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## **COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS IN TEACHING LANGUAGE DISCIPLINES**

Marina N. Zyryanova (a)\*, Olga N. Lebedenko (b), Irina N. Avilkina (c), Yulia S. Danilina (d)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Omsk State Agrarian University named after P.A. Stolypin, Institutskaya pl., 1, Omsk, Russia,  
mn.zyryanova@omgau.org

(b) Omsk State Agrarian University named after P.A. Stolypin, Institutskaya pl., 1, Omsk, Russia,  
on.lebedenko@omgau.org

(c) Siberian State Automobile and Highway University, Mira pr., Omsk, Russia, iavilkina@mail.ru

(d) Siberian State Automobile and Highway University, Mira pr., Omsk, Russia, danilinaomgau@rambler.ru

### **Abstract**

This article is devoted to the problem of the effectiveness of didactic tools used in teaching the language cycle disciplines, in particular Foreign language and Russian. The authors define the boundaries of the "communicative skills" concept and substantiate the need for the development of speech communicative competence in future specialists of the agro-industrial complex. The work also presents the results of a study of pedagogical activity aimed at the formation of students' communicative skills. The diagnostic methods used have shown an increase in the motivational activity of students after the application of the experimental program of teaching foreign and Russian languages developed by the authors. The diagnostics of students' communicative skills made it possible to assert that such interactive learning methods as "project method", "role play", "discussion", "situation modeling" contribute to solving methodological problems faced by linguistic teachers in non-linguistic universities, and allow to increase the effectiveness of the process of formation the communicative competence of students.

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## 1. Introduction

In the context of ever-increasing competition in the labour market and the introduction of new standards in the higher education system, the problem of language training of professional personnel is becoming especially relevant. Today, a future specialist is required not only to possess professional competencies, but also to have a high level of verbal communication culture. Moreover, the readiness for business communication is one of the most important indicators of social and professional status of a specialist today. To achieve high results, it is necessary to be a person who is not only “creating”, but also communicating both in the familiar linguistic environment and in the conditions of interlanguage communication.

The fulfillment of such a social order actualizes the problem of the formation of students' communicative skills and competencies which make a future specialist able to act as an effective participant in intercultural communication in the context of integration processes in Europe.

The formation of communicative skills also has a more global significance, since human life activity is inconceivable without people communication with each other, and its quality and result are determined by the culture of relations. A person with sufficient communicative skills, as known, feels confident in various situations of everyday, business and professional communication.

Basing on modern research in the field of communication psychology, linguodidactics of speech activity, as well as the psycholinguistic nature of the language personality, we include in the paradigm of communicative activity the concepts of communicative abilities, communicative qualities of speech, communicative skills, communication activities, speech skills, speech development and others. Our research is at the same time generally oriented towards finding effective ways and means of forming communicative skills of a competitive specialist as the basis of communicative qualities of a person.

Communicative skills are the ability to organize the text of the message in an adequate form, speech skills, the ability to harmonize external and internal manifestations, the ability to receive feedback, the ability to overcome communication barriers, etc. Communicative skills are divided into two groups: interactive and social-perceptual skills. The assimilation of these skills will allow the future specialist to negotiate with other people, work in a team, argue his position, understand other people's feelings and control his own.

## 2. Problem Statement

The formation of students' communicative skills is one of the necessary factors for their development as professionals. One of the tasks of higher education is the formation of professional competencies within the framework of communicative skills, which are necessary for a highly qualified specialist.

Paying tribute to the research carried out, one cannot but admit that the new socio-economic policy of Russia, including the transition to market relations, the entry into the world economic system, the intensive development of international contacts, the creation of joint ventures demanded that the higher school pays more attention to training of future specialists to their communicative activities, to mastering the culture of business communication.

Readiness for business communication has become one of the most important indicators of social and professional status of a specialist today. The fulfillment of such a social order actualizes the problem of the formation of students' communicative skills in classroom learning.

