DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' LANGUAGE COMPETENCE: THE STUDY OF THE LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

DESENVOLVIMENTO DA COMPETÊNCIA LINGUÍSTICA DOS ALUNOS: O ESTUDO DAS CARACTERÍSTICAS LINGUÍSTICAS E CULTURAIS DE UMA LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA

DESARROLLO DE LA COMPETENCIA LINGÜÍSTICA DE LOS ESTUDIANTES: EL ESTUDIO DE LAS CARACTERÍSTICAS LINGÜÍSTICAS Y CULTURALES DE UNA LENGUA EXTRANJERA

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ABSTRACT: The process of learning a foreign language is more and more strongly associated with the need to understand the didactic material in accordance with the acceleration and appropriateness of the expansion of the space covered by multilingualism and multiculturalism. The article is devoted to the development of linguistic competence of non-linguistic university students as the most important means of interpersonal understanding, the mastery and assimilation of the real and fictional world, the development of notions, as well as reflections about themselves; of creating vital conditions for the development of competencies related to the process of informative reading, mirroring, reflection, communication, and forming content-related notions; writing-composing texts, studying the linguistic and cultural characteristics of a foreign language, as well as the connotations associated with additional semantic or stylistic functions, which are consistently associated with the primary meaning in the minds of native speakers.

KEYWORDS: The study of the linguistic and cultural characteristics of a foreign language. Informative understanding of the communicative situation in texts. Consideration of cultural aspects related to the linguistic space.

RESUMO: O processo de aprendizagem de uma língua estrangeira está cada vez mais fortemente associado à necessidade de compreender o material didático de acordo com a aceleração e adequação da expansão do espaço coberto pelo multilinguismo e

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multiculturalismo. O artigo é dedicado ao desenvolvimento da competência linguística de estudantes universitários não linguísticos como meio mais importante de compreensão interpessoal, domínio e assimilação do mundo real e ficcional, desenvolvimento de noções, bem como reflexões sobre si mesmos; de criar condições vitais para o desenvolvimento de competências relacionadas ao processo de leitura informativa, espelhamento, reflexão, comunicação e formação de noções relacionadas ao conteúdo; escrever-compor textos, estudar as características linguísticas e culturais de uma língua estrangeira, bem como as conotações associadas a funções semânticas ou estilísticas adicionais, que são consistentemente associadas ao significado primário na mente dos falantes nativos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *O estudo das características linguísticas e culturais de uma língua estrangeira. Compreensão informativa da situação comunicativa em textos. Consideração de aspectos culturais relacionados ao espaço linguístico.*

RESUMEN: *El proceso de aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera está cada vez más asociado a la necesidad de comprender el material didáctico de acuerdo con la aceleración y adecuación de la expansión del espacio que ocupa el plurilingüismo y la multiculturalidad. El artículo está dedicado al desarrollo de la competencia lingüística de los estudiantes universitarios no lingüísticos como el medio más importante de comprensión interpersonal, el dominio y asimilación del mundo real y ficcional, el desarrollo de nociones, así como de reflexiones sobre sí mismos; de crear condiciones vitales para el desarrollo de competencias relacionadas con el proceso de lectura informativa, el espejeo, la reflexión, la comunicación y la formación de nociones de contenido; escribir-componer textos, estudiar las características lingüísticas y culturales de una lengua extranjera, así como las connotaciones asociadas con funciones semánticas o estilísticas adicionales, que se asocian consistentemente con el significado principal en la mente de los hablantes nativos.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *El estudio de las características lingüísticas y culturales de una lengua extranjera. Comprensión informativa de la situación comunicativa en los textos. Consideración de los aspectos culturales relacionados con el espacio lingüístico.*

Introduction

Most concepts of the didactics of a foreign language are more or less specifically associated with the interacting cognitive, cultural, psychological, aesthetic, and other content of the educational material and information. The process of learning a foreign language inescapably and increasingly adheres to the systemic integrative concept, in which all of the aforementioned elements are interrelated but presented in the teaching methodology separately, with consideration of the specific content, methods, means, and techniques, the implementation of which results in the students obtaining the necessary skills in handling vocabulary, words, sentences, and texts in order to participate in the basic culture of reading, speaking, and

communication, as well as gaining pleasure, even joy and interest, and thus motivation to learn and use the language.

