TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

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One of the peculiar features of Russian reality today is stabilizing the national economy, integrating our country into international education area that stimulate the development of cooperation and partnership in most spheres of economy and education. This process is realized in increasing demand for highly qualified specialists able to use foreign languages at a productive level, possessing sociocultural knowledge and skills of business communication. In this situation professional competence in foreign languages of company management is regarded as one of the main priority of managers training. Thus this research is devoted to the modern approach to integrating the language component into the system of management training in Russian universities. This approach is oriented at international standards and requirements and simultaneously bears the features of national traditions, taking into account linguistic factors, political, economic, geographical, ethno cultural and other conditions within the country.

Keywords: Professional activities, Competency in foreign languages, Professional and language experience, System of language training.

INTRODUCTION

Stabilizing the national economy, integrating our country in the international education area stimulate the development of international cooperation and partnership in all spheres of economy and social life. For this reason increasing demand for highly qualified specialists able to use foreign languages at a productive level, possessing sociocultural knowledge and skills of business communication is considered as a modern Russian reality.

This problem is also becoming vital because the process of globalization taking place in the world economy encourages creating multinationals where the success of implementing managerial decisions is directly related to the ability of top and middle management to function in Multilanguage environment. An important characteristic of a modern business is involvement of different European languages in the structure of economic activity of an enterprise at different levels.

In this situation professional competence in foreign languages of a company management is regarded as one of the main priority of professional training. Its significance is proved by the fact that possession of intercultural business communication skills influences not only the position of personnel within the company but also the regional labor market. What is more the language policy provided by the company, communicative climate, the system of foreign languages training play the crucial role in image making and prestige of a particular company in
business environment. Thus this article will be devoted to modern approaches to integrating the language component in the system of management training in Russian universities.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AS ONE OF THE MAIN GOALS OF MANAGERS TRAINING

The approaches to forming professional competence in foreign languages of managers are oriented at international standards and requirements and simultaneously bear the features of national traditions, taking into account linguistic factors, political, economic, geographical, ethnocultural and other conditions within the country. The need of managerial staff in foreign languages training in the modern globalizing world is seen as one of the aspect of professional and personal development of a manager. Managers feel that they can’t fulfill their professional duties effectively without taking into consideration the level of international professional standards that is ensured by knowledge of foreign languages.

For this reason a teaching process in universities is projected in the way when mastering different aspects of professional activities goes hand in hand with gaining language experience. Due to such projecting of a teaching process stable motivation of learners in improving their linguistic level is provided.

The result of this process should be achieving the level of professional competence which originally can’t be achieved without linguistic skills that is realized in the set of competences allowing the learner to speak, write, read and understand foreign speech. It means that process of mastering a foreign language is constructed as a developing situation of forming an integrated professional and language personality. Moreover foreign language means first of all accustoming to a specific discourse marked by a specific professional area and national and cultural features of native speakers. And finally developing his language skills a person acquires a complex of extra linguistic social and cultural knowledge and skills characterizing a specific representative of a specific ethno group.

The system of professional training of managerial staff in universities grants the possibility of integrating professional and language experience into the structure of content of education. In process aspect it is realized in creating situations when the success in professional and language areas is mutually connected. It means focusing on constructing a model of professional activities with the involved language experience. Therefore professional activities are understood as a set of four components: functional (professional activities as a system of tasks solved by a manager), competent (professional activities as a set of competences), cognitive (professional activities as a system of orienting knowledge, methods of world cognition), personal (professional activities as a system of motives, senses of self-realizing).

A system of tasks solved by a specialist as a functional component in the structure of professional activity must reflect the nature of this activity and corresponding sociocultural and language behavior. According to Russian standards of higher professional education future managers are supposed to fulfill professional duties in the spheres of managerial, analytical and entrepreneurial activities. What is more possession of linguistic skills should allow them to solve managerial tasks connected with operations on world markets under the conditions of globalization. Involvement of language experience in the process of solving managerial tasks must also prepare a manager to making decisions in the situations of intercultural communication. Besides, these skills help to form the experience of communicative actions in the system of professional tasks that allows making professional contacts using a foreign
language in different spheres and situations, functioning as a strong language personality in professionally significant communicative events of different types.

The essence of a competent component is that the significance of linguistic experience is not in talking about the professional duties in a foreign language but in managing these duties on the basis of a set of competences granting its success by addressing to international data bases, progressive technologies and experts.

Analysis of existing scientific researches in competence approach allows singling out three key language competences a manager should possess: linguistic, discourse and intercultural.

Linguistic competence supposes mastering a definite set of formal knowledge and skills connected with different aspects of a language for constructing grammar forms and syntax structures that will allow realizing communicative intentions in situations of business communication according to the language level.

If possessing a linguistic competence tells about the formed perception of a language and has a tendency to focus on a language out of context then a discourse competence reflects the ability to use a foreign language considering a professional peculiarity of a specific area. It can be described as an ability to perceive and achieve coherence of separate utterances in meaningful communication patterns in international settings. A key moment in defining a level of discourse competence is a skill of spoken and written interaction in professional context by using relevant strategies in each separate discourse in corresponding genres, styles and registers.

An integral component of a competence in foreign languages of a modern manager is an intercultural competence which is described as an ability based on knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavioral patterns to participate in intercultural communication in which one or each participant speaks a foreign language.

This competence depends on many factors including environment, behavioral models, values, age, and ethics. Interaction forms among people are constantly changing and a manager should be ready to react adequately to these changes. National culture, national identity, organizational, corporate, professional culture, stereotypes are generalizations which are often used to simplify and categorize other cultures, and by extension the people in those cultures.

