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ВОПРОСЫ ОПТИМИЗАЦИИ УЧЕБНОЙ МОТИВАЦИИ В ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКОМ ВУЗЕ (НА МАТЕРИАЛЕ ИТАЛЬЯНСКОГО ЯЗЫКА КАК ВТОРОЙ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОСТИ)

Аннотация

Статья посвящена вопросу формирования учебной мотивации, которая является одним из критериев эффективности психолого-педагогического процесса в вузе, а также условием, обеспечивающим успешное обучение. Авторы определяют демотивированность студентов как основную проблему обучения и рассматривают способы оптимизации мотивационной сферы обучаемых с целью формирования их учебной мотивации в процессе обучения чтению. В статье приводятся теоретические положения, разработанные итальянским дидактом П. Бальбони, и рассматриваются некоторые приемы и варианты стимулирования учебной мотивации, основанной на потребности и на удовольствии.

Ключевые слова: мотивация, активность, приемы и средства стимулирования учебной мотивации, обучение чтению.

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OPTIMISATION OF ACADEMIC MOTIVATION AT A LINGUISTIC UNIVERSITY (ON THE MATERIAL OF THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE AS THE MINOR SUBJECT)

Abstract

The article is devoted to the question of formation of students' educational motivation which is one of the criteria for the effectiveness of psychological and pedagogical processes at the university, and also the condition that ensures successful education. The authors define students' demotivation as the topical problem of education and consider ways to optimise the motivational sphere of trainees aimed at the formation of their educational motivation in teaching reading. The article presents theoretical propositions developed by an Italian didact P. Balboni, and considers some techniques and options for stimulating learning motivation based on need and pleasure.

Keywords: motivation, activity, methods and means to promote the learning motivation, learning to read.

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Introduction

In the modern educational process not only the training of students, the transmission of subject knowledge, the skills the volume of which is constantly and steadily rising, come to the fore, but also the personality of the learner as an active participant of the process having the corresponding structure of the motivational sphere. It is the nature of motivation underlying the activity of the learner that determines the direction and their ambitions in the learning process, in particular, involvement in activity, initiative, commitment, satisfaction of the process, understanding that educational information and process are personally significant to them. And the students' steady cognitive interest, their motivation, is becoming one of the criteria for the effectiveness of the psychological and pedagogical processes at the university, and also the condition that ensures successful education. The formation of educational motivation of students without any doubt can be called one of the main problems of modern higher education. Its relevance is determined by the training itself, the updating of the syllabus, the formation of students' autonomous knowledge acquisition and the development of the activity. Nowadays, the most topical problems in the learning environment are associated with the demotivation among the majority of students, which leads to the decrease in the basic indicators of their education.

In recent years the number of publications has increased which shows a steady interest of the researchers in this field, the pursuit of strategy to optimise the motivational sphere of learners and systematic work on the formation of students' motivation.

Discussion

The article represents the reflections and practical advice on the optimisation of educational motivation by the Professor of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, one of the founders of the Department of Italian Teaching Methodology to Foreign students at the University of Siena, the Director of the Linguistic Center of the University P.E. Balboni.

P.E. Balboni is the author of many books and studies on the theory and practice of teaching Italian as a foreign language, a regular participant in pedagogical associations of the Institutes of Italian Culture, a member of the Italianist Association committed to the theory of advancing (advancement) of the Italian language, based on the high teaching quality.

For teachers of foreign languages (not only Italian) the point of view of one of the authorities in the field of didactics is of undoubted interest. In addition, the works of P.E. Balboni have not been translated into Russian yet. The number of books translated into English is scanty.

Method

An important condition for ensuring the successful educational process is the painstaking work of a teacher who considers motivation as the major concern. For the emergence of a motive an external stimulus is required, with the help of which a teacher handles the changes that occur in a students' motivational sphere.

According to the hedonistic theory, a person's activity complies with the principle of "maximising the positive and minimising the negative emotions," i.e. it is aimed at achieving experiences of pleasure, joy, satisfaction and avoiding experiences of suffering, displeasure and discomfort. And here it is appropriate to talk about the problem closely related to the emotional sphere of a person –

the problem of overcoming psychological alienation, which is particularly clear in the process of learning a foreign language, a language alien, strange and distant. This misunderstanding of the realia of another country leads to its rejection, loss of interest, unwillingness to overcome difficulties, and, consequently, to demotivation. A similar thought found its expression in a Latin proverb – "Ignoti nulla cupido" (there is no desire for the unknown).

