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COMMUNICATIVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING OF FUTURE ENGINEERS

O. Chevychelova, Assist. Prof., Kharkov National Automobile and Highway University

***Abstract.** The essence of communicative approach to foreign language teaching has been defined; the conditions for developing communicative competence of future engineers at higher school have been described. The importance of stimulating the cognitive interest has been grounded and the ways of creating communicative situations at foreign language classes at higher technical school have been considered.*

***Key words:** higher technical school, foreign language, competence, communicative approach.*

КОМУНІКАТИВНО-ОРІЄНТОВАНЕ НАВЧАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ МАЙБУТНІХ ІНЖЕНЕРІВ

**О.О. Чевичелова, ст. викл.,
Харківський національний автомобільно-дорожній університет**

***Анотація.** У статті обґрунтовується важливість та розкривається сутність комунікативного підходу до навчання іноземної мови в технічному ВНЗ, аналізуються основні особливості цього підходу, розглядаються способи стимулювання пізнавального інтересу, визначаються умови формування комунікативної компетенції майбутніх інженерів у вищій школі.*

***Ключові слова:** іноземна мова, компетенція, комунікативний підхід.*

КОММУНИКАТИВНО-ОРИЕНТИРОВАННОЕ ОБУЧЕНИЕ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ БУДУЩИХ ИНЖЕНЕРОВ

**Е.А. Чевычелова, ст. преп.,
Харьковский национальный автомобильно-дорожный университет**

***Аннотация.** В статье обосновывается важность и раскрывается сущность коммуникативного подхода в обучении иностранному языку в техническом вузе, анализируются основные особенности этого подхода, рассматриваются способы стимулирования познавательного интереса, определяются условия формирования коммуникативной компетенции будущих инженеров в высшей школе.*

***Ключевые слова:** иностранный язык, компетенция, коммуникативный подход.*

Introduction

At the current stage of the development of international relations and in conditions of European integration the Ukrainian society is in a growing need of highly skilled professionals who have sufficient foreign language skills to make both personal and professional contacts with their foreign colleagues and partners. To keep up with this social demand the system of teaching a foreign language is undergoing major changes,

namely: restructuring levels of training, updating academic content, creating authoring programs and alternative textbooks. Nowadays, the necessity of developing professionally important qualities of future engineers, including their professional and communicative orientation has become a desperate demand. Therefore, focusing on communicative approach as a leading trend in modern foreign language teaching, methodology is an important and topical issue.

Recent Papers Review

The theoretical basis for communicative approach in language teaching was formed by C. Brumfit, C. Candlin, H. Widdowson, D. Wilkins as well as by the experts of the Council of Europe [1]. A significant contribution to the field of communication in general, and in particular to communicative orientation of language teaching was made by I. Bim, N. Chepeleva, G. Kitaygorodskaya, A. Leontev, T. Yatsenko and others [2]. Despite this, the peculiarities of implementing communicative approach to teaching foreign languages at higher technical school haven't been properly studied yet.

Problem Setting

The purpose of the article is to investigate the main principals of communicative approach to foreign language teaching and the ways of its implementation in the context of higher technical education.

Analyzing the Peculiarities of Communicative Approach to Foreign Language Teaching

There has been orientation towards communication as the goal of teaching foreign languages at higher school since the last quarter of the 20th century. Communication is considered to be a process of oral/written exchange of information and its assessment.

In the context of higher technical education foreign language teaching implies mainly students' understanding of the professional literature as well as the ability to express their views on professional topics and in everyday situations by means of a foreign language. In this regard, the communicative approach is in the focus of foreign language teaching at higher school. The term "approach" means a theoretical view of what language is, and of how it can be learnt. The communicative approach, which is based on re-orientation to communicative competence, properly conforms to the specific characteristics of a foreign language as an academic discipline. The following basic principles of the communicative approach can be distinguished [3, p. 75]: 1) speaking-oriented learning process, which implies that the practical goal is achieved by the proper use of a foreign language; 2) individualization in terms of personality aspect as the main means of students' motivation and activity; 3) functionality, which ensures an adequate se-

lection of foreign language material according to the process of communication; 4) situationality, novelty, etc.

There exists a great variety of interpretations of the communicative approach to teaching foreign languages, but psycholinguists see eye to eye on the fact that the goal of the study lies in developing communicative competence that is the ability to use the language according to the specific situation. Foreign language communicative competence includes the following basic components [4 p. 65-70]: 1) linguistic competence, which involves acquiring knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, phonetics, spelling and formation of the relevant skills: phonetic, lexical, grammar, morphological, syntactic, orthographical, graphical and calligraphy; 2) speech competence, which implies the acquisition of four types of skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing; 3) sociocultural competence, which comprises: cross-cultural competence that is students' knowledge about the culture of the country whose language is being studied; linguocultural competence, which involves studying the peculiarities of verbal and nonverbal behaviour of representatives of other cultures. The analysis of requirements for future professional activity of the graduates has revealed the necessity of developing all the above-mentioned components of communicative competence. Thus, it is evident that the overall goal of foreign language teaching at higher technical school can be defined as a complex development of communicative competence for ensuring communication in the professional field.

