

Development of Professional Skills of Students–Philologists (In the Context of “Extensive Reading”)

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of one of the aspects, focused on teaching of the English language. The aspect is “Extensive reading”, which is a discipline, taught at universities in Russia. The authors of the article look into the essence of the discipline and define its integrated nature, expressed in multidisciplinary connections with other subjects. The article contains brief theoretical analysis and practical part of the research. Practical implications of the research are presented by a methodology, suggested while teaching “Extensive reading”. Taking into account the existing methods, the authors pay special attention to a scientific direction, realised in the frame of “Extensive reading”. As a result the authors offer a set of exercises with the emphasis on the research activity of the students.

1. Introduction

Processes of globalization and integration affected all the aspects of life of the world community: personal and international levels. The system of education of the Russian Federation is also at the stage of entrance to the global educational system.

In addition it is noted that the system of higher education in Russia experiencing crisis, caused by inconformity of knowledge of postgraduates to expectations and demands of employers [1]. Variety of sciences with their specific methods and approaches holds back development of scientific knowledge, its acquisition and practical usage. In order to upgrade quality and negotiation of critical times in development of the higher education, it is suggested to create fundamental pedagogical structures, which are directed to preparation to successful professional activity; development of general culture and values; to formation of personality which sees far and wide. From the point of view of scientists in the sphere of pedagogy [2], [3], [4] formation of a subject of training, which would correspond to modern demands of employers, is possible by means of integrated approach.

Before we analyze specific features of integrated approach for development of professional qualities of philologists it is necessary to consider the phenomenon of integration and integrated approach in education.

2. Integration in education

Generally, the process of integration is understood as occurrence of entirety from the parts, which were separated. The specific of the process of integration is determined by peculiarities of a definite sphere, thus in the field of pedagogy it is possible to speak about pedagogical integration. According to V.V. Levchenko, pedagogical integration can be explained as uniting processes, which affect all the

elements of teaching and educational process, exactly, its content, forms and methods. The result of this combination is integrity which means enhancement of educational functions, modernization of education, innovative training and, finally, in formation of a person with scrupulous integrity [2].

Y.S. Zagraiskaya emphasizes significant role of cross-curriculum connections as integration is possible only on the basis of such connections. The author understands integration as higher level of cross-curriculum connections, directed to achievement of pedagogical aims by means of pedagogical devices [5]. Cross-curriculum connections are interpreted as connections between content-related elements of sciences, i.e. connection between notions, laws, facts etc. Occurrence of cross-curriculum connections between subjects is a complex approach while teaching and education of students: juniors are acquainted with general notions and laws, and seniors have clearer picture of connections between subjects, which are expressed in complex theories and problems [6]. It is supposed that cross-curriculum connections are realized in the field of one or some themes which allows speaking about “fragmentary character” of cross-curriculum connections and their limitation in comparison with the process of integration itself [18]. Correct interdisciplinary relationships promote high practical significance, activation of educational process and formation of intellectual flexibility of the students [19].

Lake, summarizing the results of Fogarty’s work, speaks about eight types of integration: fragmented, connected, nested, sequenced, shared, webbed, threaded, integrated, immersed, networked. It should be pointed out that the mentioned types of integration demonstrate different levels of relationships between disciplines: from education, based on general notions of two or more subjects to subtle interdisciplinary connections [7].

3. Integrated approach in foreign language teaching in the context of “Extensive reading”

Special attention of Russian (G. I. Denisova, I. A. Maskinskova, M. D. Golevko) and foreign scientists (Ibtisam H.Aljiffri, R.S. Arslan, A. Joukoulia, J.O., Ongong, M. O. Okwara, and K.N. Nyangara, Sanchez) is given to the process of integration in foreign language teaching. Using an integrated approach, language becomes a means of interconnection between people; promotes development of their natural communication in foreign language [15]. Moreover, foreign language is considered as a base for actualization of pedagogical integration that is explained by communicative process between representatives of different cultures [2]. Thus, on one hand the integrated approach leads to more effective training, on the other hand, foreign language can be regarded as a “natural environment” for actualization of integration.

Evident and traditional connection which can be traced in teaching of a foreign language is the connection between the studied language and literature. The interconnection can be observed in the discipline “Extensive reading”, taught at universities. In the article we consider the question about peculiarities of “Extensive reading” as one of the component at training of the English language. Some scholars (Y.S. Zagraiskaya, M. D. Strelkova, E. L. Maryanovskaya e.t.c.) devoted their works to development of more efficient methodology of teaching of the discipline. Taking into account the title of the course we may conclude that the discipline is, mainly, directed to independent study of the students. At the same time the aspect “Extensive reading” has a holistic character as supposes not only reading of a fiction, development of further skills for various kinds of reading but is also directed to development of abilities to discourse-analysis for full understanding of content and idea of the author [16]. Besides, any fiction is “representative” of culture as by means of language “world view of native speakers” [8]. During acquisition of the discipline, students develop all kinds of speaking activity and it points to complexity of the considered discipline.

