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Intercultural competence formation at bilingual students through a set of exercises

Формирование межкультурной компетенции студентов-билингвов на основе комплекса упражнений

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Keywords: intercultural competence, professionally-oriented text, exercises, bilingual student, intercultural reading skills.

Аннотация. Целью данного исследования является изучение эффективности применения комплекса упражнений для формирования межкультурной компетенции студентов-билингвов средствами профессионально-ориентированных текстов.

Для достижения цели исследования была проведена опытно-экспериментальная работа.

Участниками опытно-экспериментальной работы по апробации комплекса упражнений для формирования межкультурной компетенции стали студенты 1 и 2 курсов бакалавриата агротехнологического факультета ФГБОУ ВО «Арктического государственного агротехнологического университета» в условиях практических занятий по дисциплине «Профильный иностранный язык», входящей в вариативную часть дисциплин основной образовательной программы. По результатам проведенных контрольного и заключительного срезов были сделаны выводы по эффективности применения комплекса упражнений.

Результаты настоящего исследования показали, что применение комплекса упражнений повлиял на прирост среднего показателя по уровням сформированности межкультурной компетенции студентов-билингвов.

В результате применения комплекса упражнений произошёл абсолютный прирост среднего показателя сформированности МКК студентов-билингвов, что свидетельствует об эффективности применения, разработанного нами комплекса упражнений.

Abstract. The purpose of the current research is to study the efficiency of using a set of exercises for the intercultural competence formation of bilingual students by means of professionally-oriented texts.

Experimental work was carried out to achieve the research goal. Participants of the experimental work on testing a set of exercises for the intercultural competence formation were 1-st and 2-nd year students (bachelors) of the agrotechnological faculty of the Arctic State Agrotechnological University in the conditions of practical classes in the discipline "Specialized foreign language", which is the variable part of the main educational program. Based on the results of the initial and final knowledge assessments, conclusions were made on the effectiveness of applying a set of exercises.

The research results showed that the use of a set of exercises affected the average index increase for the levels of intercultural competence formation among bilingual students.

The absolute average index increase of intercultural competence formation among bilingual students has occurred, which indicates the effectiveness of the complex of exercises developed by us.

Introduction. Foreign language proficiency is an integral part of professional training of future specialists, a means of introducing students to a foreign language culture, integration into a foreign

language environment and formation of readiness for intercultural communication.

The ability to communicate in oral and written forms for solving interpersonal and intercultural interaction problems is one of the key competencies

of a future specialist formed in the process of foreign language learning in non-linguistic higher education institutions.

In this regard, the problem of purposeful development of intercultural competence in the process of foreign language training is updated and the problem of formation improving ways in the areas of training future agricultural specialists arises.

The problems of intercultural communication and intercultural competence formation has been studied in the works of many Russian and foreign scientists (N.D. Galskova [10], G.V. Elizarova [8], V.V. Safonova [17], S.G. Ter-Minasova [18], V.P. Furmanova [19], R. Brumfil [4], M. Byram [6], M. Canale [7], C.J. Kramsch [14], Van Ek [20] etc.).

A number of researches (M.S. Achaeva [1], R.S. Akhmadieva [2], V.P. Borisova [3], I.R. Mukharlyamova [15], L. Pluzhnik [16], O.G. Polyakov [5] and others) have recently been devoted to the development and formation of students' intercultural competence in higher education institutions.

However, the analyses of scientific literature, the pedagogical process and teaching methods in a bilingual environment indicate that despite significant progress in certain aspects' research of the considered problem, the process of intercultural competence formation among bilingual students using professionally- oriented texts of agricultural discourse in this process has not yet been the subject of a special integrated study.

The main issue in the problem statement of the research is the assumption that the intercultural competence formation in bilingual students when teaching intercultural reading will be effective if, within the framework of the methodic system for the intercultural competence formation in bilingual students, a set of exercises for the formation of intercultural competence in bilingual students based on professionally-oriented texts is developed.

To ensure the possibility of systematic management of the intercultural competence formation, it was necessary to define the concept of "ICC of bilingual students", its structure and content based on the works of foreign and Russian researchers.