Communication between people in real life takes place due to the need for realizing a certain communicative intention and its achievement or fail defines the result of a speech act. The formation of communicative competence at foreign language classes is possible under condition of acting typical real-life situations of communication, which occur in different areas of life and concern various issues. Thus, the need to communicate takes place under conditions of creating a particular communicative situation. The communicative situation is a dynamic system of specific factors of the objective and subjective nature, which interact with each other and involve a person in communication as well as predetermine one's behavior within a single act of communication. The communicative situation includes four factors [4]: 1) circumstances of reality under which the communication occurs;

2) relationships between the communicants; 3) speech intentions; 4) implementation of the communicative act that creates new incentives for communicating. Communicative situations used in teaching foreign languages are expected to prepare students to communicate in real life situations.

As it was mentioned above, the goal of teaching foreign languages in the context of higher technical education lies in forming students' professional communicative competence through developing all types of speech activity. This goal is difficult to achieve under conditions of the very restricted number of hours allocated to teaching foreign languages at higher technical school. Teachers have to take into account the lack of knowledge and skills with which pupils enter universities, as well as solve the problem of teaching students with different levels of language training. Under these conditions, reading professionally oriented texts becomes the main type of speech activity at the initial stage of studying.

There is no doubt that professionally-oriented foreign language reading plays an important role in practical work of future specialists. With the growing use of the Internet, reading in a foreign language has become a priority for specialists. It is a tool for satisfying both communicative and cognitive needs as well as using the means of mass communication, such as magazines, patents, monographs, etc. [2].

Nevertheless, teaching a foreign language cannot be limited only to reading texts, no matter how informative they are. First of all, language acquisition implies active production. Here's why it's vitally important to help students to overcome communication barriers, to get over the fear of speaking a foreign language. To teach students to communicate in a foreign language isn't an easy task. A motive to speak a foreign language appears only when there is a necessity of real communication that is why the students should be given an opportunity to practise a foreign language in real-life situations in the classroom. This, in turn, allows students to learn to use the vocabulary and grammatical forms to express their opinions. One of the preconditions for successful language learning is creating a foreign-language environment by teaching classes mainly in the language under study. The rules, meanings of new words should be explained using vocabulary and grammar constructions the

students are already familiar with, as well as gestures and facial expressions, pictures, visual methods, etc.

The process of gaining foreign language proficiency largely depends on students' motivation, which is the cause of actions directed at achieving goals. Psychologists call motivation a «starting mechanism» of activities.

Can students be forced to speak any foreign language only by threatening them with negative marks in the record-books? Probably, not! The key to success here is to stimulate cognitive interest, which in turn will increase the motivation and engage students in foreign language learning. The cognitive interest influences positively not only the process and the results of activities, but also the ongoing mental processes – thinking, imagination, memory and attention. The cognitive interest is one of the most important reasons for learning foreign language, the basis for a positive attitude towards it.

Almost all students are eager to master a foreign language, but the level of their motivation and activity decreases as well as progress in studies because of the difficulties they face in the process of learning. It should be noted that motivation is the subjective quality of a student and it is predetermined by his or her personal motives, passions and needs. Therefore, a teacher can influence it only indirectly, by creating the conditions under which cognitive interest of students in foreign language learning can be developed. Nevertheless, it is a teacher who has a key role in the process of developing cognitive interest and promoting positive emotions in the students, facilitating the process of learning foreign language, minimizing negative behaviour or keeping students from dropping out. Teachers can be motivators of the successful foreign language learning. It is important to think over incentives for encouraging active students' participation in speech acts by modeling certain situations.

Implementing such techniques as role plays, dramatizations, discussions, educational videos, listening in the classroom can stimulate students' interest as well as encourage them to communicate effectively at the foreign language classes. Let's consider peculiarities of using role plays and educational videos when teaching a foreign language at higher technical school.

One of the ways to create communicative situations is role-playing, which contributes to developing interpersonal communication skills of students. Role-playing directs students toward planning personal speech behavior and predicting the behavior of their conversation partners. Role-playing gives students an opportunity to turn into representatives of a particular social group, profession, etc. In role-playing, students take part in the discussion, share their thoughts and take an interest in the ideas of others. Thus, their speech becomes free and easy that is actually an implementation of communicative approach, modeling the real conditions of communication. Recently, an interest in educational videos that are effective means of teaching foreign languages has greatly increased. The main peculiarity of a video is its capability to combine visual and sound images under typical circumstances. Educational videos offer students communicative situations in which they can be active participants with the assistance of the teacher. Technical capabilities of videos, which give a possibility to stop and repeat an activity, also contribute to the efficiency of foreign language learning. It is important to remember that students got used to watching TV passively. Therefore, a teacher must be the central figure of language learning process in spite of the capabilities that videos have. It is a teacher who can organize active perception of a film and its further discussion.

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be made based on the above mentioned. In the context of modern education paradigm approaches to teaching a foreign language, which is considered an important means of intercultural communication have been changed. Over the past twenty years, the communicative approach has become a priority in the theory and practice of teaching languages in the world. The essence of the communicative approach to teaching foreign languages at higher technical school lies in the fact that the process of language acquisition should be a model of the communication process. Thus, teaching foreign languages at higher technical school implies communicative orientation. Communicative language teaching is based on real-life situations that require communication. This can be achieved by using role and discussion plays, dramatization, problem situations, educational videos and other ways of creating communicative situations that contribute to the formation of students' professional communicative foreign language competence, which is one

of the main components of professional training of future engineers who are ready not only to solve production problems, but also to adapt quickly in the fast-changing environment.

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Рецензент: В.П. Волков, профессор, д.т.н., ХНАДУ.