Analysis of preparedness level for communicative activities among the graduates of several universities allows us to highlight the most significant shortcomings in the formation of communicative skills. First of all, this is a low level of general communication culture, a lack of project knowledge of conducting business meetings, conversations and negotiations, a lack of skills in the parallel implementation of active listening and mental analysis, the ability to model one's position and the attitude of a partner towards it; inability to establish and maintain interpersonal business contacts, etc.

The analysis of the educational process shows that the possibilities of the content of academic disciplines, forms of organization, methods and means of teaching for the purposeful formation and development of communicative skills of future specialists are not fully realized. A purposeful, holistic, step-by-step process of such training for communicative activity as a subsystem of vocational education is not reflected. These issues are insufficiently covered in psychological and pedagogical literature. Special studies to determine and substantiate the didactic conditions for the formation of students' communicative skills in the process of classroom learning, their composition, and characteristics have not been carried out.

Experience shows that the formation and development of communicative skills does not happen by itself, but involves the development and implementation of a special program in the educational process. At the same time, the content of the material studied and the learning process should reflect the regularities, content, structure and logic of the process of formation and development of communicative skills.

The world practice of developed foreign countries (the USA, England, Germany, Japan, etc.) shows that such training can be successfully carried out only in a targeted learning system.

Confining ourselves to the framework of this study, we can state that at present there is a contradiction between the objective need for training modern specialists for communicative activity, for the formation of their communicative skills, and the insufficient development of this scientific problem in the conditions of classroom learning in higher education.

Hence, the problem of our research: what are the didactic means and conditions for increasing the effectiveness of the formation of students' communicative skills in the process of classroom learning.

### **3. Research Questions**

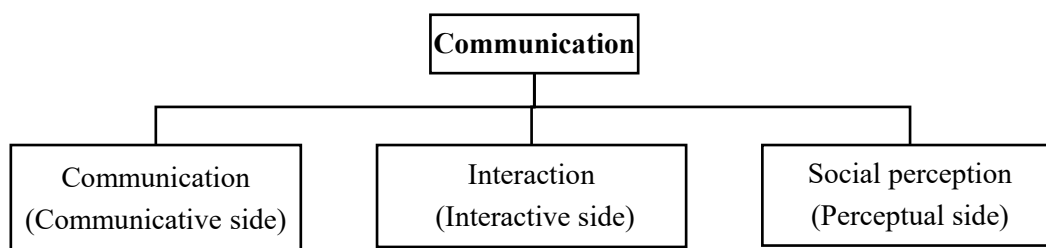
The general and global goal of the language cycle disciplines at the university is to contribute to the formation of the skills of effective speech communication of future specialists, to improve the general culture and the level of humanitarian education.

The communicative side of communication (Figure 01) is inextricably linked with the interactive and perceptual sides (Andreeva, 2008). The communicative side of communication, or communication in the narrow sense of the word, consists in the exchange of information between communicating individuals. The interactive side consists in organizing interaction between communicating individuals, that is, in the exchange of not only knowledge, ideas, but also actions. The perceptual side of communication means the process of perception and cognition of each other by communication partners and establishing mutual understanding on this basis. In reality, each of these sides does not exist in isolation from the other two, and

their isolation is possible only for analysis, in particular, for building a system of experimental research. This work is devoted primarily to the communicative side of communication.

Therefore, the object of our research is the process of forming students' communicative skills in classroom learning.

The subject of the research is didactic conditions for increasing the effectiveness of the formation of communicative skills in the process of classroom learning.



**Figure 1.** Communication structure

The sources of communicative skills are both biological (extroversion - introversion) and social factors: upbringing, life experience, general erudition and special teaching methods. Professional communication skills cannot be formed spontaneously; special psychological and pedagogical work and the creation of psychological conditions are needed.

The conditions and the means of developing communicative skills are considered in the works by Altunina (2009), Lisovskaya (2008), Mudrik (1989), Bodalev (2005), Kulamikhina (2019), Kulamikhina et al. (2020), Raitskaya and Tikhonova (2018), Brock (2010), Deci and Ryan (2008), Balashov et al. (2020), Shutenko et al. (2021), Avdeeva et al. (2017), Mingaleva and Vukovic (2020) and others. The researchers define both communicative competence and the skills comprising it in different ways. The closest to us is the position of Yezova (2008), who defines the components of communicative competence in three main groups: 1) the knowledge of the theory of communication, psychological and age characteristics of people; 2) the ability to listen, to speak, to build relationships with others; 3) personal qualities (the main ones are sociability, tolerance, empathy).