There are different definitions of a notion "intercultural competence" (hereinafter-ICC): "a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills applied through action which enables one, either singly or together with others" [12], "an ethical orientation in which certain morally right ways of being, thinking and acting are emphasized" [14]; "the complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are

linguistically and culturally different from oneself" [9] and etc.

As a result of the analysis of a number of studies M. Byram [6], G.V. Elizarova [8], V. Ek [20], I.L. Pluzhnik [16], D.H. Hymes [13] and taking into account their point of view on this issue, we have defined the concept of "intercultural competence of bilingual students" as an integral personality quality, expressed in the readiness to interact with representatives of different cultures by achieving mutual understanding based on overcoming interference and using transference at all structural levels of intercultural competence arising in intercultural communication in the context of trilingualism".

Within the framework of our research, the formed intercultural competence consists of four components (linguistic-socio-cultural, discursive, strategic, subject-professional) and to some extent coincides with the goal of foreign language teaching in non-linguistic higher education institutions. The goal of intercultural competence formation concerns a broader area of intercultural communication between representatives of different cultures, social and ethnic groups, and not only the development of communicative competence, which involves preparing students to communicate in the framework of learning foreign language.

In our research, the intercultural competence formation of bilingual students is carried out by teaching intercultural reading of professionally oriented texts (hereinafter - POT). The teaching reading priority of special literature in a foreign language in comparison with other types of speech activity requires a special approach to teaching reading.

The process of teaching intercultural reading to bilingual students requires careful selection of texts. The text used in a foreign language teaching, which is considered as: "an integral communicative unit, which is characterized by completeness, semantic completeness (Valgina N.S., 2003, Folomkina S.K., 1987), "the work of the speech-making process", (Galperin I.R., 2008, Dridze T.M.), "speech work" (N.S. Bolotnova), "basic unit of communication" (V.P. Belyanin). When teaching intercultural reading by "text" we mean "study text", considered as a means of teaching reading and a communicative unit containing, conveying information and carrying a sociocultural content, which is characterized by integrity, structuredness and completeness.

The goal of the scientific article is to substantiate the creation and testing of a set of exercises for the intercultural competence formation among bilingual students in the teaching intercultural reading process of professionally-oriented texts.

Methodology and materials. The theoretical basis of our research was the analysis of scientific works of Russian and foreign scientists on the problem of the intercultural competence formation in the process of teaching a foreign language.

The developed set of exercises is based on a methodological system of intercultural competence formation among bilingual students on the basis of professionally-oriented texts. If the methodological system is based on a systemic-structural approach, then in the process of achieving a common goal - the intercultural competence formation, competence-based, socio-cultural and learner-centered and activity approaches are combined. The systemic-structural approach ensures the interconnection of all methodological system's elements of the intercultural competence formation process and its subsystems. For the systemic management of the intercultural competence formation among bilingual students, intercultural exercises were developed with the aim of developing all four components of intercultural competence. When developing a set of exercises aimed at the formation of intercultural reading skills of POT, we focused on the types of intercultural exercises proposed by I.A. Giniatullin [11] in combination with the traditional set of exercises (pre-text, text and post-text), which are guided by assignments.

A set of exercises for the intercultural competence formation of bilingual students, which was tested in experimental work among first and second year bachelor students of the agrotechnological faculty of the Arctic State Agrotechnological University in the context of practical training in the discipline "English for Specific Purposes", included in the variable part of the disciplines of the main educational program and consisted of pre-text, text and post-text exercises, including various types of intercultural exercises: exercises in understanding linguistic units with national and cultural specifics, exercises in intercultural reading-observation, exercises in intercultural comparison and exercises in applying new intercultural knowledge.

The exercises developed within the three thematic modules "Horse breeding", "Reindeer breeding", "Cattle breeding" were presented according to the degree of complexity, had their own goals for the stages of the intercultural competence formation: motivational-incentive, analytical-synthetic and implementation-control.

