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Impact of Communicative Culture in Teaching Spanish

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Abstract

So far, in science, the process of learning foreign languages and the process of development for individuals' communicative culture has been considered separately. In this study, the possibility of communicative culture development in teaching Spanish was defined. In the national tradition the methods of teaching Spanish are not represented as widely as, for example, the methods of teaching English, German, and French. There is a need for research on this topic. In this paper the process of learning was studied, not only from the point of view of linguistics properly but also from the point of view of the development of culture, in particular the communicative culture of students. The aim of this research was to study the theoretical literature on the stated topic, to conduct an ascertaining experiment using a questionnaire among students studying Spanish as a specialty, on the topic "Student's communicative culture". According to the results of the experiment we succeeded: - to establish the content of the concept of communicative culture in the understanding of students; - find out which of its components have greatest importance from their point of view; - to determine the students' opinion on the existence of a connection between learning Spanish as a specialty and the development of a communicative culture, and also to establish how this relationship is expressed; - check whether students are aware of the methodology by which they are taught Spanish, and whether they know that this technique is a communicative technique.

Keywords: Linguistics, Teaching methodology, Communicative culture, Learning Spanish, Teaching Spanish.

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Introduction

In the context of the formation of a global information society, issues of communicative interaction, cooperation, and mutual understanding are actualized. Therefore, the professional activity of a young specialist has a distinct communicative nature. In this regard, the purpose of the modern system of education and upbringing is the development of the communicative culture of the individual (Andreev, 2009; Richards & Rodgers, 1986).

From the standpoint of social and activity approaches, the individual's culture is a component of the culture of the society. A developed culture makes it possible to develop practical skills in various fields of activity and enrich the spiritual world of man. In turn, the communicative culture is a significant part of the individual's culture (Andreeva, 2008; Lesenciuc & Codreanu, 2012).

The concept of 'communicative culture' still does not have a strict scientific definition. In addition, various authors talk about related phenomena, which they call communicative perfection, speech competence, communicative literacy, sociolinguistic competence, verbal communicative competence, communicative abilities, communicative skills, etc. In this paper, we find the most optimal use of the term "communicative culture". The previous terms reflect only one of the personality traits, while communicative culture is a broader, complex concept that unites emotional culture, thinking culture, speech culture, innate and acquired abilities, knowledge, and skills that regulate the process of communication (Bastrikova, 2005).

According to the idea of Aukhadeeva, communicative culture, first of all, represents the moral aspiration of communication, it is a public domain, a property of society and an individual property of each person. "The culture of communication is the level, quality of communication, measured by its influence on the comprehensive development of each individual personality" (Aukhadeeva, 2006; Carbaugh, 2007; Gao, 2006).

The transition to an information society in the context of a dialogue of cultures sets the task for higher education to prepare a creative, active, free person, focused in their lives not only on their own achievements but also on the overall success of the people around them. A prerequisite for the productive professional activity of a future specialist, especially a specialist in foreign languages, is the mastery of communicative culture. As a consequence, improving the communicative culture of the individual becomes the goal and content of teaching foreign languages. The communicative technique prepares students for communication with native speakers of other languages and cultures. In the learning process, real-life situations are reproduced, genuine materials are used. The student is at the center of the educational process, collaborating with the teacher and other students - this manifests a personality-focused orientation of learning. And in conclusion, let us explain that a communicative culture is a complex of formed knowledge, norms, values, skills, motives, patterns of behavior accepted in society and the ability to organically, naturally implement them in communication, control and regulate their speech behavior, competently argue their position, cooperate productively using verbal and non-verbal means of communication (Gez, 2008; Gudkov, 2003; Leontiev, 2005).

Methods

The methodological basis of the study was made up of pedagogical and linguodidactic concepts that reveal the patterns of training specialists, the cultural and historical concept of personality development, a communicative approach to learning, a lingua didactic model of a linguistic personality. The main provisions of this work are based on the findings of specialists in the field of intercultural communication.

The logic of present work led to the application of a system of methods that complement each other: the study of psychological, pedagogical and linguistic literature; questioning of students, a written survey, analysis of the results of experimental activities (Sidelnikova, 2004; Vasilyeva, 2008; Mitrova, 2006).