As pedagogical means of forming communicative skills, we distinguish pedagogical cooperation between a teacher and a student on the basis of mutual respect and trust, as well as active teaching methods, such as: situation modeling, abstract preparation and presentation, project method, role-playing games, discussions and disputes.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The development of structural, substantive, methodological and organizational aspects of the formation of professional communicative skills by means of language disciplines as an effective way to develop the speech competence of future specialists in the agro-industrial complex.

To substantiate theoretically and to test experimentally a complex of didactic conditions for increasing the effectiveness of the formation of students' communicative skills.

The research hypothesis is that the effectiveness of the formation of students' communicative skills in the process of classroom learning can increase with the implementation of the following didactic conditions:

- building teacher-student interaction in a dialogical form of communication;
- orientation of the content, organization forms, methods and means of teaching on the formation of students' communicative skills with new content and structure, due to new personal and social needs;
- pedagogical management of the process of communicative skills formation, taking into account their content, structure, stages and logic of this process;
- targeted psychological and pedagogical training of teachers for the process of developing communicative skills in classroom learning.

In accordance with the set goal, the hypothesis and the predicted result, the following research objectives are determined:

1. To reveal the theoretical prerequisites for the objective formation of students' communicative skills in classroom learning.
2. To give the essential characteristics of the didactic model of the formation of communicative skills in classroom learning.
3. To determine and substantiate a complex of didactic conditions for increasing the effectiveness of the formation of communicative skills.

#### **5. Research Methods**

Theoretical (analysis of psychological and pedagogical, scientific and methodological literature), diagnostic methods (observation, conversation, survey, questioning, testing, interviewing, analysis of the products of students' educational activities, assessment, self-assessment), generalization of pedagogical experience, experimental work, methods of quantitative empirical data processing, graphical presentation method, mathematical (ranking, registration) methods.

In the experimental work, we used a complex of diagnostic techniques: the methodology "Measuring communicative and social competence" (KOSKOM) by Kunitsyna (2009), the test of communicative skills (author L. Mikhelson, adapt. by Yu. Z. Gilbukh).

The experiment was carried out on the basis of the Omsk State Agrarian University named after P.A. Stolypin. It was attended by 1st year students of the veterinary faculty (2 groups of 25 people) and the direction of training "Agricultural engineering" (2 groups of 25 people). The study sample consisted of 100 respondents. Experimental and control groups were defined in each direction of training. The developed

methods were used in practical classes in the study of the disciplines of language cycle: "Foreign language" and "Culture of speech and business communication".

## 6. Findings

The experimental research carried out by the authors has confirmed the effectiveness of the developed system for the formation of linguistic communicative competence of future specialists in the agro-industrial complex.

The students of experimental groups significantly increased the level of proficiency in speech in Russian and English, which was experimentally confirmed, students began to assess the level of development of their foreign language skills more adequately and balanced, i.e. to have a more correct self-assessment.

A large percentage of the students surveyed has indicated that the proposed course helped them to learn how to work in groups when developing joint projects, and this has a positive effect on the development of interpersonal communication. Also, students noted that such types of educational activities as pair work, role-playing games and joint projects, unfortunately, are not sufficiently used in teaching disciplines of general professional and special cycles.

In the process of experimental learning, a positive dynamics of the level of knowledge assimilation was established. So, when moving from block to block in the process of learning the "Foreign language" discipline, the number of students who coped with the task at a higher level increased. Statistical processing according to the Student criterion confirmed the reliability of the results. The sample value of the Student criterion of 2.53 significantly exceeds the critical value of 2.01. Therefore, with a high degree of reliability, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the average score for the completion of the final task among the students of experimental and control groups.