This requires students and teachers to regularly monitor and assess achievements in learning, as well as to progress in the learning process in a differentiated manner, to properly use analog and digital media products. Of great interest are the skills of informative reading and adequate understanding in the process of comparative and correlative translation of authentic texts.

Students' work on developing a hypothesis on the content of the text and establishing the listed constituent linkages by using the existing and acquired knowledge is contingent on their correct and competent correspondence and the variability of their interpretation, which is not limited to subjective "arbitrariness" but combines the personal perception and a culturally conditioned viewpoint reinforced by the subsequent thematic and interactive exercises that follow. Identifying the components of textual information can be challenging, and one must find a solution in a language that has no equivalent to a particular concept keeping in mind the variability of intents and conventions, as well as the problematics of cultural realities. A text becomes understandable by virtue of its association with a specific event, and this link allows one to understand the focal element in its informative, communicative, cultural, and social situational functions in the corresponding domain, which defines the time frames, norms, conventions, and value systems with consequent textual actions in dynamic interaction. The dynamism is conducive to the fact that contextual factors are not constant and cannot be determined in advance and once and for all.

An exploratory approach to analysis gives an opportunity to take this subtle relationship into account and create a flexible contextual field. Understanding of the communicative situation to be considered in the target text is influenced by linguistic competence.

Methods

Methodological solutions for teaching and developing foreign language and foreign cultural skills are adopted and implemented within the framework of the curriculum. Grammatical structures that facilitate learning and application of vocabulary are actively reinforced; structures are introduced depending on textual situations. Pragmatic goals of communication are achieved by means of the communicative approach, which is understood as the facilitation of intercultural communication, and the improvement of language skills in

combination with the development of additional communication skills through the elimination of social-affective and cultural-cognitive barriers. In accordance with the methodological guidelines, pragmatic goals regard language as a means of communication, including in the cognitive goal the description of the language system and cultural goals based on materials from textbooks, which rely on theoretical fundamentals and the author's practical recommendations, particularly in the field of the communicative approach and authentic texts. Learning strategies and teaching methods aim at the formation of analytical, synthetic, and creative thinking, the collection, analysis, and synthesis of knowledge.

Results

In performing acts of translation, students operate with educational, explicit social, and cultural aspects in deploying linguistically and grammatically appropriate linguistic structures. Consideration of language actions includes the study of the text in its appropriate cultural, domain, and situational context, transferring expressions to speech acts.

Translation and understanding of a foreign language text are situational, domain-specific, oriented on a specific social group, and can reach a specific communicative addressee, form certain notions, and advance students' knowledge.

Cultural aspects are related to linguistic space, but dealing with cultural concepts and aspects in texts is more complicated than it seems. In no small part, this refers to the realities, terms, and connotations used in certain languages with certain conventions.

> Connotations are associated with additional semantic or stylistic functions consistently associated with their primary meaning in the minds of native speakers. A connotation is intended to express emotional or evaluative connotations of an utterance and reflects the cultural traditions of society (REVZINA, 2001, p. 439).

The formation of a communicative task can be effective not by virtue of the historiography of cultural content in the narrow sense, but rather thanks to reference information, which tends to be more accessible. Cultural diversity, on the one hand, is an important contextual factor, yet on the other hand, it is difficult to determine where and how the "lines" between different cultures and languages go.

The process of teaching non-linguistic students focuses on their mastery of linguistic translation literacy and relies on concrete authentic textual cases and their interpretations. These interpretations are embodied in reality in scientific, artistic, or other creativity in various

intellectual and cultural fields for the purpose of comprehending the system of objective and problematic relationships. The positional relationships are characterized by positional properties and focus on statements, accurate application of linguistic means, and recognition of appropriate connotations and culturally specific conventions in specific situations, in professional communication, to have the skills to apply the learned rules in different communication spaces, to be able to productively develop textual solutions and evaluate the adequacy of translation solutions, to apply the learned patterns depending on the content. This involves knowledge and recognition of the degree to which a particular solution in the variant of translation – a deviation or incorrect interpretation as non-compliance with the norms of translation – "can be assessed from various standpoints: '[...]either from the point of correspondence to the original or from the point of the communicative effect achieved through the translation and its pragmatic value'" (TSVILLING, 2009, p. 57).

