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Foreign-Language Project-based Method as a Means of Forming Professional Competence in Bachelors of Management

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Abstract

The objectives of the present research have been to elaborate the principles of non-equivalent word-combinations selection for the ideographic dictionary compiling. The results we have obtained allow us to put the project, helping the students to understand some cultural peculiarities that are present in language, into practice. According to the view expressed in the article, a non-equivalent word-combination is a set expression with a stable meaning, which is broader than the meaning of its components' combination, it carries cultural specifics.

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1. Introduction

The effect of globalization processes on redefining the content of Higher Education System actualizes the problem of improvement of education quality and personal and professional development of students. In modern society a specialist must speak a foreign language on a communicative level high enough to communicate in the professional sphere, which is one of the conditions of professional training. In response to the challenges, facing the world community, modern Pedagogy suggested a competence-based educational paradigm (Bazarov; Zimnyaya, 2004; Povarenko, 2002; Khutorskoi, 2003 and others).

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V. I. Baidenko, while classifying competences, distinguishes common (key or additional) and professional (professionally oriented) (2006).

I. A. Zimnyaya introduces the concept of social and professional competence, a part of which is activity competence. It is based on interdisciplinary knowledge, multi-level skills which are manifested in professional activity (2004).

There are different points of view on the definition of professional competence. In “Slovar-spravochnik sovremennogo rossiyskogo professionalnogo obrazovaniya” (A manual dictionary of modern Russian professional education) professional competence is defined as ability to successfully operate on the basis of skills, knowledge and experience when performing tasks and solving problems of professional activity (2010).

M. Yu. Oleshkov and V. M. Uvarov define professional competence as a range of issues which a specialist must resolve (2006).

From the point of view of Yu. P. Povarenko, formation of professional competence in higher education acts primarily as a value-oriented task, then it becomes a reference model of mastering the profession and at the stage of graduation – integrative professionally significant new formation of specialist’s personality (2002).

2. Methodology of project-based learning by means of the German language

2.1. Foreign-language project-based method as a means of forming professional competence

The aim of this work is to search for ways of introduction of foreign-language project-based method as a means of forming professional competence in Bachelors of Management during the lessons of “German language for professional communication”. The question arises of which methods to choose and how to create such conditions, in the process of teaching a foreign language, which would enable achieving the set goals. In our point of view, one of such means may be a foreign-language professional project-based method. In the framework of our research, foreign-language professional project-based method should be understood as joint activity of lecturer and students of creating a project in a foreign language, during which students solve professionally significant problems independently (Beltyukova, 2014).

2.2. Forming professional competence in a Bachelor of Management

While teaching a foreign language to senior students of non-linguistics universities, it is necessary to develop professional competence, which is understood as knowledge, skills and personality traits acquired in the course of specially organized training, reflecting its willingness and ability to use a foreign language for solving professional problems (Grishaeva; Karataeva, 2012).

The programs of foreign language training must be professionally-oriented, being one of the means of professional training realization – to improve an aspect of the acquired professional competence with maximum intensity during a limited period of time (Rostovtseva, 2010).

What kind of knowledge, abilities and skills are necessary for a manager in order to communicate successfully at professional level in a globalized world? Modern civil service implies communication with people. Activity of specialists in the field of state and social management relies on implementation of the following functions: communication, decision making, organization, motivation, control, planning (Mineeva, 1999).

Analysis of the bachelor program in the major “State and Municipal Management” carried out with reference to Federal State Educational Standard 3+ of Higher Education shows which professional competences should be formed in a Bachelor of Management in the framework of learning a foreign language:

a) general professional:

- the ability to do business communication and public speaking, to negotiate, to hold meetings, to carry out business correspondence and to maintain electronic communications;
- the ability to solve routine tasks of professional activity on the basis of bibliographic and information culture along with Information and Communication Technologies taking into the main information security requirements;

b) professional:

- the ability to implement information and communication technologies in professional activity observing their relations and prospects for their use;
- the ability to implement interpersonal, group and organizational communications;
- the ability to work in a team during official activity in accordance with ethical requirements for official conduct;
- the ability to self-organize working time, to use resources rationally and to interact effectively with other employees.

c) professionally applied:

- the ability to effectively take part in group work on the basis of knowledge of the processes of group dynamics and team building principles (Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education in the major 38.03.04 State and Municipal Management (qualification (degree) “Bachelor”, 2015).

It is important to form not only special knowledge and skills, but to have professional and communicative competence, the ability to communicatively organize professional activity as a manifestation of the degree of specialist’s professionalism which provides an effective range of actions in aimed at achieving goals through the ability to communicate professionally (Znikina, 2005).

Project-based activity allows formulating different professional competences: the ability and willingness to make a conscious and effective self-management of their professional activity (Jung, 2000); the position of business activity, interaction and cooperation in the process of solving problems in professional sphere (Minakova, Obdalova, 2012); the position of reflexive self-esteem, which means correction and accumulation of effective experience of activity; the position of constructive and creative activity, i. e. forming their own knowledge systems and personal methods of obtaining skills, flexibility and adaptability to different situations (Kachalov, 2004).

