philology and methods of teaching Russian and foreign languages" (March 27, 2020 Yekaterinburg).

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Список литературы / References

1. Зимняя И.А. Ключевые компетенции – новая парадигма результата образования / Зимняя И.А. // Высшее образование сегодня. – 2015. № 5.— С. 33-36.


Список литературы на английском // References in English


11. Kalinin S. V. Tekhnologija formirovanija professional’nyh kompetencij sotrudnikov politici MVD Rossii (na primere special’nosti "Prawoohranitel’naja dejatel’nost’") [Technology for the formation of professional competencies of police officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia (for example, the specialty “Law Enforcement”): dis... of PhD in Pedagogy / Kalinin S. V. — Barnaul, 2015. 196 p. // — URL: http://www.dlib.net/prof-obrazovanie/tehnologija-formirovanija-professionalnyh-kompetencij-sotrudnikov-policii-mvd.html (accessed: 11.03.2020) [in Russian]
