



The Advantages of the Individual Approach to Teaching Students a Foreign Language on the Communicative Basis

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ABSTRACT

Today, when at the present stage of the socio-economic development of Russia the sphere of international activity of the country has intensified, the need for learning foreign languages is becoming urgent, and therefore, the requirements for professional training of specialists are increasing, which can be called a priority direction of the modern pedagogical process of higher school. In this regard, within the framework of this study, the essence of the phenomenon of the individual approach in teaching a foreign language, contributing to the development of students' abilities for foreign language activities, has been revealed. The study identified and systematized the main advantages of the individual approach in communicative teaching of a foreign language in a non-linguistic university; analyzed the principles of the individual approach in teaching a foreign language; the conditions for the implementation of the individual approach in the context of communicative teaching a foreign language are highlighted; determined the criteria for the success of the individual approach in teaching a foreign language on the communicative basis. The results of the experimental work allow us to speak about the consistency and validity of the individual approach in teaching a foreign language on the communicative basis in the context of language education in a non-linguistic university.

Keywords: language education, university students, foreign language, speech activity, language competencies, communicative teaching, communication competencies, foreign language communication, individual approach, motivation for learning a foreign language.

1. Introduction

1.1. Actualization of the problem

At the present stage of the socio-economic development of society, the increased requirements for professional training of students are becoming relevant. And in this process the factor of communication between the subjects of educational activity becomes of great importance. This is especially true of teaching a foreign language, when young people have to develop not only the ability to read and translate professional specialized literature, but also to develop the ability to communicate in other languages. Today, the culture of communication is one of the components of higher education, since young specialists, mastering the basics of their profession, must also develop such professional qualities as: social activity, flexibility of thinking when choosing work methods, self-control, initiative, etc. For example, organizing communication in a foreign language, a modern specialist should be able to perceive and understand the meaning of the interlocutor's speech, to argue his position with arguments, while formulating his ideas clearly and logically.

Hence, when using a foreign language as a means of communication, a specialist has the opportunity to solve specific problems within his professional powers (for example, during business correspondence, telephone negotiations, participation in a press conference, everyday communication with foreign colleagues, etc.). However, the reality is that when studying a foreign language in non-linguistic universities, many students do not fully realize the importance and necessity of mastering a foreign language due to the presence of such a factor as the difficulty of mastering another language. Thus, the higher school faces a difficult task: to do everything possible so that in a short period of study at the university, students believe in themselves and achieve significant success in mastering a foreign language.

And here the communicative technique comes to the rescue, which logically leads to the construction of a foreign language teaching system based on communication. It is important to note that the use of this technique contributes not only to the study of a foreign language as a means of communication, but also to the development of a general outlook and personal qualities of a future specialist. However, there are grounds to assume that at present in vocational training there are gaps in the implementation of the following aspects: an increase in the level of formation of the communicative competence of students of a non-linguistic university; introduction of teaching aids aimed at developing situational communication skills; wide use of an individual approach in teaching a foreign language; developing students' motivation to learn a foreign language, etc. Thus, the relevance of the study is ensured by identifying the advantages of the individual approach in teaching a foreign language to students on the communicative basis; the development of a theoretical basis for the process of teaching a foreign language, based on overcoming difficulties in the context of providing foreign language communication; the implementation of requirements for the level of foreign language proficiency by students of a non-linguistic university in the context of the development of intercultural communication, etc. In this regard, the training course in the discipline "Foreign language", built on the individual approach, should perform the following pedagogical functions: providing motivation for educational activities (transition from the motive of assessment to the motive of achievement and professional interest); introducing variety in the student's cognitive activity and the ability to work for him in his own mode; training based on the creation of real foreign language communication in the classroom; developing students' skills of independent work, which are the basis of their continuous education and self-education. Based on this, in this study, it is of interest to consider the following algorithm for using the individual approach in teaching a foreign language to students on the communicative basis: creating goal-setting → organizing the main stages and activities → student activities → student performance results → analysis and introspection of the obtained result → conclusion, assessment → setting a new goal, etc.