P. Balboni states that the immersion of the learner's personality in the process of studying a foreign language to the depths of his/her «Ego» and reducing the psychological distance between one's own language, culture and the same concepts of a foreign language, requires from the teacher specific permanent actions to overcome «alienation»». [10, P. 76].

The following techniques can significantly help to begin identifying one as Italian [the term dépaysement (Fr.) refers to the phenomenon, when a student does not feel Russian, Canadian etc. any longer.]:

- simulation of real communication, when a student is forced to overcome their psychological barrier while speaking. The point at issue is about different games and role plays, in which the participation of a teacher is minimised;

- the creation of an artificial environment in a particular classroom, as a metaphor for the "loss" of the national identity. It is, for example, the design of the classroom as "little Italy", which, of course, will help create a special atmosphere of authenticity;

- presence and participation of Italians in the learning process. Assistance of Italian Cultural Institutes.

The creation of a favourable didactic environment, the atmosphere of creativity and cooperation also have a significant impact on the process of overcoming the alienation of a foreign language. Overcoming the psychological distance is a co-factor in the formation of motivation in studying a foreign language.

The initial phase of the lesson as a structural unit of pedagogical activity is always characterised by different motivational vectors of students. Thus, the goal of the teacher's efforts at the initial stage should be to redirect the motivational vectors into a «co-directional" interaction. This can be achieved by influencing the students' motivation through the rational sphere (motivation based on need), the emotional sphere (motivation based on pleasure) or volition (motivation, based on necessity).

However, methods of influencing the students' volition are not the subject of this article, as they can not be subsumed to the methods of optimisation of learning motivation. And, nevertheless, we consider it important to make the following remark. The use of the verb «must», as the form of stimulus during the lesson, should be extremely cautious. We can conclude from our own teaching experience that not only children but also adults, as a rule, react with an explicit or hidden refusal to this verb during communication in the classroom. The effect of the interaction in this case is opposite. According to this fact, we recommend the limitation of the verb "must" during the study.

Let us consider in a successive order some techniques and options for stimulating learning motivation based on need and pleasure, which, according to the Italian didact P.Balboni, are the most effective [10, P. 78].

• Motivation based on future needs. For example, traveling around Italy next summer, one will need to buy a train ticket using the following expressions of a pragmatic nature, etc.

• Motivation based on educational needs. For example, traveling around Italy, one should try to understand this country, its peculiarities and traditions. We can hardly call the Italian language to be a language of great applied significance, compared to other foreign languages, for example, English and Spanish. After all, you can travel around Italy, enjoy its historic and cultural monuments even without knowing the Italian language. But the Italian language has great educational value for studying music, art, literature, history and religion.Its significance for the cultural, social development of the personality in self-education can not be overestimated. Therefore, it is advisable to increase the level of students' motivation, and help them to realise the importance of studying the Italian language in their lives from the perspective of their personal development.

• Motivation based on the actual needs of a student while learning a language implies, for example, reading graded texts, studying various aspects of the language within the given level (A1, A2, etc.), as well as the opportunity not to get bored during the lessons and not to go deep into problems of methodology. Motivation based on the need requires attention throughout the whole course of training.

• Motivation based on pleasure is the most effective type of motivation for a person. Its basis consists of the following options.

The pleasure of learning is formed step by step, moving ahead gradually in mastering the language, without turning error corrections into sanctions and punishments.

The pleasure in overcoming difficulties is a typical characteristic of a person, like the previous type of motivation. It can be used in many methodological exercises. For example, listen to the text, then see if you can understand its main idea, try to convince your group mate that your point of view is correct. Some difficult exercises are especially loved by students, because they present a challenge and a test for their abilities. Students struggles with themselves, with their problems, with the text, but not with the teacher.

Pleasure based on diversity. «The beauty of the world lies in its diversity», – says an Italian proverb. In adolescence and adult life curiosity is transformed into interest, in our case – into interest in the target-language country. This can be a starting point for the formation of motivation. Jokes, teacher's stories, video and audio materials, tourist brochures serve as a support for maintaining interest during the entire period of studying the Italian language.

