Teaching Specialty Language to Non-Philological Students: Key Questions

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Abstract: This paper explores the challenges in teaching the language of specialized fields to non-philological students. It delves into the communicative needs of students and the necessity of forming their linguistic competence. Understanding these needs is crucial for designing effective Russian language courses that cater to practical communication in various professional settings. The study highlights the importance of a communicative-oriented approach in language teaching, emphasizing the development of language skills for real-life situations. By analysing the communicative needs of students across different fields of activity, the paper identifies key aspects to consider in curriculum design, including the selection and presentation of language material. It argues for a system-functional approach, starting with the general literary language as the foundation and progressively incorporating specific functional styles relevant to students' professional contexts. This holistic approach aims to cultivate linguistic competence aligned with students' communication requirements in their respective fields of study.

1 INTRODUCTION

The harmonious correspondence of thought and word, speech and speech act seems to be an urgent educational task. Understanding that language is one of the main tools for personal development leads to the search for effective approaches in teaching. It is essential that the assimilable semantic and syntactic models of utterances and their lexical components make it possible to solve specific communicative tasks of professional communication.

The priority of today's language teaching is to focus on the formation of communicative competence. The communicative dominance in language teaching places serious demands on the content and forms of organization of the educational process. Russian language learning by students of non-philological specialities has a practical orientation; it should provide various forms of communication in Russian both during the period of study at the university and after graduation. "Communication is the ability of a person to get in touch with other people and make himself understood," says John Adair (2003).

The pragmatic goals of language learning determine the practical, communicative orientation of the entire learning process based on a comprehensive study of the communicative needs of students. Identification of students' communicative needs can be considered as a starting point for determining the main parameters of the course of study, including language. Knowledge of the communicative needs of students allows you to more accurately imagine what the description of language material in a practical Russian language course should be, how it should be selected, presented and mastered in a communicative learning environment.

As you know, one of the decisive conditions for mastering speech is the correspondence of the level of language competence of the student to the nature of his speech activity. Thus, when setting limited goals in learning the Russian language (communication in some fairly standard situations relevant to business people, etc.), a situational-thematic principle of selection, organization and presentation of language and speech material in textbooks using appropriate teaching methods can have a positive effect. Learning a language for the purpose of communication in different spheres for the implementation of broad cognitive and social activities implies a different level of formation of

language and speech competence, and therefore, in this case, a different approach to the selection of language material, a different organisation of the entire educational process is required.

If we want to define the content of the Russian language course in such a way that it is adequate to the goals facing our students, then it is possible to accomplish this task only if the speech and language needs of students are comprehensively taken into account. This means that the basis of all work should be:

a) identification of the communicative needs of students;

b) a certain scientifically and pragmatically based description of the language system as a whole and those functional subsystems, the choice of which is completely determined by the communicative needs of students.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of the communicative needs of students of non-philological universities has shown that, along with the educational and scientific fields of activity for non-philological students of the humanities, such fields of activity as socio-political, socio-household and administrative-legal are relevant. Communicating in each of these fields of activity, students should be able to use one or another stylistic variety of modern Russian. Thus, in the administrative-legal and educational-scientific fields of activity, students will use, respectively, official business and scientific styles of speech, and in the social and household sphere - spoken language. When communicating in the socio-political sphere, students will need knowledge of the main features of the journalistic style, and the socio-cultural sphere will require, in particular, some familiarity with the language of fiction. In this case, the following problems naturally arise:

what functional styles of the modern Russian language should be the object of study?

is it legitimate to single out the main, central one among these styles, on the basis of which other functional subsystems can be studied?

In fact, according to methodologists Motina (1983) & Bitekhtina et al., (1986), the number of stylistic varieties included in the educational process should correspond to the number of fields of activity relevant to this contingent of students. However, it must be borne in mind that the communicative needs of students in the above-mentioned fields of activity are

unequal. So, for example, the verbal needs for the ability to write an official statement or fill out a questionnaire (i.e. the administrative and legal field of activity) are quite peripheral. As for the social and household sphere, in the first-year students already have the necessary communication skills in a language environment. Therefore, at the main stage of training, the communicative needs of students in the educational, scientific, socio-political and socio-cultural spheres of activity are important, which dictates the expediency of highlighting the following aspects in the teaching process as the main aspects: "Language of specialty", "Language of journalism", "Language of fiction". This determines the need to include appropriate manuals in the educational complex.

Now, regarding the second question outlined above. It is often suggested that, unlike philology students who require complete knowledge of the entire language system, non-philology students, whose main purpose of learning Russian is to receive professional training, feel the need for fluency in only the language of the specialty, and somewhat more broadly, the scientific style of speech. Indeed, communication in educational and scientific activities is the leading need of students of the main faculties. If we conclude that the scientific style of speech should be the basis for studying the Russian language for students of non-philological faculties, then such a decision, on the one hand, does not correspond to the communicative needs of students, and on the other hand, contradicts the need for an adequate representation of the system of the studied language, and this makes it advisable to take a different approach - Bitekhtina et al., (1986).

