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Особенности формирования коммуникативной
языковой компетенции на занятиях по английскому
языку у студентов, обучающихся по направлению
«Зарубежное регионоведение» (из опыта работы)

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The development of the english language
communicative competency of the students
majoring in Foreign Studies (practical aspect)

В статье рассматривается вопрос использования современных образовательных технологий и учебно-методических пособий на занятиях по английскому языку для студентов, обучающихся по направлению «Зарубежное регионоведение». Особое внимание уделено кейс-анализу и его коммуникативной функции

Ключевые слова: кейс-метод, дискуссия, общепрофессиональные и профессиональные компетенции, образовательные технологии, зарубежное регионоведение

The article deals with modern educational technologies and course books used in teaching English to students majoring in Foreign Studies. The author focuses on the Case Study analysis and its communicative function

Key words: case-study, discussion, general and professional competencies, educational technologies, foreign studies

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Foreign Regional Studies is a neoteric vocation at Pacific National University. The competition for this prestigious major is very high. Each year a number of applicants who want to learn the new perspective occupation increases. The Khabarovsk Territory is a borderline with Eurasia, having close ties with the neighboring countries (Japan, China, Malaysia, Philippines, South Korea, etc.). Therefore the occupation is acute and demanded.

A student majoring in Foreign Studies is supposed to be an expert, who will be engaged in diplomatic, cultural and foreign economic contacts. He will also be capable

of predicting the main trends in the development of the countries in the region as well as making a comprehensive description of the whole region with all its features.

In accordance with The Federal State Educational Standard of the Higher Education, approved in 2015, having completed the course of “Foreign Studies” (bachelor’s level), the graduate who has mastered the bachelor’s program must solve the following professional problems:

- professional graphic translation of official and business documents;
- protocol support of officials and interpreting speeches;
- collection and analysis of information about countries;
- preparation of information materials about international events;
- explanation of social – political phenomena.

To implement the tasks of interpersonal and intercultural interaction the graduate after completing the bachelor program should be able to get certain general cultural and professional competences:

- the ability to communicate orally and in writing in Russian and foreign languages;
- the possession of standard methods of computer typing in a foreign language of international communication;
- the ability to have a dialog, to keep correspondence, to conduct negotiations in a foreign language;
- knowledge of effective techniques to establish professional contacts and develop professional communication [1].

The curriculum was based on the experience of leading academies of Russia: Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Institute of Asia and Africa of Moscow State University named after M.V. Lomonosov. Students majoring in foreign studies at Pacific National University take the English language programs for three semesters: the first and the second semesters – English, the third semester – Business English. The number of hours isn’t enough for elaboration of general and professional competences. Curriculum and methodical complex of the major are constantly supplemented and updated because of some alterations in The Federal State Educational Standard and freshmen’ test results.

The test results in English of students majoring in Foreign Studies show an adequate level of lexical and grammatical skills (personal verb forms in the active and passive voice, using impersonal forms of verbs, adverbs degrees and comparisons, knowledge of word formation meanings). Nevertheless the ability to use lexical units in accordance with collocations is not strong enough.

Students successfully demonstrate the ability to extract information and to determine the main idea in listening and reading tasks. But the tasks of higher level, where it is necessary to draw conclusions, determine cause – effect relationships, cause difficulties. The results of the written work showed poorly developed skills (the style noncompliance, violation of the logical connections, limited vocabulary, etc.). The oral part of the tests showed that school leavers can’t express their own point of view, explain their own position, ask questions, analyze proposed projects, and criticize. Debate culture, tolerance and ability to find compromises aren’t developed enough.

English testing allows estimating the true level of school leavers and to identify problematic issues of study.

Because of the major novelty the lectures apply their own elaborations, educational guidance and tutorials in class. One of the sources is the textbook "English for Foreign Studies". The manual includes authentic text materials with sound (audio and video materials) that allow developing necessary business skills and skills in the English language: to analyze scientific and political texts, to abstract and annotate texts, to debate, to participate in presentations, to reflect different points of view and reality facts.

Intensive materials usage of international conferences, forums, meetings, consultations with the representatives of Pacific Region countries allows students to adjust the hearing aid for speech perception at first sight, to adapt to the various voice forms of presentation (timbre, intonation, rate), as well as to develop skills of taking notes and a record-keeping.

The textbook also includes a variety of subjects: "Identity", "Values", "Communication style", "Social change", "Gender and culture", "Culture in language", "Culture Shock", "Global Community", etc. Students analyze numerous situations, give some explanations of characters' behavior and motivation, looking for the ways of solving and overcoming conflicts as well as participate in discussions. In this way, the regional studies are carried out through its culture and language. The main characters of studied countries are people living there. We can confidently agree with A.V. Pavlovskaya, that it allows future experts to expand the national region's peculiarities in its diversity, to define the uniqueness of life and lifestyle, to open the main factors that influenced its development. Eventually, it gives an opportunity to analyze certain situations and to make future forecast [3].

In addition to the basic course at practical lessons on "Business Foreign Language", educational-methodical complexes of foreign publications by Macmillan and Oxford are used: Learn to Read Newspapers and Discuss Politics, Email English, Effective Presentation, Telephone English, Meetings in English, Understanding International Relations. This practical training is necessary for the development of basic communicative and language skills, where video and audio stories are also the main component.