1.2. Status of a problem

To date, pedagogical science has accumulated a certain amount of knowledge necessary to solve the problem posed. A detailed analysis of the research showed that an individual approach to teaching a foreign language is studied at various levels, for example, theoretical, methodological and practical. In this regard, the theoretical basis of the study is based on theoretical conclusions and practical recommendations contained in the works of I. Kondrateva, D. Sabirova, N. Plotnikova (Kondrateva, I., Sabirova, D., Plotnikova, N., 2018), W. Rivers (Rivers, W., 1964), N. Segalowitz & P.M. Lightbown (Segalowitz, N. & Lightbown, P.M., 1999). Various issues of teaching a foreign language to students are touched upon in the research of R.R. Khusainova & A.A. Valeev (Khusainova, R.R. & Valeev, A.A., 2018), H.H. Stern (Stern, H.H., 1983), D. Larsen-Freeman (Larsen-Freeman, D., 2003). A wide range of ideas in the methodology of teaching a foreign language is studied in the works of D. Nunan (Nunan, D., 1992), J.C. Richards & T.S. Rodgers (Richards, J.C. & Rodgers, T.S., 2001). Various aspects of language education are considered in the scientific works of S.D. Krashen (Krashen, S.D., 2009), N. Chomsky (Chomsky, N., 1986). With regard to approaches to teaching a foreign language, such researchers have studied as M. Canale & Swain, M. (Canale, M. & Swain, M., 1980), P. Skehan (Skehan, P., 1998), S. Savignon & M. Berns (Savignon, S. & Berns, M., 1984). We found ideas for organizing communicative teaching of a foreign language in the scientific works of A.V. Babayants (Babayants, A.V., 2005). The study of approaches to the development of the communicative competence of university students is presented in the works of W. Littlewood (Littlewood, W., 1981), R. Mitchell (Mitchell, R., 1994). The definition of objective factors and essential characteristics of an individual approach was carried out by R.K. Johnson & C.B. Paulston (Johnson, R.K. & Paulston, C.B., 1976), J. Asher (Asher, J., 1977). An individual approach to teaching a foreign language as a scientific problem is considered in the works of authors such as E.G. Sabirova, N.R. Latypov, A.A. Valeev, R.A. Valeeva (Sabirova, E.G., Latypov, N.R., Valeev, A.A., Valeeva, R.A., 2018), Z. Domyei (Domyei, Z., 2001). The sections of the theory of speech activity and intercultural communication, considered in the works of N.V. Elukhina (Elukhina, N.V., 2002), S. Herrera & K. Murry, K. (Herrera, S. & Murry, K., 2016).

1.3. Hypothesis of the research

As a hypothesis, it was put forward the position that teaching a foreign language in higher education will be more effective if:

- Students will have a readiness to consciously master the linguistic aspects of a foreign language;
- The achievement by students of the personal level of language competencies (for successful communication) will be ensured;
- Readiness for self-study of students will be stimulated, taking into account their individual abilities;
- The level of development of students' individual style of educational activity will be increased;
- All possibilities of an individual approach will be used in teaching a foreign language to students on the communicative basis.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. *The tasks of the research*

In the present study, the following tasks were set: 1) To reveal the essence of the individual approach in communicative teaching of a foreign language on the basis of scientific analysis of psychological, pedagogical and linguistic didactic literature; 2) To carry out a methodological and substantive analysis of the principles of the individual approach in teaching a foreign language; 3) To outline the criteria for the success of the individual approach in teaching a foreign language on the communicative basis; 4) To develop a set of conditions for the implementation of the individual approach in the context of communicative teaching of a foreign language.

2.2. *Theoretical and empirical methods.*

To solve the tasks, the following methods were used:

- Theoretical analysis of psychological, pedagogical, methodological and special literature on research problems;
- Study and generalization of pedagogical experience;
- Experimental learning;
- Conversation, testing and survey of students;
- Statistical processing of experimental learning results.

2.3 *The trial infrastructure) and stages of the research*

The research is based on The Institute of Fundamental Medicine and Biology and the Alexander Butlerov Institute of Chemistry of Kazan (Volga region) Federal University. The research was carried out within the framework of training students of the specialty "Foreign language". The study was carried out in two stages: At the first stage (September 2019), there was formed the following: students' ideas about the possibilities of developing an individual style of learning activity; the need to consciously master the linguistic aspects of a foreign language; the possibilities to experiment when using a new language material; the relationship of language competencies with professionally oriented activities. The state of the problem of using the individual approach in teaching a foreign language on the communicative basis in university educational practice was studied; empirical material was collected; the attitude of students to self-study was studied, taking into account their individual abilities, etc. At the second stage (May 2020), guidelines were developed for researching the didactic possibilities of using the individual approach on the communicative basis when teaching university students a foreign language; an experimental test of the implementation of the possibilities of using the individual approach on the communicative basis was carried out and, on this basis, the achievement by students of the personal level of language competencies, as well as the skills and abilities of using the language in various spheres and situations of communication; registration of research results was carried out.