Understanding the meaning opens aesthetic access to various texts to the student, which allows them to see linguistic diversity and differentiated expressiveness and use them in their own choices. Understanding of the feelings and experiences of people in the past and the present, as well as the reflection of these feelings and experiences in literary or other cultural heritage, helps to develop personal value notions. Foreign language teaching is characterized by a universal culture of reading, writing, and speech for the development of students' multifaceted life experience skills by using the developed learning material, as well as by organizing, for example, student meetings in "writers'" and "readers'" "workshops," conversations with authors, or visits to theater and film productions using the digital forms of learning and communication (ABDULAEVA, 2017, p. 6).

Students learn to interact according to the context and the given communicative situation.

> Correctly organized multichannel system of control over the level of development of students' translation competencies serves not only the function of control but also the diagnostic, correction, stimulation, development, and discipline functions. The quality of translation is assessed by such criteria as the reproduction of the content of the original text without distortion and unjustified omissions, compliance of the text in the target language with the norms and usage of the source language, consideration of the communicative intentions of the original author and the communicative focus of the text (SUSLOVA, 2018 p. 417).

The acquisition of knowledge and the ability to demonstrate it, demonstration of the procedure of solving communication and other problems, as well as the capability of self-

control over one's level of training, are provided by an innovative teaching tactic with the use of digital distance and other forms of learning and regarded as the reflection of the student's success. Students learn to constructively deal with mistakes. Digital learning concepts address the complexity of acquiring competence related to spoken language and the purposeful use of acquired linguistic tools for communication, and, respectively, reproducing them, responding to them linguistically appropriately; communicating their intentions, as well as forming ideas about language, culture, values, expressing others in oral and written so as to be understood by others; using linguistic means that fit the specific communicative situation and articulate one's reflections and position in analog and digital contexts; checking one's own learning strategies and being able to more and more independently manage the process of learning the language further; assessing the effectiveness of the methods employed in understanding, writing, and conducting lexico-grammatical, or informative analysis of texts, as well as in leading a conversation; determining the influence of mass media in the digital world on one's own worldview, perception, and thinking; using technical instruments for the formation of speech acts; forming and developing personal ideas of what was read, heard, or seen and communicating them to others verbally and in writing, as well as immersing into the language and culture and other people's feelings through a figurative format; comparing one's national value attitudes and ideas with different, foreign cultural notions; experiencing the aesthetic content of language and using it in translation; mastering the skills and ability to speak clearly and listen carefully to the interlocutor; observing universal rules in conversations; being able to take on various roles in a conversation, to anticipate and evaluate results in the course of communication, to speak on a topic and express an opinion on it, to present one's own opinion reasonably, to recognize a conflict situation and resolve it, to ask questions and give answers, to formulate clearly and speak in a conversational language by default, in a set order of intentions, and in a structured way, for example, with the help of key words, intonation, facial expressions, gestures, and linguistic means.

Game scenes are classified according to the focus of action: consistently presenting facts and observations, describing actions and objects according to the characteristic using linguistic forms such as request, gratitude, consolation, apology; applying the linguistic uses related to the situation and assessing the adequacy, for instance, justifying, explaining, reflecting, criticizing, simplifying; flexibly applying basic knowledge to the rules of conversation, such as praise, or self-vindication; expressing spontaneous thoughts and feelings about the text; developing and expressing ideas, thoughts, and feelings when reading and listening, such as

searching, underlining what is important, breaking the text down, comparing; applying information gathering techniques to understand text information, such as: finding, identifying, and understanding key words; purposefully searching and structuring information around key words online, focusing on the website for the reliability of information; conveying (giving information about) the content of the text; answering questions on the text; justifying the evaluations and statements found in the text; dividing and assembling sentences with consideration of grammatical schemes and the use of linguistic tools and their operation in different situations; recognizing the past, present, and future and expressing them situationally.

Reading skills

Informative and selective reading of authentic texts implies the identification of information for knowledge acquisition and the resolution of communicative tasks and the problems with the development of, first of all, interpretative reading. Overall, work with different types of texts and other mass media in foreign language learning lays down a viable foundation for learning motivation.

Writing skills

Foreign language teaching offers a variety of opportunities for students of non-linguistic specialties to develop their writing skills by participating in writing conferences, writing comments on their impressions from reading and listening, or participating in the creation of student papers, acquiring wording and standardized writing skills. Presenting particularly successful papers assists in developing student motivation.

