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Topical Issues of Linguistics and Teaching Methods in Business and Professional Communication

**PROFESSIONALLY ORIENTED FOREIGN LANGUAGE:
INTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING**

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Abstract

The article deals with the integrated teaching of professionally oriented foreign language as well as with different approaches to pedagogical collaboration in foreign language teaching in non-linguistic universities. The possibility of foreign language integration with other disciplines according to Content and Language Integrated Learning is considered. Foreign languages are regarded as an optimal means of interdisciplinary integration with humanities and natural sciences at different levels of education such as school, baccalaureate, master's degree program and post graduate program. The models of interdisciplinary foreign language teaching developed by some Russian universities are shown in professionally oriented view. Some peculiarities of teaching foreign languages for special purposes are enumerated. The most effective forms of implementing interdisciplinary professional foreign language teaching are illustrated for different levels of education, these forms being different in the degree of complexity depending on the professional orientation of training. It is emphasized that the necessity of long lasting collaboration of foreign language departments with professional graduating departments of educational institutions should be a must in developing training programs to ensure the relevant professional background of students as well as their ability to successfully communicate with foreign partners. This may be realized only through regarding professionally oriented foreign language curriculum as one of the majors of professional education.

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1. Introduction

At present the development of higher education is focused on language education more than ever. This results from the fact that the knowledge of foreign languages has become a must in the modern world as well as a prerequisite for the professional success and competitiveness of young professionals. A specialist in any professional field needs to be prepared to communicate with foreign partners in an increasingly expanding international cooperation. In addition, nowadays teaching a foreign language is not only the transfer of linguistic knowledge, but also a means of socializing a person in a multicultural and multinational world. When learning a foreign language, two functions are performed: that of general development and the educational one. That is why a foreign language can be regarded as one of the best tools for the integration of linguistic and major subjects thus ensuring education process integrity. This holistic approach appears to be vital for higher education.

2. Problem Statement

When implementing interdisciplinary integration at all levels of professional education it is necessary to follow the aims of both academic and individual courses so as to transform an educational institution graduate into a comprehensively developed and professionally competent personality. Multifunctional specialists are now in great demand because technologies have made the borders of different sciences vague and modern specialists have to adapt quickly to all kind of changes. In this respect a foreign language can be not only a discipline studied but also a means of acquiring additional knowledge in majors. This new role of foreign languages requires a special approach to methodology at various levels of teaching in non-linguistic schools and universities. So this problem should be stated and carefully investigated.

At present many universities offer their programs focused on the interdisciplinary approach, integrating different training courses, for example, design, business, and engineering. (Popova, 2012). Teaching these subjects in foreign languages can facilitate interdisciplinary integration and give it another impetus due to the binary role of a foreign language which is both the subject and the tool of studying. This can be realized in high school, undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate courses.

3. Research Questions

As foreign language teaching in higher education includes different aspects of other disciplines, there is a possibility of combining linguistic, professional, and cultural components of studies. The difficulty of this integration can vary depending on the extent of closeness between the discipline and the foreign language studied. For example, the English language is more closely connected with computer science, fashion, and show business than with mathematics, physics, and chemistry. It should also be noted that for different foreign languages the nature of this complexity will be different even within the same professional sphere. It depends on the prevalence of a concrete foreign language and its historical ties with the profession.

Thus, the proper integration of a foreign language with professional disciplines requires consideration of the following issues:

- what the goals of knowing a foreign language for a given profession are;
- what subject areas and the amount of information from the curriculum of a professional discipline can be learned through a foreign language;
- what degree of difficulty in integrating a given language and the intended professional sphere (availability of borrowings, historical context) is;
- how the material of a professional discipline should be introduced into a foreign language course;
- what teaching methods and forms of teaching a professionally oriented foreign language are most effective for a given profession.

4. Purpose of the Study

The integrated foreign language teaching is aimed at forming such specialists who can successfully communicate with their partners all over the world and apply their professional knowledge and experience internationally. Such integration requires synthesizing the goals of the involved disciplines and defining the common integrated goal which realization depends on the following components: content, organization, methodology, and effective assessment.

The first component consists of two parts: the invariable part and the variable one. The invariable part is determined by the Federal State Educational Standard and by the curricula of individual disciplines, whereas the variable part corresponds to the goals and objectives of particular interdisciplinary integration. As for the organizational and methodological components, they contain a set of traditional methods of foreign language teaching as well as a number of specific methods based on an integrative approach. The last component of interdisciplinary integration, i.e. assessment, it is based on integrative methodology for evaluating results.