As Galperin (1998) wrote, "each language can be considered as a kind of code, which is nothing more than the norms of a literary language, and which is divided into a number of sub-codes – functional styles. In other words, the literary language is an alternative to the common language system, and functional styles – the language of fiction, the language of newspapers, the language of scientific prose, the language of official documents – are variants of this common language system". If we use the terminology proposed by Galperin (1998), it turns out that starting language learning in the audience of humanities students with a scientific style of speech means starting the study of the system from one of its variants, bypassing the center, the core of the system, i.e. the norms of the general literary language.

3 METHODOLOGY

We understand that the general literary language, in contrast to the language employed in scientific and mass media contexts, is not restricted to any specific domain of student activity. It is utilised by our students, as well as by any native speaker, based on the specific circumstances across all their activities without exception. Therefore, it is the general literary language that is the basis for the study of linguistic phenomena by foreign students. The core of the educational complex for non-philological students of the humanities is a general literary language, on the basis of which work begins within each section, and then the acquired skills and abilities are transferred to other functional subsystems, which is facilitated by working with textbooks supplementing the textbook, which aim to develop speech skills and abilities based on the material of texts in the specialty.

This way of studying the language system – from the general literary language to individual functional styles of speech that fall within the sphere of students' communicative needs (i.e. from the core to systemically related phenomena) seems rational and adequate to the structure of the subject of study itself – the language system. Having mastered the core of the system, students naturally move on to mastering subsystems, and this is the way to form the level of language competence necessary for students to communicate in Russian not only in educational and scientific, but also in other relevant fields of activity for them - Galskova et al., (2004).

The presentation of language material in a practical Russian language course should reflect the nature of the object and the pragmatic nature of the objectives of its study. The most promising in this regard is a system-functional approach to solving these tasks. Focusing the entire process of teaching Russian to the student, including textbooks, we note that there is a significant difference between what is a language system for a student and what is for a teacher.

As is known, in the process of forming language competence, a student should acquire not so much certain knowledge of the Russian language as acquire practical language skills and abilities. This means that students should be able to correctly build word forms, combine them into phrases, form sentences and text.

When learning a language, a person, willingly or unwittingly, necessarily organises his knowledge into a certain system, which allows him to use this familiar system as a means of communication, during which the language material is compared, differentiated, analysed and generalised, the choice of language means is made depending on the conditions of communication. The cognitive activity of the student in connection with the study of language, due to the system-forming nature of human thinking, turns into a continuous and intense process of formation, expansion and refinement of the idea of the language system that has developed in his mind. The formation of an idea of the language system as a functioning system is carried out in the process of using language for communication purposes, and at the same time, the idea of language as a system is a condition that allows using language as a means of communication – Sorokin et al., (1989) – Garbovsky (1988).

4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

According to psychologists, the main, leading psychological process in language acquisition is the process of generalisation (generalisation, transfer). To form an idea of the language system in the student's mind, a system-functional approach to the selection, description and presentation of language material for educational purposes is needed. This approach to the presentation of language material involves:

1. An adequate description of the language material, determined by specific goals, so that an integrated model of the language system can be presented in the perspective of the entire course. To achieve this goal, it is necessary: a) allocation of the core of the system and systemically related phenomena; allocation of linguistic means subject to active and passive assimilation; b) a systematic representation of individual fragments and different levels of the language system (here we mean a systematic representation of vocabulary, morphology, word formation, syntax, text type systems, etc.; the representation of linguistic units is not isolated, but in a system of their oppositions and connections, paradigmatic and syntagmatic. c) characteristics of language tools in terms of their content, structure and function.

2. Balanced and communication-oriented introduction of language and speech material, correlation of language material with the possibility of performing speech tasks in certain communication conditions, since the formation of language competence occurs in the process of speech activity, i.e. in the process of using language as a means of communication. When studying different

language tools, a projection is made of the possibility of their use in different spheres of communication, and especially in the field of humanities - Bitekhtina et al., (1986).

5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is imperative to consider two primary factors when developing the linguistic competence of philology students: their communicative needs and the organization of the language system and its relevant functional subsystems. The linguistic competence required by students should align with the volume and nature of their communicative needs across various fields of activity. This competence can only be achieved through a solid foundation in the general literary language. Once students have mastered this foundation, they can progress to studying the specific features of language subsystems.

The level of linguistic competence needed for students to effectively engage in speech activities dictates the necessity of employing a system-functional approach to describe, select, and present language material. This approach ensures that language instruction is tailored to the communicative needs of students and provides them with the skills necessary for effective communication in their respective fields. In essence, a comprehensive understanding of the communicative needs of students, coupled with a systematic approach to language instruction, is essential for the development of their linguistic competence and proficiency.

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