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Topical Issues of Linguistics and Teaching Methods in Business and Professional Communication

INTERDISCIPLINARY INTEGRATION INTO PROFESSIONALLY ORIENTED FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING: MEANS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract

The article examines the means and possibilities of using an interdisciplinary approach to teaching a professionally oriented foreign language to Hospitality Management students. The authors aim to substantiate the feasibility of using interdisciplinary integration when forming communicative competence of students on the example of working with authentic material, increased didactic potential of which is facilitated through digital technology. To implement the goal, both theoretical (analytical) and empirical (observation, questionnaires, surveys) research methods were used. The novelty of the research approach to solving the problem of integrating the teaching material of speech-related and specialised disciplines within the framework of professionally oriented foreign language teaching is due to the reference to a work of fiction. The authentic text of A. Haley's novel "Hotel" has become the basis for the development of tasks, implementation of which requires from students not only knowledge of a foreign language, ability to consider national specifics of business communication, but also the knowledge obtained during the study of special (profile) disciplines. Findings show that the use of an interdisciplinary approach makes the process of professionally oriented teaching of foreign language communication for students as effective as possible, while the use of digital technologies allows a variety of forms and methods of learning, using information from diverse areas of scientific knowledge, thereby forming a holistic view of the world for students.

Keywords: Authentic text, communicative competence, digital technology, interdisciplinary integration

1. Introduction

The task of a modern Higher Education Institution is to ensure the effectiveness of preparing graduates for an active professional life. The competence approach is focused on the formation of students' readiness to solve practical and theoretical problems in the sphere of their future professional activity. It is reflected in the Federal State Educational Standards (Federal State Educational Standards of Higher Education, 2017) developed for higher education, which outline the competencies that students should master as a result of mastering a particular study programme. At the same time, the modern approach to higher education considers that a high degree of mobility and competitiveness of a specialist in the labour market is ensured by the development of not only professional, but also as previously mentioned professional (universal) competencies, each of which is formed in the process of studying several disciplines. Thus, the requirements of the third-generation FSES HE (2017) state that a Bachelor graduate should be "able to carry out business communication in oral and written form in the state language of the Russian Federation and in foreign language(s)". Communicative competence (CC-4) is a "soft skill" and is in demand in any field of activity as an indicator and basis for professionalism. The emphasis is placed on communication in the business (professional) sphere of communication. Moreover, in the context of globalization, to be successful, a young professional with good professional training should demonstrate an excellent command of both his/her native and foreign language, thus demonstrating his/her readiness for business communication, including intercultural communication.

Mastering communication skills is one of the most important components of professional training for hospitality professionals, who are required in particular to be able to provide successful customer service; to interact with customers without conflict; to establish interpersonal contacts; to understand the main issues that define their specific area of professional activity; and to make decisions in both standard and extreme situations. In this regard, the Russian University of Transport pays special attention to the readiness of graduates for interpersonal interaction; training in fluent speech activities (listening, speaking, reading, writing), as well as strategies and tactics for business conversations, negotiations both in Russian and in a foreign language, when training students in Hospitality Management (Bachelor's programme).

Training in communication is carried out within the framework of general and special (profile) disciplines in accordance with the curriculum and is aimed at teaching the practical possession of verbal and non-verbal means of communication and the ability to choose the most appropriate of them in a specific situation of business communication.

2. Problem Statement

Since students' training aimed to develop their communicative competence should consider their future professional activity, the specifics of students' future professional activity is the guideline for the development of working programmes of speech-education disciplines for Hospitality Management training direction.

2.1. Speech-language disciplines and their role in the development of professionally relevant communication skills

Professionally relevant communication skills of future hospitality professionals are formed during the study of such disciplines as "Russian language and business communication", "Speech communication", "Foreign language (general knowledge)", "Business (professional) foreign language".

Thus, at the Russian language and business communication course most attention is paid to the specifics of business style, the specifics of oral and written official communication (in particular, the rules of discussion and business negotiations; the ability to compose and format texts of technical documentation and business documents in accordance with the requirements for written business speech); oratory and public speaking techniques, including the ability to interact with the audience, to lead a debate, using words as a tool.

Classes in Speech Communication provide students with a systematic understanding of speech communication; develop communication skills, considering ethical, sociolinguistic and psychological aspects of speech interaction; deepen their understanding of language and speech, forms of speech, types of Russian speech culture; gain an understanding of the psychological and socio-role components of communication, as well as the specifics of speech and speech behaviour in interpersonal communication and social interaction. Particular attention is paid to business and speech etiquette (verbal and non-verbal), considering its national specificity, the problem of recognition and effective use of speech tactics in communication.

Foreign language teaching, which is an integral part of students' professional training at higher education institution, is aimed at the integrated development of communicative, cognitive, informational, socio-cultural, professional and general cultural competences of students. Students are not taught linguistic, reproductive and training exercises, but problem-solving and creative tasks; authentic communication situations are modelled, the ability to react spontaneously during communication is formed, as well as psychological readiness for real foreign-language communication in various situations. Particular attention is paid to the careful selection of course topics, language, speech and country study material, as well as the typology of tasks and forms of work, considering the context of students' future activities (Kuzmina et al., 2009). Thus, communicative and socio-cultural skills are acquired in accordance with the norms of socially acceptable communication accepted in the countries where the language is spoken. The students get rid of incorrect and one-sided ideas about the foreign language culture and learn to consider the existing social, ethnic and other features of life of different groups of citizens.