The actual material of the study was the questionnaire filled out by I, II, III, and IV years students studying in the specialty "Spanish Language and Literature".

The object of the study was the process of teaching Spanish in a group.

The subject of the study: questionnaires completed by students studying Spanish.

The sources of the research material were theoretical literature on the topic, dissertations in pedagogy, textbooks on the methodology of teaching foreign languages, linguistic dictionaries (Mychko, 2002; Lazar & Huber-Kriegler, 2007).

Results

We studied the theoretical literature on the stated topic. Then we conducted a stating experiment with the help of a questionnaire on the topic "Student's communicative culture". Four groups of students studying Spanish as a specialty took part in the survey.

As a result of the survey:

- established the concept of communicative culture in the understanding of students;
- found out which of its components are of the greatest importance from their point of view;
- determined the opinion of students about the connection between the study of Spanish as a specialty and the development of a communicative culture, and also to establish what this relationship is expressed in;
- checked how students are aware of the methodology by which they are taught Spanish, and whether they know that this method is a communicative method.

Below there is a questionnaire that students were asked to fill out.

Questionnaire

Student's communicative culture

Full name _____ group _____

- 1) What is, in your opinion, communicative culture?
 - 2) Number the indicators of communicative culture in order of importance from your point of view (1 is the most important, 5 is the least important):
- communication skills

- organizational skills
- sociability
- innate communication skills
- a culture of speech

3) Do you think that the study of a foreign language as a specialty affects the level of communicative culture and how?

4) Which method is applied to teach you the language?

5) What would you like to add about the communicative culture?

We determined the uniformity of answers in question No. 2 as follows: 50% or less of the same answers or with a difference of 1 - the answers are heterogeneous,

60% of the same answers or with a difference of 1 - the answers are quite homogeneous, 70% or more of the same answers or with a difference of 1 - high uniformity of answers.

Calculation of the uniformity of the responses in question No. 2

Table 1. First-year students

Respondent	№ 1	№ 2	№ 3	№ 4	№5	№ 6	№ 7	Total	Order of significance	Uniformity of responses
Communicative skills	4	1	2	2	4	1	1	15	1	high
Managerial skills	3	3	4	5	5	5	4	24	5	high
Sociability	2	4	1	3	3	2	2	17	2	high
Innate communicative ability	5	5	5	1	1	3	3	23	4	low
Culture of speech	1	2	3	4	2	4	5	21	3	low

Table 2. Second-year students

Respondent	№ 1	№ 2	№ 3	№ 4	№5	№ 6	№ 7	№ 8	№ 9	№ 10	Total	Order of significance	Uniformity of responses
Communicative skills	3	4	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	4	24	2	high
Managerial skills	5	3	3	3	4	5	5	4	5	2	39	4	medium
Sociability	2	2	4	1	3	2	4	3	1	1	21	1	medium
Innate communicative ability	4	5	5	5	5	4	1	1	4	5	39	4	high
Culture of speech	1	1	1	4	1	3	3	5	3	3	25	3	low

Table 3. Third-year students

Respondent	No 1	No 2	No 3	No 4	No5	No 6	No 7	No 8	No 9	No 10	Total	Order of significance	Uniformity of responses
Communicative skills	4	2	4	2	3	2	2	3	1	4	27	3	medium
Managerial skills	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	47	5	high
Sociability	2	3	3	1	2	1	2	1	3	1	19	1	high
Innate communicative ability	1	4	1	5	1	4	3	4	5	3	31	4	low
Culture of speech	3	1	2	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	24	2	high

Table 4. Fourth-year students

Respondent	No 1	No 2	No 3	No 4	No5	No 6	Total	Order of significance	Uniformity of responses
Communicative skills	4	3	4	2	2	2	17	3	medium
Managerial skills	5	5	2	5	5	5	27	5	high
Sociability	3	2	3	4	3	3	18	4	high
Innate communicative ability	2	1	5	3	4	1	16	2	low
Culture of speech	1	4	1	1	1	4	12	1	medium

Discussion

This work is relevant in that the process of learning a language was considered not only from the point of view of linguistics properly but also from the point of view of the development of culture, in particular, the communicative culture of students.