So, the objectives of the present article are the following ones:

- to identify the peculiarities of teaching professional disciplines by means of foreign languages;
- to illustrate some models of integration that are currently used in some universities for foreign language teaching;
- to determine the most effective forms of teaching professionally oriented foreign languages.

5. Research Methods

Both theoretical and practical methods of research were used for investigating the integrated teaching foreign languages in non-linguistic universities. These methods include studying and analyzing modern and historical literature on education, as well as educational standards, and documents regulating education. Interdisciplinary training models of some universities at different levels of education were compared. Interviews and pooling students who study professionally oriented foreign languages were conducted both on- and off-line.

6. Findings

The most impressive result of applying integrated approach to teaching foreign languages is the ability of a person taught to use at least one foreign language for oral and written interaction with colleagues abroad in professional spheres and for cross-cultural communication both formally and informally. Moreover, it is vitally important to be able to assess the communicative situation in terms of validity for choosing the appropriate mode of behavior. So, due to the combination of professional knowledge, language training, and cultural awareness, communicative competence of specialists can be formed and assessed comprehensively: in the field of the native language, foreign language and specialty language.

6.1. Features of Training Professional Disciplines through Foreign Languages

The idea of interdisciplinary education is not new, it come back to ancient times and was mentioned by many well-known philosophers and educators. In the 17-th century Y. Comenius wrote in his famous book “Great Didactics” that everything is in mutual connection and should be taught in the same connection (Komensky, n.d.), i.e. he argued that the goal of learning should be to create a holistic picture of the world.

Nowadays interdisciplinary approach in education is very popular in higher education of many countries. For example, state schools of Finland use it all over the country. In our country the idea of interdisciplinary education began to be studied and applied at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries. Currently, a large number of universities are introducing integrated training programs into the educational process, this being especially true for the integration of professional disciplines and a foreign language.

In Europe interdisciplinary approach is identified with the CLIL method (Content and Language Integrated Learning) which means that teaching foreign languages is professionally oriented and combined with teaching special disciplines. In other words, CLIL can be regarded as a didactic technique aimed at forming linguistic and communicative competences of students in the same educational context which is used for acquisition of common knowledge and skills in native language.

Actually, CLIL is characterized by a dual purpose: on the one hand, teaching a specific discipline and, on the other hand, teaching a foreign language. Being a curriculum discipline, a foreign language differs greatly from other disciplines as it is the main aim of studying, whereas in teaching other courses and majors a foreign language is a tool. Teaching special disciplines through a foreign language as compared with teaching through the native language has some peculiarities such as:

- communicative nature of the classes due to the interaction of students in pairs, groups, with the teacher;
- pre-teaching language difficulties at the beginning of the classes (vocabulary, grammar);
- active use of visual aids such as diagrams, charts, graphs, videos;
- constant monitoring of the understanding and memorizing new information.

6.2. Integrated learning Models

Professionally oriented training based on interdisciplinary approach is in its infancy in our country, and many universities are in the search of the ways for solving this problem most effectively. Tomsk Polytechnic University is known to be one of the first technical universities in Russia to develop a

comprehensive program of language training for specialists based on an interdisciplinary approach. The uniqueness of this program is in the fact that the discipline “Professional Foreign Language” is considered to be one of the university majors and it is created by the teachers of language departments in collaboration with the teachers of graduating departments. The program provides the modular organization of the educational process with teaching a basic course of a foreign language for 1-2nd year students, a professional foreign language course for 3-4th year students, and the 5th year students have the possibility of learning a professional foreign language represented by special blocks for different specialties (Maletina, 2006).

Quite interesting and functional is the model of language education of the Northern (Arctic) Federal University. It is based on the principles of lifelong language education (bachelor-master's program-postgraduate program), modularity (professionally oriented interdisciplinary language modules), maneuverability (the formation of one's own educational route with the choice of language modules in accordance with the specialty) (The program for the development..., 2015).

An interesting model of professionally oriented language education was developed at the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation. Training the basics of the profession begins in a modular manner from the first year of studying and continues with specialized modules focused on the specialty up to the 4th year of studying. Students can diversify their language training both simultaneously with their regular studying a foreign language and after the 4th year at the Center for Innovative Language Strategies, where they can find a wide range of language courses of general and professional character, for example, “Translation in professional communication” or “Training for international exams (IELTS, BEK, etc. This makes it possible to improve the language training of students in various directions (Translator in the field of professional communication FU, 2020).