3. Results

Organizing the experiment on the stated hypothesis of this study, we proceeded from the fact that teaching a foreign language in the context of using the individual approach on the communicative basis should take into account the development of the following skills and abilities in students: The ability to structure an individual style of learning activity; The ability to show a positive emotional attitude when learning a foreign language; the ability to use language competences on a personal level; Skills of conscious application of linguistic aspects of a foreign language; The ability to be motivated to approach the study of a foreign language; Skills of using reflective activity in the study of a foreign language; The ability to experiment when using new language material; Skills of organizing self-study based on individual abilities; The ability to achieve goals based on confidence in one's capabilities.

In this regard, we focused on the use of various tests that process such groups of exercises as: test for knowledge of grammar; vocabulary test; test on the contextual application of the relevant vocabulary; test for the ability to work with texts; overview test; audio testing, etc. Work on criteria for the effectiveness of learning a foreign language based on the individual approach was carried out in the 2019-2020 academic year: initially - in September 2019, again - in May 2020 in one experimental and one control group. The control group consisted of 16 students of The Institute of Fundamental Medicine and Biology of Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, studying a foreign

language without taking into account the individual approach to this process; The experimental group consisted of 15 students of the Alexander Butlerov Institute of Chemistry of Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, studying a foreign language, taking into account the individual approach to this process. The diagnostic results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Development of students' abilities and skills in learning a foreign language, taking into account the individual approach on the communicative basis ("Plus" means an increase in indicators in% for the period September 2019 - May 2020)

Success criteria for the individual approach to teaching a foreign language on the communicative basis	Control group (studying a foreign language without taking into account the individual approach to this process)	Experimental group (studying a foreign language, taking into account the individual approach to this process)
The level of development of the individual style of learning activity	+ 5 %	+ 48 %
The level of manifestation of the emotional factor in the study of a foreign language	+ 12 %	+ 70 %
Achieving a personal level of language competence (for successful communication)	+ 8 %	+ 65%
Willingness to consciously master the linguistic aspects of a foreign language	+ 3 %	+ 40 %
Increasing the level of motivation for learning a foreign language	+ 8 %	+ 75 %
Awareness of the importance of reflective activity	+ 2 %	+ 42 %
The ability to experiment with new language material	+ 3 %	+ 55 %
Readiness for self-study, taking into account their individual abilities	+ 10 %	+ 75 %
Increasing a sense of confidence in achieving the set goals	+ 1 %	+ 50 %

Compared with the results of the control group, in the experimental group, one can observe a steady increase in all factors. Thus, according to the results of diagnostics of a set of questions and tasks presented to students in order to make quantitative assessment of readiness to learn a foreign language, we observe that the dynamics of an increase in the level of motivation for learning a foreign language among students who took part in the experiment exceeds the similar dynamics of the control group. This may indicate the effectiveness of our experimental work to improve students' ability to master a foreign language, taking into account the individual approach on the communicative basis. The dynamics of the indicators of students' mastering knowledge of a foreign language and the organization of its system also testifies to the formation of their readiness for self-study, taking into account their individual abilities on the basis of the manifestation of the emotional factor when studying a foreign language, taking into account its professional orientation. At the same time, the number of students with a narrow range of manifestation of the individual style of educational activity in the study of a foreign language has decreased.

Thus, the advantages of the individual approach to teaching students a foreign language on the communicative basis showed that the development of students' ability to achieve a personal level of language competencies (for successful communication) based on their readiness to consciously master the linguistic aspects of a foreign language contributes to the development of their ability to experiment when using a new linguistic material in a foreign language speech, taking into account the awareness of the importance of reflective activity in the context of its professional orientation. All of the above suggests that the study has confirmed the main provisions of the hypothesis and made it possible to increase the level of motivation to further study a foreign language.

4. Discussions

The study showed that communication within the framework of a training session based on the individual approach is of an influencing nature, and this is manifested in such features of speech interaction as: individual

accountability, adequate use of personal and group skills, cooperation. Speech interaction unites the teacher and the student, coordinates and complements their efforts for defining, approaching and achieving a communicative goal by speech means. And the process of interaction (the mutual influence of people or the influence of groups on each other as a continuous dialogue) makes it possible to solve various communicative tasks in teaching a foreign language by coordinating the efforts of participants in verbal communication. It is productive interaction that creates a motive and stimulus for communication and awakens to reciprocal speech actions.

5. Conclusion

So, the goal of the individual approach in teaching a foreign language on the communicative basis is the most productive use of a foreign language in natural, not prepared contexts under the guidance of a teacher. The individual approach, in one way or another, is associated with feedback, which implies receiving a response signal from a student, which would indicate that the speech message received by him is correctly understood, that is, it assumes a reaction to the messages he listened to and read. The choice is supposed to be free variability of forms in order to express this or that communicative intention. This means that the student, with the individual approach, has a choice of what to say specifically and how.

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