Depending on the purpose of research, various methods for teaching of the discipline are suggested. For instance, Y. S. Zagraiskaya offers a set of exercises, focused on formation of ability to analyse a fiction as a means for intercultural communication. According to the methodology, the exercises are based on differential approach, including some actions: 1) on anticipation; 2) on interpretation of the text; 3) on distinguishing the semantic information; 4) on abridgment of the text. Each of the actions suggests development of definite abilities and skills. Actions on anticipation develop an ability to

foresee events; actions, directed to distinguishing of the semantic information perfect skills for understanding of “personal, vital and activity sense”, including plotlines and general idea of the fiction; actions focused on abridgment of the text develop an ability to distinguish necessary information; actions on interpretation of the text suppose an ability for analysis of the fiction. The author underlines flexibility of the offered methodology, i.e. the exercises can be places in any order.

M.D. Strekalova on the contrary, emphasizes the necessity to follow the definite algorithm while working with students in the field of “Extensive reading”. The technology of teaching in this case includes the following teaching strategies, focused on formation and development of: 1) lexical skills; 2) listening; 3) grammar skills; 4) ability for literary translation; 5) speaking; 6) writing; 7) social, cultural and knowledge about the country of the studied language. It should be noted that the exercises, based on these strategies are directed to perfection of all the kinds of language behaviour. E.L. Maryanovskaya gave special attention to “Extensive reading” as a kind of independent study, which helps to education and self-education of the students. The researcher suggests four blocks of exercises while teaching the discipline. The first two blocks are focused on development of different kinds of reading: skim reading, reading for detail and reading for specific information. The third block contains the exercises for oral speech in regard to previously read and the fourth block includes tasks for preparation of the students to their future professional work.

As the considered discipline entails active independent study of the students, it is appropriate to mention methods of projects, by help of which students develop their critical thinking, ability to find cause-and-effect links. For instance, M.D. Golenko gives examples of projects during teaching of the discipline “Extensive reading”: “Screen version of a novel”, “Alternative way of sequence of events”, “Frontispiece of a novel” and others. Presence of such project tasks allows increasing motivation, interest to studying the language and it broadens “Extensive reading” beyond class activity and the discipline becomes capturing naturally motivated process [9]. By means of the method the students come to a new level of problem discussion.

4. “Extensive reading” as a basis for development of professional skills

Besides the cognitive activity, the discipline implicates development of scientific activity of the students. Therefore, the methodology of teaching, focused on perfectness of competence to apply the gained knowledge in the sphere of theory and history of the language, literature, philological analysis, theory of communication and text interpretation should embrace exercises, considering development of all the kinds of language activities and perfectness of scientific research. The suggested exercises were made basing on the integrated approach. A book “A snow garden and other stories” by Rachel Joyce, the British writer, was chosen for study material. The book includes seven short stories, which are interconnected by plotlines. “A snow garden” is an authentic literary text, characterised by definite language, semantic, contextual and sociocultural information. The book is quite contemporary as it was published four years ago and it points to actual background knowledge, culturological interest and embrace of the country while working with the text.

The developed sets of exercises include tasks on anticipation; lexical and grammar exercises; tasks for enhancement translation, speaking; advance of local knowledge and tasks on development of stylistic analysis. An introductory lesson entails discussion of biography and work of the writer, viewing of interview and reviews of the book by professional critics and wide readership.

Exercises on anticipation conform to a structure of the chosen literary text and allow expressing opinion in regard to further development of the plotline. Enhancement of lexical skills is directed to work with active and passive lexical units. Training of active vocabulary allows increasing the level of acquisition of the lexical units and work with passive vocabulary acquaints the students with new vocabulary, translation and pronunciation, enabling them to further usage of the new words in speech. Enhancement and control of performance of grammar material is parallel to development of skills for literary translation and speaking. Speaking skills are developed by the exercises which include answers to questions about the content, description of the characters and retelling as one of the characters of the story. Listening skills are also enhanced during class hours by means of prepared and

spontaneous speech of the students. Emphasis on development of research skills of students-philologists is achieved during preparation of the discussion of the text, including commentaries regarding stylistic peculiarities of the book, plot, characters and structure in general. Moreover, the exercises, containing chosen sentences from the text allow students practicing their skills on definition of stylistic means, which helps to further enhancement of stylistic analysis.

The mentioned exercises are given below:

Comment on the title of the story. Suppose what this story is going to be about.

Read out and translate the following words.

Find English equivalents for the Russian words in the story and describe the situations where they were used.

Describe the characters.

Say, if the following sentences are true or false.

Translate the following sentences using the words from the story.

Answer the questions.

Find stylistic devices and analyse their functions in the following sentences.

Retell the text as if you are one of the characters.

Make literary translation of the suggested excerpts.

Discussion. What problems did the author raise in the story? What would you do if you were one of the characters? What are the connections of this plot with other stories?

5. Conclusion

Enhancement of knowledge about culture and traditions of the country of the studied language results from application of the presentations, prepared by the students. The presentations are based on method of projects on cultural, historical and other actual realia, met in the book.

It is worth mentioning that the gained results during performance of the tasks frequently become a basis for research and participation at scientific conferences, writing of articles and theses. This points to increase of motivation and interest to the study of the English language.

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