



International Conference for International Education and Cross-cultural Communication.
Problems and Solutions (IECC-2015), 09-11 June 2015, Tomsk Polytechnic University,
Tomsk, Russia

Dialogue as a Model of Business Language Training in the Teaching Methods of Russian as a Second Language

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Abstract

This article reviews the methods of training foreign students in the fluent dialogic communication skill of the business sphere. Training of the dialogic communication in business sphere is understood to be a key method of professional competences' development with the students. The system of the dialogic communication skills development in the business sphere is included in the general system of the development of oral communication skills in teaching Russian as a Second Language. Described are the linguistic fundamentals of the oral and written communication skills development in business sphere. The system of tasks is based on the communicative law in teaching Russian as a Second Language. It presents the training model of the tasks arrangement to develop the skills of business dialogue in a foreign language.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of IECC 2015.

Keywords: Dialogue; dialogic communication; business sphere; dialogic communication skill; oral and written communication; Russian as a Second Language; communicative law; professional competences; lexico-grammatic skills; system of exercises.

1. Introduction

Acquiring education in a foreign language implies development of the professional competences with the students that allow for mature business communication in different situations. As an outcome of training, the student should be able to use the Russian language fluently as a method of business communication, be prepared for active

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communication in business processes and social and public spheres, be able to record, present, report, discuss and disseminate the results of professional activity. In addition, the student should be ready to develop regulations, engineering documentation, as well as proposals and measures for implementation of the developed projects. The difficulty is not only in the fact that all these competences are to be developed in a second language, but also in the fact that they should be developed subject to the specificity of business communication in Russia. The content of the programs of teaching Russian as a second language involves mastering of lexico-grammatic minimum development of oral and written communication skills that allow for communication in professional and business topics (Akishina & Kagan, 2010; Kryuchkova, 2011). Within the disciplines that train in Russian as a second language, to meet the competence level of TRFL-1, TRFL-2 («Test of Russian as a Foreign Language»), the students acquire knowledge of: business communication basics; specificity of official business written speech; culture of the official correspondence; paperwork rules; linguistic prose of official documents; rules of speech (business) etiquette; language features of the private documents, business correspondence, reference and information documents. The structure and content of the language course allow gaining experience in business communication, presentations, debates, discussions, brainstorming. The development of these competences is based on the study of the lexico-grammatic system of the Russian language.

The main task of the foreign students' teaching is development of the professional competences that allow thinking creatively and independently, producing original thinking results, defining them precisely and clearly for their intended audience, provoking the interest of the respective people thereto while making them their own co-thinkers, including the expected result. Thus, the ability to communicate in the foreign language in business sphere includes not only the skills of effective business communication in different formal situations in compliance with the official rules of business custom, but also the ability to act professionally in this field. This task cannot be performed on the basis of standard dialogs that reflect the cultural and linguistic characteristics of business communication in Russian.

2. Business conversation

Teaching the dialogic communication in business sphere for the foreign students is realized at the advanced stage of learning Russian as a second language. One of the major objectives of teaching the dialogic communication in business sphere for the foreign students is to develop the business dialogic communication skill. Here several stages can be identified: elaboration of the concepts on the specifics of oral and written communication, conversational and intelligent manner of speaking, dialogue in business sphere, development of the skills of the ready-made oral speech pattern preparation, analytical skills, editing and self-revision of the dialogue.

Business conversation is a form of business interaction, which is one of the most common and referred to the dialogic speech forms, thus allowing for the skills training of verbal interaction with a partner. At the same time, a form of business conversation and its thematic diversity allow developing the skill of the fluent associative conversation within certain thematic framework. Moreover, the conversation format is common and the skills of dialogic communication in the social sphere already have been developed by the advanced stage of learning of the foreign students. Teaching the business dialogic communication in the foreign language allows developing the skills of the coherent oral and written communication, taking into account such important characteristics of speech as functions, forms, types, functional and semantic, functional and stylistic and compositional forms of speech. Generally, teaching the foreign language, especially at the initial stage, is realized using stylistically neutral speech resources; however, the practice and theory of teaching Russian as a second language show that stylistics, as the science that studies "the language functioning in real practice of oral communication," becomes foremost. Therefore, teaching the dialogic communication in business sphere meets not only the objectives of the professional education, but also is relevant to the general concept of "communicative law" in teaching the foreign languages (Belchikov, 1988).