The hypothesis of an increase in students' motivation, as well as an improvement in their emotional state in the classroom, has been empirically confirmed. The analysis of the results showed that as a result of the experiment, a moderately high level of motivation increased from 30% to 53% of students. 25% of students had low motivation at the initial stage, and at the final stage of the experiment, a low level was noted in 12% of students.

During the study, the following results were obtained:

- the structure of communicative competence was determined and developed, the principles and the most significant components of its formation for specialists - agricultural engineers and veterinarians were highlighted; the classification of existing approaches to the definition and the structure of the concept "communicative competence" was carried out;
- the importance of the discipline "Foreign language" in the system of formation of speech communicative competence of future agricultural engineers and veterinarians is theoretically substantiated and experimentally confirmed;
- the specificity of speech communicative competence of future agricultural engineers as a special type of interaction in the sign system "man-technology" was substantiated;
- the principles of constructing an educational and methodological complex were proposed. We have created an educational and methodological complex which consists of electronic and

traditional parts and is aimed at the purposeful and systematic formation of the speech communicative competence of students;

- the author's version of the program of classroom studies for the courses "Foreign language", "Culture of speech and business communication" was compiled. The program content focuses on the formation of speech communication training of students;
- various interactive learning forms aimed at creating the effect of immersion of future specialists in the agro-industrial complex into quasi-professional activities during the learning process were proposed and tested;
- the levels and the criteria for the formation of communicative competence of future agricultural engineers and veterinarians were set out.

The processing of the experimental results showed that learning according to the approved experimental system has a positive effect not only on the level of students' proficiency both in foreign and Russian languages and, accordingly, on the formation of communicative competence of engineers and veterinarians, but also on the development of positive motivation for professional activity. It also influences positively the educational success of students which can serve as a confirmation of the effectiveness of this experimental learning system in comparison with the traditional one.

## 7. Conclusion

The structure of professional communicative competence covers three main aspects: cognitive, interactive, perceptual. All the aspects reflect the main areas of professional activity of engineers of the agro-industrial complex and veterinarians.

The cognitive aspect of communicative competence of a future specialist is defined in the context of this work as a process of cognition of the means and methods of communication.

The interactive aspect of communicative competence means the organization and formation of the process of mutual exchange of information.

The perceptual aspect of communicative competence of an agricultural engineer presupposes the knowledge of normative and technical features of interaction between man and technology.

In the system of training agricultural engineers and veterinarians who can be competitive on the labour market, the role of Russian and foreign languages is significantly increasing. The competent use of both Russian and foreign language has become an integral part of the professional competence of specialists in this profile.

The organization of interaction between man and technology in all three aspects is the main task of the professional activity of a future engineer. Thus, being a means of professional activity, professional communicative skills included in the communicative competence of a specialist of the "man-technology" professions form part of the professional competence for professions of this type. In accordance with the principles of competence-based approach to the formation of the education, it should be taken into account when training of specialists in the agro-industrial complex.

The learning process within each disciplinary block is organized according to the same scheme (this applies equally to the Speech culture of and Foreign language classes) and includes three stages. The first one is educational, consisting of lexical training and training in the translation of professionally oriented

texts. In the process of studying the module "My future profession", the selection of learning material which helps to increase the cognitive interest and motivation of students is of particular difficulty for the teacher. Future veterinarians learn a foreign language only in the first year of study, and the professional aspects of their specialty are still unfamiliar for them.

Careful selection of affordable lexical and grammatical material, practical orientation of tasks, an individual approach - all this helps students at the initial stage of learning the discipline in our university to open up, feel self-confidence and understand that learning a foreign language can be fun and practically oriented. With excitement, such tasks at this stage of learning are performed: "Describe your group-mate's appearance using the following keywords" or "Describe your relatives' characters using the given idioms". In the Speech culture classes this stage is realized through the work with a quite voluminous vocabulary minimum including 300 units of borrowed vocabulary, which is necessary for a graduate of an agricultural university for communication in professional environment and in everyday life. The assimilation of vocabulary occurs gradually: for each lesson, 20 words each with a brief description of the meaning are recorded into a handwritten dictionary from the list compiled by the teacher (this allows you to develop the ability to "compress" information and encode it), in the lesson, different methods allow you to learn this vocabulary: individual and group questioning, contextual use. At the final stage, students take a vocabulary online test. The study showed that such an organization of vocabulary learning in the experimental groups made it possible to raise the level of assimilation by 30% in comparison with the control groups.