Exercises in understanding linguistic units with national and cultural specifics are used at the pre-text and text levels and are intended to form the linguistic-sociocultural and substantive-professional components of the intercultural competence among bilingual students:

- motivational-incentive stage – detection, definition of the language units' meanings of the native culture with national and cultural specifics; to discover and determine the professional vocabulary meaning of agricultural discourse with the national-cultural specifics of the native culture;

- analytic-synthetic stage – exercises to detect, determine the meaning of linguistic units of first non-native language (hereinafter FNNL) culture with national and cultural specifics; to detect, determine the meaning of professional vocabulary of agricultural discourse with the national-cultural specifics of FNNL culture;

- realizing-control stage – to detect, determine the meaning of language units of IC with national and cultural specifics; on the detection, definition of the meaning of professional vocabulary of agricultural discourse with the national-cultural specifics of the foreign-language culture (hereinafter-FLC).

Exercises in intercultural reading-observation are aimed at the formation of the discursive component of the ICC among bilingual students at the text level:

- motivational-incentive stage – the detection of phenomena and objects of the features of verbal / non-verbal communication, the traditional way of life and farming of agricultural discourse in native culture;

- analytic-synthetic stage – the detection of phenomena and objects of the features of verbal / non-verbal communication, the traditional way of life and farming of agricultural discourse in the culture of FNNL;

- realizing-control stage – the detection of phenomena and objects of the features of verbal / non-verbal communication, the traditional way of life and farming of agricultural discourse in the culture of FLC.

Exercises in intercultural comparison are aimed at the formation of the discursive component of the ICC among bilingual students at the *text and post-text level*:

- analytic-synthetic stage – characterization, identification of communities and differences of linguistic units, phenomena and objects of the features of verbal / non-verbal communication, the traditional way and management of agricultural discourse types of farms in the cultures of FNNL and native language;

- realizing-control stage – characterization, identification of communities and differences of linguistic units, phenomena and objects of the features of verbal / non-verbal communication, the traditional way and management of agricultural discourse types of farms in the cultures of FL and FNNL or native language.

Exercises in the application of new intercultural knowledge as post-text exercises are aimed at the formation of a strategic component at the third – realizing-control stage and focused on forecasting, designing and applying communication strategies and tactics in situations of intercultural professional communication with representatives of the NC and culture of FNNL and FL.

Results. Before the teaching start with the use of a set of exercises in order to determine the beginner level of the intercultural competence formation among bilingual students, initial assessment was carried out for which test tasks were developed to check the level of formation of the ICC components. The assessment showed the absence of significant differences and the predominance of bilingual students with low and medium levels of intercultural competence formation in both groups.

When evaluating assessments, we adhered to the PET (Preliminary English Test) scale, according to which a minimum of 45% of the assessment must have been completed. The tasks of the initial test consisted of 30 questions, for each correctly completed task the student received one point.

After approbation of the set of exercises at the final stage, to determine the level of qualitative changes in the intercultural competence formation among bilingual students, a final assessment was carried out. The content of control and measuring materials and the diagnostic procedure were identical in both groups. Students had to read three authentic professionally- oriented texts and complete tasks for them within 90 minutes in written form.

The increase in the number of bilingual students with a high level of intercultural competence formation in the experimental group was 7%: linguistic-socio-cultural component – 8.9%; substantive-professional component – 7.1%; discourse component – 7.1%; strategic component – 5.4%. The number of bilingual students with a sufficient level of ICC formation noticeably increased on average: in the experimental group by 39.3%; in the control group by 8.3%.

The Average Index (AV) at the initial stage was: Experimental Group – 1.68, Control Group – 1.67, and at the final stage: Experimental Group – 2.57, Control Group – 1.88 (Picture 1).

Picture 1. – Results of assessments

The absolute increase in the average index of the ICC formation among bilingual students was 0.89 in the experimental group.

Conclusion. Thus, the obtained results confirm that the differences in the average index increase by the levels of ICC formation among bilingual students in the experimental and control groups are due to the

effectiveness of the set of exercises' use developed by us within the framework of the methodology for the intercultural competence formation on the material of professionally-oriented texts, which were the basis of the study book "Animal husbandry" developed by us in the experimental group.

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