

Problems of Motivation at Studying Foreign Languages in the Master's Program of Non-Linguistic Training

E. Zlobina

Department of linguistics
Vyatka state university
Kirov, Russia
alyona.zlobina@gmail.com

Abstract— Nowadays in some countries there are still problems with motivation to study foreign languages even among masters' students of non-linguistic training. The aim of the present article is to state problems of motivation at studying foreign languages by master's students of non-linguistic training and to find possible solutions of these problems. The main scientific method to determine these problems is questionnaire. In the result of questionnaire main groups of motivation problems were identified. To solve these problems the author suggested organizing the process of education which was based on student-centered approach. The author developed methodology how to solve problems of foreign language motivation on the basis of student-centered approach. Using student-centered approach makes a learning stuff interesting and necessary for master's students because they study foreign languages for specific (professional) purposes. The article shows significant difference in the results of the questionnaire of master's students before the experiment (control group) and after the experiment (experimental group).

Keywords— *motivation; foreign languages; master's program*

INTRODUCTION

Modern world can not exist without international collaboration. But in some countries there is a lack of it. Foreign languages are not used in every day life. That is why problems of motivation to study foreign languages are still actual.

Contemporary research is devoted to find out reasons and solutions of this problem in the sphere of studying foreign languages by master's students of non-linguistic training.

The author of this research supports the view of M. Pace who considers that: "Most businesses today need workers who can speak different languages, not only for communication purposes, but also to understand the different cultural realities and needs that exist around the globe. Mastery of foreign languages has become, in today's world, a vital instrument that enables workers to considerably improve their career prospects, since multilingualism is considered to be one of the key elements for a modern Europe. In today's world, knowing how to use a language in specific circumstances and purposes gives people a very strong bargaining power, especially in the labor world" [1].

Many scientists studied the problem of motivation to study foreign languages applying different approaches and methods of teaching, investigating different components and kinds of motivation [2-13].

To find out reasons of low motivation level of master degree students the author had to work out a questionnaire. Researches in the sphere of criteria in the pedagogical investigations were referred to [14-15]. As a result of scientific literature review the author determined 3 criteria according to which the questions of the questionnaire were developed: 1) cognitive criterion (availability of knowledge in the investigated sphere); 2) motivation criterion (availability of motivation to the process of doing or learning); 3) practical criterion (practical appliance of knowledge acquired in the investigated sphere). To see the tendency in each criteria three questions were stated to be enough, and answers for all questions give information where there are gaps for each criteria and it determines the direction where the improvement should be done. Understanding that solving only the problem of motivation will not influence positively on the level of foreign language knowledge. That's why the author studied thoroughly the theory of educational technologies and scientific approaches which are applied in master's programs [16-20].

OBJECT AND METHODS

To find out problems and their solution questionnaire was determined as a scientific method of the research. The questionnaire survey involved 214 respondents. There were two groups of respondents: control group consisted of master's degree students of the first year who started their master's program in 2016; experimental group consisted of master's degree students of the first year who started their master's program in 2017. Each group had to answer two questionnaires: in the beginning of the academic year and at the end of the academic year. The questions of both questionnaires were identical, so it was easy to see the changes in the students' answers. The questions were the following:

1) *How will you determine the aim of the subject "Foreign language in the professional sphere"?*

2) Do you get / will you get new knowledge while studying the subject "Foreign language in the professional sphere" in this master's program?

3) What topics would you like to study in the sphere of foreign language?

4) Do you have wish to study foreign language in this master's program?

5) Do you think that you need foreign languages for professional purposes?

6) Do you attend classes of foreign language with great pleasure?

7) Do you take additional lessons of foreign language?

8) Do you plan to study foreign languages after graduation from master's program?

9) Do you have wish to take part in the foreign language contests organized in the university?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The author gathered data of questionnaires, calculated and made comparative analyses of data between two groups. Results of each analyses of questionnaire answers are presented according to the criteria. According to the analyses of answers of cognitive criterion the author got following data:

1) How will you determine the aim of the subject "Foreign language in the professional sphere"? – before experiment in control and experimental groups all master degree students described the aim of this as subject as enlarging vocabulary with vocational terminology; after experiment – only master degree students of experimental group added that foreign language for professional sphere in master's program should include also topics connected with international business, teamwork and project management;