6.3. Forms of Interdisciplinary Integration

Teaching foreign languages based on interdisciplinary integration can be realized in different forms. These can be professionally oriented lectures and seminars using textbooks made up in accordance with the specialty majors. Additional authentic texts can also be used both for classroom and independent work outside the classes. Such training is focused on mastering specialty knowledge and a foreign language is used as means, a tool for acquiring professional knowledge.

Controlled independent work of students is another effective form of interdisciplinary integration which allows to obtain additional information about the latest professional achievements abroad. Reports and presentations that students can independently prepare in a foreign language may be presented at thematic conferences, students' forums, congresses, science festivals and other events within students' scientific work at the interuniversity and international levels. As for the majority of the classroom time, it can be devoted to a foreign language training for creating the base of high-quality language skills contributing to professional self-education.

The experience of teaching foreign language for undergraduate and graduate students shows that interdisciplinary integration based on foreign languages facilitates the interest and motivation of students. Practical training and performing various independent and creative tasks in a foreign language are very popular among the students and the most effective forms are preparing reports, short messages, and

presentations on the problems of modern science, engineering and technology. Future bachelors and masters also use scientific and technical literature in a foreign language while preparing for seminars in the main specialty (Stepanova, 2014). At the master's level, another effective form of training is seminars on topical issues of the main specialization as well as the topics of their research in the studied foreign language which allows undergraduates to get acquainted with the latest information in science, engineering and technology all over the world. Historical, geographical, cultural information may also be included into teaching and the sources of such information can be various: a teacher, texts in a foreign language for independent work of students, i.e. reports, essays, and creative works.

Since a foreign language can be the basis for interdisciplinary ties with humanities and professional university disciplines, its teaching should be organized through the interaction of relevant disciplinary components, for example, a foreign language and computer science. Using electronic resources when teaching the discipline "A Foreign Language" promotes the interaction of content components and, in combination with the professional topics of the material learnt, it provides the following interaction: "Foreign Language" - "Computer Science" - "Professional Discipline" (Sihvola, 2016).

Other computer disciplines such as informatics, which are mandatory in all working curricula of the main educational programs, can help to get students' skills for working with electronic resources. For example, why not to let students use specialized translation programs when translating original professional texts to speed up the translation process, and then ask them to edit the translation correcting grammatical, lexical, stylistic errors, creating their own version of the text translation. This will surely result in developing students' linguistic thinking and activating the knowledge of special terminology. Students can perform a great amount of work while preparing for various scientific and practical conferences, this work being related to the selection of necessary Internet resources. Such work may involve not only selection but also analysis of the necessary and sufficient material on the topic of the research work. So, this preparatory work realizes interdisciplinary methods, reflecting the integration processes in society, in production and in science.

As the main goal of an interdisciplinary approach to foreign language teaching is the formation of communication skills, it is difficult to overestimate such type of educational activity as role-plays. This form of teaching prepares students for real professional situations. Such types of tasks as summarizing and retelling specialized texts, compiling terminological glossaries are also useful and productive because they prepare students well for communication with foreign colleagues, for the search for foreign sources of necessary information and their analysis.

It is quite clear that implementation of interdisciplinary integration on the basis of foreign languages requires joint and coordinated actions of the teachers from specialized departments and the teachers of foreign languages in educational institutions of any profile and level. The cohesive work of several departments involves sharing their suggestions, meanings, requirements, and relevant information from professional fields which is necessary for graduates. It is such joint work in the forms of discussions, meetings, seminars, round tables, that can contribute to the development of practice-oriented training programs for foreign languages teaching based on an interdisciplinary approach.

7. Conclusion

The possibilities of integrating foreign language with other academic disciplines, and majors in educational process at various educational levels as well as understanding that a foreign language can be the optimal means of interdisciplinary integration, allow us to conclude the following.

- Interdisciplinary integrated training is necessary and in demand for the professional training of modern specialists.
- One of the methods for implementing interdisciplinary integration is Content and Language Integrated Learning.
- The interdisciplinary integration can differ in the degree of complexity and variety of forms depending on the professional sphere of the training.
- The successful implementation of interdisciplinary training requires close cooperation of language and specialized departments.

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