In the process of skill development of the coherent foreign speech, one should remember that the human verbal ability does not depend on the linguistic abilities, developed both in the native and second languages. One can possess communication skills: speaking and writing well, while possessing no linguistic abilities. At the same time, a high level of linguistic abilities does not mean that a person has a command of perfect speech. Therefore, the main

objective of development of the coherent communication skill is not the development of linguistic knowledge and skills, which, in fact, are the demonstration of such intellectual actions as analysis, synthesis, classification, etc., but, in particular, is the development of verbal abilities of the student. In this context, there arises the issue of the minimum theoretical knowledge of text and language theory that is required for the development of communication skills. The students know and understand the majority of linguistic concepts from the preparation and basic training courses of Russian as a second language. The students are already familiar with such terms and concepts as the functions of language and speech (a means of contact establishment, a means of joint activities arrangement, a means of information acquisition and transfer, a means of self-expression, a means of effects), the text, paragraph, monologue, dialogue, book style, connotation, theme, the description, the story, the narration, and they are able to achieve the objective with linguistic means of the Russian language (Passov, 1989).

For example, the students are able to transfer the information subject to the situation and communicative purpose and to select the lexico-grammatical means in accordance with the topic of communication and form of speech. From the point of view of the theory, the key objective of teaching business communication is to update this knowledge and its focus on the new sphere, i.e. the sphere of business interaction.

3. Teaching methods

From the methodological point of view, the development of the skills of business communication should be associated with understanding of the features of the oral and written communication. In general, the students possess this information; however, it should be organized and mastered.

Example of the task: Define the special aspects of the oral speech. Together with the teacher, the students list the main characteristics of oral communication: sound is created in the process of speaking, free choice of the vocabulary while using simple, imperative, interrogative, exclamatory sentences, repetitions, incomplete phrasing and others. Then, one should make a series of exercises aimed at the development of fluent speaking skills, for example, it is proposed to make a dialogue, in which the main objective is to encourage and continue the topic declared by the partner. The students made the similar types of the tasks at dialogue-unison training. The teacher is to offer a number of statements relating to the business situations. The ability of the teacher to offer an adequate business situation facilitates the development of business debate skills, where the student is to compose the utterance to argue against the opinion of the opponent (dialogue-argument, dialogue-debate) (Minyar-Beloruichev, 1990).

An important difference between the spoken and written language is the nature of the recipient. Written language is usually addressed to absentees. Spoken language, on the contrary, implies the presence of the conversation partner, so it often depends on how it is perceived, i.e. the reaction of the listener. The spoken and written languages differ from each other by the nature of perception. The oral speech is perceived by ear and created in the process of speaking, so it should be composed so that its content will be easily heard and immediately understood by the listeners. While teaching the dialogic communication in business sphere it is necessary to update the students' knowledge and to supplement their knowledge with cultural characteristics of the verbal and non-verbal behavior of the Russians in business sphere.

Example of the task: choose the correct version of the speech response or etiquette pattern in particular situations of business interaction. The students are familiar with the etiquette patterns; the main objective of training at the advanced stage is to make them used in autopilot mode, on the one hand, on the other, to eliminate the stereotypeness and inappropriateness of their use. In this case, it is recommended to use the communication exercises, complicated with additional requirements to the recipient. For example, come up with several answers to the offer of taking part in a conference, exhibition, etc. The complexity and training component reside in the fact that it is required of the foreign student to phrase some of own statement content without reference to the communicative task, based only on professional needs.

Then, it is required to highlight the differences between conversational and textbook means of speech, which is largely determined by the mode of speech - verbal or written. This definition allows moving to the specification of the functional-style system of the Russian language. The students have an understanding of the functional styles, peculiarities of official style, which is the key in business communication. The teacher generates the knowledge that all functional styles in one way or another can be realized both in verbal and written forms, although the

implementation of each style is different.

Example of the task: Convert the written language and expressions into verbal speech and rearrange the verbal phrases into the form of written statements. Exercises to render the same content in oral and written speech are represented as the most productive, because they allow teaching how to present the written content in the form of a verbal statement. This type of exercise is widely used in the practice of foreign language teaching, in particular in teaching Russian as a second language. As part of development of business communication skills, this type of exercise becomes of particular importance, since the official style belongs predominantly to the written textbook style of the Russian literary language.

Development of communicative competence in learning of the foreign language is predominantly verbal. This statement does not apply to teaching the professional skills and communication in professional issues. Acquiring professional skills and education in the foreign language is mainly realized in written form. Communication in business sphere implies predominantly the verbal form and its content are still quite complicated, rather than social, so the ability to render the complex written statement orally, while preserving the same level of content complexity, is determinative in teaching the dialogic communication in business sphere. Development of the culture of dialogic communication becomes the main objective of the university education, including training in the foreign language.