Role-playing, cognitive and competitive forms of work can greatly expand the opportunities of general and professional skills formation:

- disputes "Russia only for Russians?";
- evenings "Myths and Legends of the Pacific Region's countries";
- questionnaire (whether you pay attention to the similarities and differences of customs and traditions in different countries, or you are interested in the culture of the Pacific region, you respect the other person's point of view, if it does not coincide with yours;
- educational situation "National nicknames", "National customs", "On a visit";
- controversial statements "People will never learn to live in peace" [2].

In the training process new educational technologies such as role play, discussion and case-analysis are actively used. Scientific-pedagogical research show that potential of new teaching technologies is high enough. Their introduction in the educational process allows learners:

- to express their own point of view;
- to increase the level of professional competence;
- to develop the ability of making independent decisions;
- to integrate their knowledges and skills;
- to evaluate and interpret a conflict situation;
- to comprehend the consequences of the decision;
- to master the skills of public speaking.

Case-method or case-study needs special attention as a modern technology of professionally-oriented education. In order to activate and develop basic language competence, it is necessary to select cases where targets are clearly defined and have a certain difficult level. Their content should be actual and should provoke discussion, should have a few decisions and illustrate some typical situation.

The benefit of "ProFile" by The Oxford University Press (Business English) is obvious. The publisher offers a wide range of relevant topics for studying, and introduces business language specifics in various fields, such as «Human resources», «Prioritizing», «International business», etc.

Thematic relevance, deep information component and absence of numerous errors are the main advantage of the tutorial.

Let us analyze the theme "Negotiations". The first group of introductory exercises is aimed at expanding the vocabulary and new words and phrases' development, which are linked with this topic: to negotiate supply contracts, to win or lose a negotiation, to persuade, to convince, a confront, to manipulate, to propose, to reach a compromise, to lose one's temper, to get out of a contract, to cancel, to beat smb down, to apologize for any inconvenience, to suffer for smth, to arrange a date and time, as far as I am concerned, a day off, according to, to appreciate, etc. Exercises on listening and reading are aimed at consolidating the new lexical units, terms and fixed expressions. The following is the situation itself, where it'll be necessary to use this knowledge. Students should determine which method of negotiating is closer for them.

Categorical negotiation style:

- any negotiations are always a competition where there are winners and losers;
- you can win your opponent only if you have total advantages;
- manipulation and bluff are a true delight for negotiator;
- to get all without extra costs.

Loyal negotiating style:

- each party can win if there is a compromise;
- negotiations should be seen as a long-term perspective;
- to recognize certain interests of each party;
- to achieve results on mutually beneficial terms.

Afterwards students should decide a task: "Last year Wakely's – a British engineering company – was taken over by an American conglomerate, Stonebridge Inc. Changes in management style have caused tension in the plant. The union is ready for

confrontation. An argument took place on the shop floor yesterday when some of the blue-collar workers lost their temper at the extra work they were being asked to do." The workers expressed their grievances:

1. As part of its export drive Stonebridge is investing heavily in language tuition for sales and marketing staff. Courses take place during work time. Language tuition is available for blue-collar staff but in their own time.

2. Sam Walker, Stonebridge's vice-president, has reduced the subsidy paid to the factory's rugby and football team and club. The Managing Director, who doesn't drink alcohol, says the subsidy encourages drunkenness. Golfing weekends at expensive hotels, and foreign travel are offered to senior executives.

3. A female American manager has accused male assembly-line workers of negative behavior and sexism. She claims they are resistant to new techniques and equipment. They say she doesn't respect their skill and is young and aggressive.

It is necessary to hold a meeting and find a solution. Students are divided into groups: representatives of senior management and union representatives.

Information files include tasks for each sub-group and sample requirements for each of the parties involved in the negotiations. Representatives of the administration and trade unions assert the following arguments, by choosing individual negotiating style and the role:

"Golfing weekends are part of work. They are to cement relations between suppliers, customers, and Stonebridge. Senior executives have to sacrifice their weekends to do this. Other workers can spend their time with their families".

"Sales and marketing staff work longer hours. Blue-collar staff work clear shifts. It's essential for the company's future that sales staff improve foreign language skills. Blue-collar workers are lucky to have language lessons paid by the company. They are for use on holiday."

"If our application won't be accepted, we are ready to declare a strike and an overtime ban. Learning a language will help workers to improve their prospects. They can help with technical installations in other countries. The treatment of blue-collar workers is unfair."

At the end of the work it is necessary to determine whether the agreement is reached, if the negotiations were not successful. It is important to specify reasons impossibility to reach compromise.

Thus, the practical purpose of case-study is to create a practical model of a situation in a professional environment, to solve it, to accept extra solutions, to find convincing arguments, thereby generating interest and motivation to language.

Training assignment of case-method is to study a particular lexical – grammatical topic and its application in a particular language situation, as well as to update the knowledge of the whole complex.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the development of general and professional competencies of professionals majoring in Foreign Studies is necessary to continuously improve the educational – methodical base, enrich it with new content and new educational technologies by motivating students to improve their knowledge and develop communicative language abilities.

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