Pleasure based on various types of work. Attention mechanism has a cyclic nature: the monotonous work tires students, and therefore demotivates them. The beginning is a very important part of work; the effect of novelty is the strongest motive to start an activity. This effect can be maintained throughout the work by changing types of exercises and tasks [teacher-centered, group, individual, oral, written, etc.]. It is useful to incorporate songs, videos, meetings with Italians in the work, as this adds variety to educational routine. Pleasure based on understanding and systematisation. The fact that certain language material will be systematised during a certain period of study, and students will receive answers to their burning questions, should be mentioned at the very beginning of work with a text.

Pleasure based on success. The approval and praise of a teacher are important for every student. But the state of success is even more important, because it leads to increased motivation in almost all types of students, even if the latter solve standard problems.

Pleasure based on a game. The idea of a game is «to pretend and to imagine that I …" – it enables a student to

play different situations of communication in a foreign language. Using the phrase «If I were you, I would …" students are involved in frank and sincere talk, share their excitement, stimulate their imagination, critical and creative thinking. This method contributes to the effective "liberation" of students' personality and their creative activity.

During the experimental training, students were offered a number of tasks of this kind, where they were able to 'try on' various characters, which have certain characteristics (professional, age-related, social, etc.).

Results

The impact on the student's motivational sphere occurs not only through organising educational activities, techniques and methods of teaching, but also through the content of training, which must correspond to the age and psychological characteristics of students. At the age of 18 and above young people are experiencing a period of self-determination and the formation of a personality. In light of this, the role of culture in general and literature as a part of it grows more than ever: as the essential, constitutive function of culture and literature in particular is the disclosure of the meanings of certain aspects of reality, as well as their translation for the subsequent semantic formation and semantic construction in the process of self-determination and self-identification. [8].

A distinctive feature of a fairy tale is that a life's challenge in a fairy tale is characterised by the level of general significance, multipurposeness and, therefore, the relevance for many people. At different times the researchers of a fairy tale drew attention to the fact that the concept of meaning can refer not only to the personality of a narrator, but also have shades of general, collective meaning, bringing an individual closer to the representatives of a given epoch, nationality, country, culture, religion, class, profession, and so on.A.N. Leontiev speaks about the existence of "semantic generalisations" and "general problems in the meaning."

However, the personal meaning of the author is not identical to the abstract significance of objects or phenomena that are reflected in students' emotional experience.

After the emotional experience, as the indicator of significance, follows the question of the vital motive of this significance, the question of this object or phenomenon connected with the basic realities of the reader's life. According to M.M. Bakhtin, senses are answers to questions. The thing that does not answer any question is meaningless to us [1, P. 350]. There is a so-called problem in the meaning [8]. It can be posed relating to one's own action (Why am I doing it? What are the motives behind it? What needs or values are being realised in this action? What will it result in?), and also in relation to objects, phenomena and events (What place do they occupy in my life, in my world? Which aspects of my life are they not indifferent to? How can they affect it? What are the consequences of them?)

According to L.S. Vygotsky, the reader's contact with the literary text should be regarded as the behavioural organisation and a goal for the future, a demand that, perhaps, will never be realised but which makes it strive to overtake life to what that lies behind it [2, P. 322]. Semantic changes, occurring under the influence of a fairy tale, provide a student with mechanisms to overcome real crises, show examples of solving problems, suggest behavioural patterns in difficult situations. To develop and enrich his life experience, there is no need for a young person to experience new misfortunes every time, whether it is an illness, prison, betrayal or deception. A contact with the text of a fairy tale helps to realise it without serious consequences, influencing the person as directly as real life does, but at the same time, providing a person with experience and understanding, excitement and overcoming the future life situations without restricting him to the tough need.

The main psychological function of reading fairy tales is included in the development and enrichment of various forms of students' understanding the reality, the familiarisation with which does not "tear off" a person from life, but, on the contrary, brings him closer to it [7].

This is also proved by the results of students' choice of a reading subject. The survey was conducted in 2014 among the 2nd and 3rd year students of the Linguistics Department of the Institute of Foreign Languages at the RUDN University.

Conclusion

It is worth noting that teachers, using above mentioned methods, can actively influence not only motivation of students but also the entire scope of goal-setting. In addition, the impact on the motivational component of the learning process can be implemented through external psychic mechanisms, such as: addressing the social function of the individual, (research need) and directly through the motivational sphere (ambition, leadership). However, to select pedagogical measures of influence, a teacher needs to determine the personal characteristics of a student, especially the characteristics of memory, emotional sphere and socially significant points.

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