2) Do you get / will you get new knowledge while studying the subject "Foreign language in the professional sphere" in this master's program? – before experiment in control and experimental groups all master degree students gave positive answer, as they were sure that they would get new knowledge while getting master degree; after experiment control group showed that the number of positive answers decreased two times in comparison with answers before the experiment, in the experimental group there were no changes in the answers of master degree students, so it proves that if learning material of the subject is formed during collaboration between lecturers and students, it will positively influence on their wish to study the subject;

3) What topics would you like to study in the sphere of foreign language? – before experiment in control and experimental groups all master degree students pointed that they would like to enlarge vocabulary with vocational terminology; after experiment master degree students of control group wrote about their wish to get knowledge in business foreign language, project management, etc., one third of master degree students of experimental group insisted in their questionnaires to enrich their vocational vocabulary, although business foreign language is of great importance for them, too. The author explains these changes with one third of students from experimental group that before entering

master's program they had very poor vocational vocabulary which was being formed while studying foreign languages at bachelor's program, that's why they want to improve their knowledge during master's program because they need good level of knowledge of vocational terminology at their jobs.

These data in cognitive criterion is necessary and important because if students' expectations before and after experiment don't correspond with the real educational material, so it will obviously lead to decreasing of motivation to study foreign languages.

According to the analyses of answers of motivation criterion the author got following data:

4) Do you have wish to study foreign language in this master's program? – before experiment the number of master's degree students in control group was less than in experimental group (30% and 31% respectively), so it means that students of 2017 understand the necessity of knowing foreign language for professional purposes; after experiment the number increased in both groups (40% and 45% respectively); there are some reasons of such increasing effect: master's degree students start working and realize the necessity of foreign language knowledge to do professional tasks; taking part in the foreign language contests and international scientific conferences motivate them to improve level of foreign language; applying for international grants and scholarships, and possible foreign business trips stimulate them; studying foreign language for professional purposes based on the student-oriented approach using modern educational methods makes this process exciting and corresponds expectations of students and satisfies their cognitive interests;

5) Do you think that you need foreign languages for professional purposes? – before experiment the number of master's degree students in control group was less than in experimental group (30% and 31% respectively), so it means that students of 2017 understand the necessity of knowing foreign language for professional purposes; after experiment the number increased in both groups (40% and 45% respectively); students of experimental group explained in their questionnaires that they had opportunity to read texts, instructions, patents in their original forms; some students communicate with foreigners while working at joint projects.

6) Do you attend classes of foreign language with great pleasure? – before experiment in control and experimental groups 70% of master's degree students gave positive answers, explaining that they didn't have any problems with foreign language at bachelor's program, so they were glad to have opportunity to continue language education in master's program of non-linguistic training; after experiment the numbers changed with increasing in both groups (80% and 85%), so the author explains increased numbers with peculiarities of students' work and their professional ambitions regarding new working place in the joint or foreign country, or wish to enter later post-graduate course with writing scientific articles on foreign language and participation in scientific conferences.

According to the analyses of answers of practical criterion the author got following data:

7) Do you take additional lessons of foreign language? – before experiment in control and experimental groups 80% of master's degree students gave negative answers; after experiment the numbers increased by 5 % in each group. Students in both groups explained that even if they understood the necessity of acquiring knowledge in foreign languages for professional purposes they had financial problems because any additional foreign language education costs money, that's why either they study using different electronic courses free of charge, or watch films or podcasts with business foreign language content and try to train their audio skills.

8) Do you plan to study foreign languages after graduation from master's program? – before experiment 30% students in control and 42% students experimental groups plan to continue foreign language education, in both groups there were such explanations as lack of time and financial sources to begin foreign language education while getting master degree of non-linguistic training, but they are strong motivated to do it after getting master degree; that's why there were no changes in the answers after experiment. Master's degree students are sure that while studying subject "Foreign language in professional sphere" they will acquire necessary knowledge and important vocational skills will be formed, so if they need other additional foreign language in the future they will have many resources and great motivation to do it.

9) Do you have wish to take part in the foreign language contests organized in the university? – before experiment 22% students in control and 27% experimental groups showed their willingness for participation in different foreign language contests; after experiment 37% students in control group and 44% students in experimental group changed their opinion about language contest (I All-Russian contest (Olympiad) for master's degree students of non-linguistic education) because the tasks were in the open access in the Internet and the tasks were oriented on master's degree students; besides, students were given also information about modern technology (mind mapping) which can be also useful for them in their professional sphere.