Mass media competence

Students must be ready to live in the digital world that requires knowledge of foreign languages using their personal media experience, which increasingly focuses and reflects on operations with analog and digital mass media. For this purpose, lessons actively incorporate the use of the technical means provided by the university IT center, for which the basic methods of work and learning strategies for information search, processing, storage, and presentation are developed. The shift to online learning, which occurs frequently in the period of the pandemic, forms the experience of independent, safe, and targeted online communication and

analytical/critical reflection of one's actions on the media mainly under the teacher's supervision.

The development of original textbooks for students of non-linguistic specialties involves the formulation of educational and upbringing objectives that focus on the clearly identified communicative results of comparative and correlative translation, the well-thought-out and creative execution of which is the main priority. These objectives are aimed at the development of students' language and communicative competence, which implies both explicit and implicit knowledge necessary for adequate communication in the speech community. This constitutes the foundation of communicative learning of a foreign language in a professional aspect, which is necessary for students of various non-linguistic specialties. The educational environment of the university becomes a training ground for professional, linguistic, and intercultural competencies. Accordingly, its objectives are aimed at students' knowledge and mastery of the possible linguistic structures that are appropriate and accurate for meaningful acts of communication. Work on authentic texts is devoted to the development of students' understanding of the logic of the information, the ability to navigate in the text content, and to solve communicative problems, which touch upon the following aspects:

1. The cognitive aspect, which governs the procedure of learning a foreign language through the aforementioned structures and their situational use.

2. The socio-cultural aspect, which specifies and explores the information through the interaction of language, culture, and social influences.

3. The semiotic aspect, which helps to recognize and accurately reproduce the information inherent in the culture in question.

4. The pedagogical aspect, which concerns motivation and stimulation of the educational process.

Together, these aspects provide for the study of linguistic structures, their understanding, and reproduction depending on the following aspects:

– complexity of linguistic structures (grammar, vocabulary);

– cognitive load (familiarity/unfamiliarity with the topic; difficulty in viewing the content of the text; clarity and informativeness of the communicative task)

– communicative pressure (anxiety; time constraints; length of text; the variety of informative material; variability of communicative task solution; inability to comprehend the task, etc.)

The practical results are not always unambiguous, and the difficulties "students encounter when translating a text from a foreign language into their native language may be related to the inability to adequately analyze the pragmatic orientation of the text and determine its main theme and idea, which, in turn, is only possible if the translator succeeds in understanding the initial text in the foreign language as a reflection of the opinions and values of another culture and determining their significance for themselves, i.e. in identifying the informative meaning of the text and the idea conveyed by the author, in interpreting the author's position based on their conceptual scheme, while choosing the right translation solutions. One of the key requirements for a translator is their ability to understand and "interpret the material to be translated for themselves (by means of linguistic imagery), to mentally analyze it, as well as evaluate it critically" (NELIUBIN, 2016, p. 78). Practice shows that solving challenging tasks (in reading) leads to the fact that students, due to the great concentration of attention required for understanding the text, focus exclusively on the content, leaving the form of expression of the content unattended. As a result, new linguistic structures present in the text are not noticed and, therefore, not memorized. Speech tasks build students' skills in developing communication strategies to circumvent the challenges they face in understanding the content of the text and the associated correct resolution of the communicative task. They speak more slowly, use more simple structures and a reduced vocabulary, which leads to the slowness of speech (due to the fear of making a mistake), deliberate use of familiar structures at the expense of mastering new ones. On the other hand, the tasks that are too easy do not require great effort from students as the knowledge already available is sufficient to understand and formulate the communicative task. As a result, students' linguistic and communicative knowledge is not enriched. Thus, the effectiveness of learning a foreign language through foreign-language texts and the language competence of students in non-linguistic specialties is contingent on the proper linguistic text material a priori planned by the teacher and the accurately formulated communicative tasks for this material.

Conclusion

Communicative tasks related to language learning and the varied interactive activities planned for them contribute to the assimilation of the necessary structures and, accordingly, to the communicative competence of students.

Comparative and correlative analysis of diverse texts in teaching foreign languages to students of non-linguistic specialties focuses on communicative tasks, which allow students to creatively develop thematic options (having certain freedom of action within the content), work with dictionaries and grammar reference books. The teacher instructs them in advance to pay attention to the form and language structures. This helps students more easily recognize problematic issues of misunderstanding and learn new material more attentively, more successfully, more quickly. Naturally, the presented material and assignments correspond to the level of proficiency in the previously learned language material, so that each student can cope with the task at hand and advance their knowledge of the language.

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How to reference this article

Processing and publication by the Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação.
Correction, formatting, standardization and translation.