2.3. Foreign-language project-based method as a means of forming professional competence

Foreign-language project-based method for future professional activity was conducted with the students of Tomsk State University in two target groups: the fourth year undergraduates majoring at Management of International Faculty of Management and the third year undergraduates of Faculty of Economics, who are aware of their profession and German-speaking at the level not lower than B1.

Below there are professionally-oriented projects: “My future profession”, “Job interview” with interactive and mixed basis (Apel, 2001; Polat, 2000).

A German language lecturer was the initiator of the project “My future profession” at the stage of its overall planning. Students were asked to write an essay about how they imagine their future occupational work.

The questions for essay were selected and discussed using brainstorming mode: 1. Who/What influenced the choice of your profession?, 2. Where do you study?, 3. Which subjects do you study?, 4. What was your idea about future profession at the moment of entering university and what is it now?, 5. Is your profession prestigious?, 6. What is the thing you like best in your profession?, 7. Which character traits, in your opinion, are necessary for a specialist in the field of management?, 8. Which professional competences does a specialist in the field of state and municipal management need to have?, 9. Who are some famous personalities in your profession?, 10. Which foreign languages do you speak?, 11. Does your FL training help to develop your professional competence?, 12. Please, rate your foreign language communication skills, willingness to work in your profession, interest in the process of implementation of professional activities, 13. Where do managers work after university graduation?

During the design phase of the project discussions on the chosen specialty and industrial practice were held in groups and the results were summed up. Then every project participant started work on individual project task: search for information on the Internet and at the University Scientific Library, a survey among scientists at departments of some faculties. The personal involvement of every project participant was obligatory, that is why all types of work were divided among all project participants. The German language lecturer consulted students on linguistic execution of the project and answered their questions.

At the final stage of self-reflection, group professionally-oriented projects in German were presented and defended. In addition to participating in the overall project, every student made a report on professional development in their chosen profession in the context of learning German.

In order the project “Job interview” to be realized, goals and objectives of the project were discussed, project tasks were created, students chose foreign (German) and Russian companies at the stage of its overall planning.

During the design phase of the project, the project participants were divided into two groups: Group A – representatives of Russian company, Group B - representatives of German company. Key moments of work on the project were discussed in groups. The projects participants’ responsibilities were distributed: the company was verified, what kind of jobs it presented, who the candidate for the vacant post would be, who would hold job interview, which documents the candidate must prepare. Each group gathered information about their company, prepared job interview questions, the students, whose were supposed to act as candidates, gathered all the documents necessary for employment and prepared for job interview. When preparing for job interview, every candidate had to consider all their strengths in order to convince representatives of the company, he/she was going to be employed in, that he/she was a necessary specialist for this company. The interim results of research work were regularly discussed in groups. The German language lecturer consulted students on linguistic execution of the project.

At the stage of reflection the collected information was summarized and the created tasks were done, interviews were held with different candidates for the same vacant post according to the preset plan.

The groups evaluated every job interview taking into account the specificity of production of each company and peculiarities of each culture.

2.4. Results and discussion

The abilities to carry out interpersonal, group and organizational communication, to know the methods for self-organization of working time, to use various resources rationally and to communicate effectively with other project participants during group work develop at all stages of work on the projects (overall planning, the design phase of the project, presentation of results, reflection).

The ability to do business communication and public speaking was confirmed by the fact that some of the project participants presented the reports in their profession in German at the section of foreign languages of International Student Conference of Tomsk University Faculty of Economics “The globalization of social and economic development of the region”.

During the project students gathered the necessary information using information and communication technologies, Internet resources in particular, which promoted the development of their ability to use technologies in their professional activity observing their relations and the prospects for their use.

Within the project “Job interview” ethical requirements for official conduct of employees with company executives and colleagues, which develops the ability to cooperate in professional activity.

Such competences as interaction and cooperation in the process of solving problems in professional sphere and willingness to make a conscious and effective self-management of their professional activity, the position of business activity were confirmed by the fact that students actively discussed the results of their research work during the final lessons, defended their views on the developed problems, argued and provided arguments. The received knowledge and skills were successfully applied in practice when four participants went to Germany as part of the group of students of International Faculty of Management who won a grant for educational training through the German Academic Exchange Service. It is nonetheless important that the position of reflexive self-esteem is formed, effective experience of constructive and creative activity is accumulated, i.e. forming their own knowledge systems and personal methods of obtaining skills, flexibility and adaptability to different situations.

3. Conclusion

As it was shown by the conducted experiential teaching of future managers, who are the third and fourth year graduates, foreign-language project-based method as means of forming professional competence has a great educational potential, as it promotes the development of professional competence, all of its components and

motivates students to obtain additional knowledge. While forming professional competence, German language is not only the means of learning during the lesson but also the instrument of development of specialized knowledge and the way to develop the qualities required for students as future management professionals.

Due to the fact that a foreign language is used in situations as close to real and professionally significant, through practice students become convinced of the advisability of studying a foreign language and its usefulness for forming their professional competence, which increases their motivation to study language further.

It is recommended to start realization of professionally-oriented projects with the students whose proficiency in a foreign language is not lower than B1 level in accordance with Common European Framework of Reference for languages. On the other hand, the third/fourth year undergraduates must already have understanding of their future profession.

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