According to the analyses of questionnaire answers before the experiment the author chose student-oriented approach as the main one and changed the content of the subject "Foreign language in the professional sphere" with referring to the educational standards and competencies which are to be formed while studying at master's program of non-linguistic training. The author understands that student-oriented approach is represented as one of possibilities to improve master's student motivation. This method is supposed to be an additional, but efficient method of motivation improvement as the results of questionnaire show at the end of experiment.

CONCLUSION

1. The present study investigated problems of motivation at studying foreign languages by master degree students of non-linguistic training. The reasons were named as following: 1) lack of necessity to use foreign languages in the professional sphere, that's why no wish to study foreign

languages in the master's program of non-linguistic training; 2) low level of foreign languages, that's why they could not cope with this subject while studying at master's program; 3) lack of interest to the topics in the sphere of foreign languages suggested by the educational program.

2. The conducted research allowed finding one of the possible solutions of motivation problem at studying foreign languages by master's degree students of non-linguistic training. The author applied student-centered approach by choosing the content of learning material. The questionnaire analyses of control and experimental groups gave data what topics should be included in the process of studying the subject "Foreign language in the professional sphere" because master's degree students know better what knowledge and skills they want to acquire while studying at master's program which will be of great importance for them in their professional sphere. The key point in applying this approach is that master's degree students not only get the necessary professional knowledge but they are also shown during lessons how they can use this knowledge in practice: fill in documents required for the job application (CV, cover letters, autobiographies and professional biographies), take part in formal role-games (job interview, team work project, telephone business conversations, business negotiations), make successful presentations on the rules of international business.

References

- [1] M. Pace, "The Teaching of Foreign Languages for Specific Purposes: The Way Forward. In *The Educator*," *A Journal of Educational Matters*, vol. 1, pp. 15-22, 2013.
- [2] I.V. Batunova, K.I. Brezina, "Formation of student motivation at studying foreign language in non-linguistic universities," *International research journal*, vol. 05(59), pp. 10-12 2017.
- [3] I.A. Zimnyaya, "Key competencies – new paradigm of educational result," *Higher Education Today*, vol. 5, pp. 34-42, 2003.
- [4] G.V. Shvalova, "Motivation formation of students of technical university at studying professional foreign language," *Periodic scientific and methodological e-journal "Koncept"*, vol. 11, pp. 1-6, 2012.
- [5] R.C. Gardner, *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. Edward Arnold Publishers, London, 1985.
- [6] D. Gálová, ed., *Languages for Specific Purposes. Searching for Common Solutions*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Cambridge, 2007.
- [7] R. Parsons, S. Hinson, D. Brown, *Educational psychology : practitioner – researcher models of teaching*. Wadsworth Thomson Learning University of Virginia, 2001.
- [8] R. Wimolmas, *A Survey Study of Motivation in English Language Learning of First Year Undergraduate Students at Sirindhorn International Institute of Technology (SIIT)*. Thammasat University, Bangkok, 2013.
- [9] E.V. Mil'man, "Inner and external motivation of educational activity," *Matters of Psychology*, vol. 5, pp. 129-138, 1987.
- [10] A.N. Leont'ev, *Requirements, motives and emotions. Psychology of motivations and emotions*. Moscow, 2002.
- [11] F. Belmechri, K. Hummel, "Orientations and motivation in the acquisition of English as a second language among high school students in Quebec City," *Language Learning*, vol. 48(2), pp. 219-244, 1998.
- [12] R. Oxford, J. Shearin, "Language Learning Motivation: Expanding The Theoretical Framework," *The Modern Language Journal*, vol. 78, pp. 12-27, 1994.
- [13] M. Rost, "Generating Students Motivation," *Worldview*, 2006.

- [14] O.A. Abdullina, "Monitoring of quality of professional training," Higher Education in Russia, vol. 3, pp. 21, 1998.
- [15] V.P. Bespal'ko, Composed components of educational technologies. Pedagogics, Moscow, 1989.
- [16] B Gou, "Contemporary teaching strategies in general chemistry," The China Papers, pp. 39-41, July 2003.
- [17] V.N. Kosarev, M.Yu. Rykov, "About personal-oriented approach in the education," Science Journal of Volgograd State University, vol. 6 (10), pp. 89-94, 2007.
- [18] A.V. Chutorskoi, Handbook in didactics and modern methods of teaching. Piter, St.-Petersburg, 2004.
- [19] N.E. Schurkova, Educational technology. Pedagogical society of Russia, Moscow, 2002.
- [20] I.S. Yakimanskaya, Basics of personal-oriented education. Binom, laboratory of knowledge, Moscow, 2013.