Dialogic speech in business communication has its own characteristics. It is, of course, verbal, because it is a dialogue. Consequently, the dialogic format of the business communication is characterized by the same features as verbal speech as a whole. However, there is specificity of dialogic communication in business: despite the fact that the verbal language is created in the process of speaking, in business discourse the verbal speech is almost always ready-made, as it is realized in certain situations with the specific purpose and carefully thought-through communicative task. Finally, business communication is always realized within a specific topic. Thus, speaking in business communication has features of written language: preparedness and forethought. In this regard, there is a problem of interaction of oral and written forms of communication. Verbal speech in business communication takes the form of a codified language; i.e. it is determined by level of formality, preparedness, mutual awareness of the speaker and the interlocutor on the subject, the degree and type of communicative intentions of the speaker (focus on the listener, object, form of speech, purpose of presentation). Dialogic communication in business sphere is primarily a verbal form of speech. However, such features as the official environment of communication should be considered while using it. It is equally important to consider the impact of the written structures of the official style on its verbal forms. Thus, the verbal form of the official style is a complex hybrid form, including the features of the written language form and advantages of the verbal communication. This specificity should be reflected in the features of the dialogue construction on the business topic and under the business conditions of communication. For example, it can be presented in the choice of vocabulary and phraseology and syntactic structures.

The most significant problem in this case is the transfer of the written structures into the verbal language and the construction of the oral statements based thereon. Special emphasis should be given rather, not to the problem of mastery of singular compositional forms of expression, but to the inability to disclose the topic and the basic idea of the statement, the planning ability. These skills are the basis of the overall ability to compose a text. Consequently, teaching the dialogic communication in business sphere should be based on the ability to create the texts of different functional-style and functional-semantic focus. Development of such skill is the knowledge of the work methods, how and what should be done to cover a topic and the basic idea of the statement, how to collect and organize the material for the statement, how to edit the written language, etc. The specificity of this knowledge is in its focus on mastery of the communicative skills.

There are several features of the teaching methodology of coherent speech in the native language that determine the choice of the methods (Scherba, 1957).

The main feature of the skills development of coherent speech is a combination of teaching methods of this type of speech and such a didactic means as text. At the same time, the teacher should focus on teaching the ability to produce and understand utterances within the authentic activity context. In other words, in order to teach the students of coherent speech, one must teach them how to create the text. As a rule, the international students have a good command of the clichéd ways of creating texts of different styles, including in the business sphere. The task of teaching the business dialogic communication is reduced to the development of the skills of unconventional preparation of the ready-made oral statements. In this process, the exercises of reproductive type with a creative

component take an important place.

Example of the task: Exercises should include tasks that are based on the generalized prescribed actions or generalized tasks, rather than on the rules, indicating certain actions. This is a difficulty in learning. For example, it is reported that there are two ways of “compression” of the text – elimination and generalization, their essence is defined, the scope of their application is indicated, but what exactly is to be excluded in a particular text, what kind of verbal means of generalization should be used, how to express the basic idea briefly, all this is decided each time all over again and not under pattern. Therefore, one can produce the same type of exercise, which in every case is done on the new material. To make such tasks it is required to use a combination of various operations, including that of reproductive character.

The tasks for analysis, editing and self-revision of the dialogue play an important role in the system of teaching dialogic communication. This is required not only to practice the language skills, but also to develop critical thinking skills. In this respect, an efficient form of activity is arrangement of the discussion of the dialogic presentations prepared by the students. This allows learning the requirements made to the verbal statement, getting used to the self-criticism with respect to one’s own speech. In this process, the clear arrangement of the discussion is of particular importance.

Example of the task: Distribute the evaluation of the stages of the business dialogic communication between the groups. One group is to follow the coverage of the topic, an second one – the speech means of emphasis, the third one – statement of questions, the fourth one – follow the discussion, the fifth one – the non-verbal means of communication, and so on and so forth. It is important for the teacher to teach the students to record their notes during communication, which will be used in the discussion. It is important that these records are made in Russian, since it is necessary to develop the competences of active communication in business and professional spheres. To develop the sense of self-critical attitude to their own speech it is recommended to give the first floor for the analysis to the participants of the discussion. For example, offer a list of questions to be answered: did you enjoy it as you were talking; did you tell everything you wanted to say; what is to be improved? Then the floor is given to the representatives of the groups. The teacher will be the last one to state his own opinion, while summing up and summarizing what was said.

4. Conclusion

The command of foreign language implies the ability to respond fluently to various situations. Therefore, the main purpose of teaching Russian as a second language is to develop communicative competences. Such skills as the ability to compose a coherent text, the ability to design verbal statements based on the written ones, the ability to take advantage of non-verbal interaction are highly important in the skills development of dialogic business communication for the international students. These skills are developed throughout the entire teaching course of Russian as a second language; an objective of teaching at the advanced stage is identification of the characteristics of dialogic communication in the business sphere in a foreign language. In the process of teaching the dialogic communication in business sphere for the foreign students, the specific role is allocated to the teacher, who should develop the training scenarios, focusing on the real communication situations in business sphere. Implementation of the dialogic methodology requires creation of the special organization of the system of classes, where the communicative and professional competences will be developed with the foreign students.

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