Up to now, science has separately examined the process of teaching foreign languages and the process of developing a communicative personality culture. In this research, the possibility of developing a communicative culture in teaching Spanish was determined. In addition, in the local tradition, the methodology of teaching Spanish is not as widely represented as, for example, the methodology of teaching English, German, and French. There is a need for research on this topic.

As a result of our research, the following tasks were solved:

- defined the concept of "communicative culture" on the basis of the study of theoretical material;
- studied the concepts of "communicative culture" existing in the classification system of knowledge and disclosed them in this paper;
- studied and disclosed the principles of the communicative methodology of teaching foreign languages;

- conducted a survey of students studying Spanish as a specialty;
- analyzed the questionnaires completed by students and made conclusions.

In the course of the study, we were able to establish that the communicative culture according to students is a culture of communication, which is the ability to clearly express their point of view, respect for the opinions of others, the ability to listen, the ability to understand and accept other people's views, the art of competently speaking, respecting the rules of communication, established in society, the ability to set up a contact with representatives of another culture, to understand and accept the characteristics of other cultures. Also, according to students' responses, a communicative culture includes personal qualities, upbringing, communication habits and skills, the ability to set up and maintain contacts with other people in different situations, the ability to communicate according to the rules of society, the ability to customize the communicator to the desired mode, the art of speaking correctly.

It's cleared that, which components of communicative culture students perceive as the most significant. In addition, students note the impact of learning Spanish as a specialty on the development of their communicative culture. Students believe that the study of a foreign language as a specialty affects the level of communicative culture. They argue this by expanding vocabulary, overcoming shyness and constraint in communication due to the constant practice of speech, acquaintance with the culture, history and literature of another people, the development of speech culture (especially spontaneous speech). Students are aware that their future profession is directly related to communication, in particular with native speakers of other languages. They argue that a foreign language, being a means of international contacts, greatly expands the possibilities of communication between people.

Students suggest that despite the level of sociability that a person possesses by nature, learning a language helps to acquire basic skills that improve the communication process. This suggests that the communicative culture is perceived by students not as a given, an invariable individual psychological characteristic, but as something amenable to development, improvement.

First-year students have a vague and non-contoured idea of the communicative method used in teaching Spanish. Students cannot always state its principles and give it a name.

Second-third-year students list tasks that are performed in the process of learning: a conversation between a teacher and students, tasks in the form of game, creative tasks, reading literary texts, watching movies, listening to audio recordings, songs. All this characterizes one of the principles of the communicative method - the use of authentic material in teaching Spanish to create authenticity and effect of live situational communication in the educational process.

Senior students are the closest to the description of the communicative method. All respondents know its name and see its significance in reproducing real situations of communication. Consequently, undergraduates are becoming more aware of "what is being done with them" in the process of learning and why specifically this or that task proposed by them in the lesson is needed.

Summing up, it should be noted that among students enrolled in the specialty "Spanish language and literature", the widest understanding of this phenomenon, as well as the principles of the communicative methods of teaching Spanish, is observed in senior students. Communicative culture is perceived by them not as a given, a constant individual psychological characteristic, but as something amenable to development, improvement. Students are aware of the positive impact of learning Spanish on the development of their communicative culture.

To sum up, it should be noted that the problem of communicative interaction is relevant in the context of the formation of a global information society. For this reason, professional training of university graduates has a clear communicative nature, especially with regard to specialists in foreign languages. In this regard,

increasing the communicative culture of the individual becomes the goal and content of learning foreign languages. The communicative technique prepares students to communicate with speakers of other languages and cultures. In the process of learning, real life situations are reproduced, genuine materials are used. The student is in the center of the educational process, collaborating with the teacher and other students - this is the manifestation of the personality-oriented direction of learning.

Conclusions

The theoretical significance of the study lies in a synthesized approach to the consideration of the process of teaching foreign languages and the process of developing a communicative personality culture. The practical significance of the study is to conduct a survey among students studying Spanish as a specialty and thereby clarify their knowledge of the content and component composition of the concept of “communicative culture”, the impact of learning Spanish using a communicative technique on the development of a communicative culture.

It is noteworthy that the survey was conducted only among students of 1-4 courses, but master students were not invited to participate. In addition, there were involved only students studying Spanish as a specialty and not as additional education, advanced training, etc. The study also focused only on the views of students studying one given foreign language. In further research involving a wider circle of students, is likely to produce a larger view and more widescale results.

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