Intercultural competence, then, includes the ability to deal with, and be incentive to, differences in how other cultures do things. From a business point of view, the aim might even to be recognized and utilize those differences in order to create something which adds value for business or its customers.

Cognitive component of professional activities is connected with such categories as knowledge, cognition, processes of comprehension involved in fulfilling professional duties. The essence of this component is that using a foreign language is considered as an integral part of professional activities and reflects an interaction between psychological, communicative, functional and cultural factors. It is expressed in the ability of flexible utilizing of different sources of information, in the skill of effective constructing mental perceptions in business environment basing on linguistic experience. A manager with knowledge of a foreign language gets a chance to cognize the spiritual potential of peoples and nations, their historical and cultural memory, to find the most effective ways of achieving cultural understanding.

Personal component of professional activities as a system of motives, senses of self-realizing reflects the process of a person’s self-development and self-realizing, when a person tries to make his own contribution into professional culture transforming it and himself. The effectiveness of such activity is increasing dramatically because its content now gains qualitatively personal sense, individual value, becomes a source of developing individual experience.
It should be fair to mention that when we speak about teaching foreign languages we first of all mean English as it nowadays got the status of a tool of international cooperation and functions in accordance with the tendencies of development of international languages and needs in unification lexis and structural grammar for easier comprehension and use by representatives of different lingua cultures.

While planning and projecting professional course of foreign language in the system of higher education the objectives and the content of these courses should grant the learners the opportunity to develop two areas of activity, on the basis of two kinds of experience in their mutual connection and functional unity.

Thus, teaching foreign languages in a modern university is organized as a system of language training composing four elements: General Everyday English, General Business English, English for Specific Purposes, and English for Academic Purposes.

Each of these elements has two levels: professional and language. These levels are mastered simultaneously; developing the skills of intercultural communication is realized by modeling the situations of a real business communication. Professional and language experience may be considered as an integrated kind of experience as its acquiring can be successful only when language training is integrated into professional context.

On a professional level General Everyday English deals with the skills of using definite speech models for functioning in typical situations (introducing people, establishing contacts, telephone talks, arranging the time and the place of a meeting, situations connected with traveling and services). A language level is revealed in the ability to use a definite set of emphatic, lexical, grammar and syntax constructions for a particular kind of communication as well as specific types of written speech.

General Business English as a type of language education supposes knowledge of strategies of business communication: presenting oneself as a subject of professional activities, presenting the goods produced (monologue); negotiating which means using the skills of forecasting the coming process, working out strategies, persuading, arguing, standing one’s opinion, compromising and reaching a win-win agreement (dialogue); conducting business meetings including planning, working out agenda, defining business matters, delegating the responsibilities, participating in discussion and in final decision making (polylogue). The significant aspect is knowledge of business written communication.

From a language point of view General Business English is a specific kind of communication with its own laws and rules. The choice of linguistic means is carried out in a strict accordance with communicative objectives and functional principles such as simplicity, clarity, accuracy, relevance, logic and coherence. It supposes using marked expressions, certain constructions for making a dialogue (emphasis, subjunctive mood, repetitions, reformulating, disjunctive questions, incomplete sentences).

English for Special Purposes has similar professional and language levels that deal with specific lexis and terminology of this professional area in native and foreign language as a central object of this component, with understanding the essence of this specific area.

And the last component of foreign languages teaching is English for Academic Purposes. It is considered as a tool of constructing a picture of business environment, getting knowledge from different sources, information analysis, its critical comprehension, sorting out its most valuable components and absorbing them as a personal experience. On a language level it means teaching the strategies of working with foreign literature, noting, referring and transforming the text.
OUTCOMES

As a result of implementing this approach three stages of forming professional competence in foreign languages in the process of management training were defined:

1) mastering the basic concepts of profession and building the foreign language images of these concepts;
2) mastering the ways of using a foreign language while imitating the basic professional activities;
3) integrating language experience into the structure of professional activities.

To achieve this result professionally oriented situations with the involved language experience as micro model of desired outcomes were developed. Each situation has two aspects: managerial solution and language solution of a professional task. Managerial aspect presents a professional task in the sphere entrepreneurial and analytical activities. Language aspect is connected with actualizing of language thinking with the help of which a professional task is becoming a value reflecting the professional culture in the global world. To such situations we refer imitation of basic professional activities, creating a product (written materials), and interaction at a professional level.

The system of language managerial training is realized with the help of the course “Theory and Practice of Business Communication”. It is a logically connected system of modules with specific technologies for each stage giving a chance to future managers to master both professional and language experience involving them in interacting within professionally oriented situations.

CONCLUSION

Thus, professional competence in foreign languages as an objective of a managerial training reflects the ability to solve various professional tasks in situations when implementing managerial decisions at the level of international quality standards is impossible without using a foreign language opening the access to the international data bases. This competence is a new kind of education involving integrated professional and language experience which can be seen as a system of professional knowledge, possessing the skills of functioning in a specific business area, realizing the self value as a subject of this area on the basis of ability to use a foreign language as a tool of professional activities, an integral element of a culture of a modern manager.

In the last decade, Russian business education has experienced a spectacular development. It has grown both quantitatively and qualitatively, adapting itself to new Russian economic and social realities. Many old business programs in foreign languages and management have been substantially updated; many new programs on professional language learning and international trade have been created.

Nowadays we observe a tendency of global moving and the interest of American and European universities to each other, and also their vital concern about Russian market and penetrating in it. It is evident that we need to create the united platform for mutual cooperation and informational enlargement with the aim to develop the system of education in the world. Such platform will help to connect education with different forms of business and create fruitful
relations among three major participants of this market: business companies, educational establishments and state.

REFERENCE