The second stage is controlling, which includes a series of tests based on the learning material, intended to carry out the final control by the teacher and self-control. At this stage, the level of formation of translation skills is monitored for each disciplinary block. Such work is carried out mainly in electronic form, which arouses interest of a modern young person, and, accordingly, increases motivation.

The third stage is developing and controlling one at the same time and includes such types of work as a business game, discussion, modelling situations (educational and cognitive types), which are at the same time the final control of the level of formation of communicative skills for each disciplinary block. For example, the role-playing game "At the Vet" is popular with veterinary students. The work is carried out in pairs, where one of the students plays the role of a pet owner, the other acts as a veterinarian. The owners draw cards with the name of the animal and the indicated symptoms of its illness, the veterinarians make cards with the corresponding names of the diseases and treatment methods. The owner and the veterinarian conduct a dialogue based on phrases-clichés with the use of the studied lexical material. Role-playing games help in forming interpersonal communicative competence. They provide participants with personal involvement in the communication process and the possibility of active contacts; allow them to find out what they see, hear and how they interpret certain statements or actions around them. Role-playing games are a kind of mirror in which the participants see themselves through the eyes of others. Students start to listen to other people's opinions, evaluate different positions and diverse needs; find out their personal communication characteristics, advantages and disadvantages on the basis of instant fixation of the emotional external reaction and impressions that their speech produces on the listeners; finally, they determine which behaviour and speech models are the most productive. Minimization of psychological defence during collective work dramatically increases the ability of each of its participants to perceive the back information adequately, which is explicated by all members of the group. (Abolina & Akimova, 2012)



The game should be accompanied by a phased reflection and end with a general analysis and summing up. Reflection allows us to comprehend the game as a process having its own laws. The game helps to imagine the deployment of game interaction in time retrospectively, in the logic of problem solving, in the dynamics of social processes, to comprehend the results, the degree of personal advancement, and to develop communication flexibility.

For the didactic support of the implementation of the process of forming the communicative competence of agricultural engineers and veterinarians, an educational and methodological complex was developed, consisting of two parts - electronic and traditional.

The creation of favourable atmosphere in the implementation of the communicative task was also facilitated by the dynamics in the organization of such classes. Free communication was carried out first in pairs formed taking into account the level of language readiness of the communicants, then in replacement pairs at will, in small groups, and, finally, in a whole group together with the teacher. Such an organization of activity brings comfort in communication, the emotional well-being of the communicants improves, which positively affected the development of the communicative competence of students in general.

The set of conditions for the formation of the speech communicative competence of future agricultural engineers and veterinarians by means of the native and foreign languages was aimed at:

- students' acquaintance with the content and structure of communicative competence; students' awareness of their own capabilities, the importance of the processes of development, correction and improvement of their communicative potential;

clarification of the requirements for a specialist in the field of modern technologies and the role of a foreign language and Russian in the future professional activities of a specialist in the agro-industrial complex;

- comprehension of the resources of Russian and foreign languages as an academic subject for the development of the communicative potential of an individual;
- providing classes with a rich communicative-oriented content, involving the use of active methods and forms of learning, such as group training and business games;

When training agricultural engineers and veterinarians for the formation of communicative competence, the following methods were used:

- informational (transmission of educational information in the form of lectures, messages, consultations, reviews, reports, explanations, analysis of various media);
- operational (work with various means of obtaining information: reference books, dictionaries, printed publications, periodicals, electronic reference books, encyclopedias, programs);
- creative (analysis of specific situations, role play, brainstorming, creative dialogue, imitation play, project method, teleconferences);
- methods of control or feedback (message, abstract, report, exam, test, current and final control, testing, annotation).

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