The main aim of the discipline "Business (Professional) Foreign Language" is the development of professionally oriented foreign language communicative competence, enabling business communication in conditions of intercultural communication to solve professional tasks. As part of the course, students master the lexical and grammatical tools characteristic of foreign language business communication, ways of expressing spatial, temporal, logical, modal and other relations, foreign language professional terminology, as well as the norms of business etiquette; principles of business and corporate ethics; rules of business documentation and drafting adopted in professional communication; master the skills of translation of professionally oriented texts, etc.

Future specialists of the hospitality sphere should also be able to perform design tasks, create and edit foreign professional texts (business correspondence, reports, instructions, presentations); fill out forms and forms, compile reports; extract from foreign language sources, analyse and systematize information of professional purpose; logically correct, reasoned and clearly build oral and written language; translate professional and business information from one iconic system to another (from text to table, from audiovisual series to text, etc.); adequately perceive the meaning of authentic texts on different media; understand oral speech within professional subject; prepare texts of public speeches, presentations, make reports.

It should be noted that some aspects of communicative training of students are also considered in such courses as "Introduction to the profession", "Psychology", "Psychology of business communication", "Professional ethics and etiquette", "National features of hospitality", "Documentary support of hotel business management", "Hotel management" and some others. Each of these disciplines contributes to the formation of communicative competence of students.

Although the content of the working programmes of both speech and professional disciplines has a clear communicative orientation, it is not possible to provide students with a systematic understanding of speech interaction, to teach them professional communicative skills, considering ethical, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of communication, to form a professional linguistic personality. This is because we see a highly specialized approach to the development of communicative competence within each individual discipline. As Nikitina (2008) notes:

> Each of these disciplines introduces its element into the process of communicative education of university students, thus creating a contradiction between "fragmentary" knowledge received by students in the study of different disciplines, and the need for their integrated application in future professional activities; between the need to synthesize, integrate knowledge, skills in the field, to combine them in a holistic picture and a highly specialized approach to presentation of the content of material in various disciplines, as well as the violation of unity in the presentation of certain aspects of the above problem. (p. 25)

2.2. Specifics and problems of professionally oriented foreign language teaching in terms of a communicative approach

In the context of increasing international cooperation, there is a growing need for professionals who can communicate effectively in a foreign language in the field of professional communication.

The goal of communicative approach to foreign language teaching of students of the «Hotel business» direction, who will have to communicate with clients and business partners in both Russian and foreign languages, is the preparation of them for foreign speech and intercultural interaction in the field of hospitality, which involves the ability to choose a style of communication and adapt their speech to the specific situation of speech interaction; translate various professional texts from Russian into foreign and from foreign into Russian; conduct business correspondence considering the style of official and unofficial letters, as well as sociocultural differences in the format of correspondence; to present their views in public speeches and in situations of business (professional) communication.

Those students whose future activities will be related to the field of hospitality need to have an in-depth understanding within the process of communicative interaction and to develop the right attitudinal guidelines related to communication. They need to master the skills of strategic planning of the speech situation and speech reflection (during and at the end of the communicative act). But the main reference point in mastering the strategies and tactics of effective communication should be considered communicative and ethical norms, compliance with which contributes to conflict-free speech interaction. In this context, the fact that students' acquired communicative skills for effective professional communication in their native language may sometimes differ significantly at the encyclopaedic/cognitive level from the knowledge acquired in the foreign language classes deserves special attention. Therefore, the teaching of foreign language business communication also involves the acquisition of professional and linguo-socultural concepts of the foreign-language speech message by the students.

Teaching the discipline "Business (Professional) Foreign Language" shows that the exposure of the Russian-speaking linguistic personality to professional fragments of the picture of the foreign world is often significantly limited by the absence in the Russian-speaking world picture of many stereotypical communication situations, discursive strategies and tactics, professional concepts that are common to the society of another culture. This is typical for such situations of business communication as making personal contacts, writing business letters, talking on the phone, holding meetings, negotiations, etc. It should be noted that such situations arise and are greatly complicated if native speakers of Russian are not aware of the strategies of communicative deployment at the cognitive level, if in the minds of students there are no basic structures that could provide perception and understanding of the language and the world of another socio-cultural community (Turbina, 2013). Given this circumstance, students should pay special attention to mastering the principles of speech interaction in business (professional) communication, first in their native language and then in a foreign language, considering that speech etiquette and rules of communication in business sphere have national specifics. This is why the teacher has a special focus on developing students' skills in adequately understanding the intentions of business partners, as well as the social and professional values from which members of another culture derive. Such work goes faster and easier the better students' skills in identifying and generating speech patterns in their native language in a variety of business cooperation situations, the more knowledge they have of professional communicative interaction strategies and speech tactics obtained in their native language. It is primarily a question of teaching specific speech patterns, analysis of professional discourse and how to implement a communication strategy in every situation aimed at achieving consensus in work-related tasks, be it personal contacts between partners or meetings and negotiations.

According to the traditional starting (entrance/diagnostic) control carried out in one of the first classes at the Russian University of Transport, the level of knowledge of a foreign language, in particular English, among first-year students shows: the former students have poor knowledge of grammar, no knowledge of linguistic terminology, they have no or poorly formed skills of speech activities; most of them have communicative-speech problems. The situation is aggravated by the fact that classes in speech studies ("Russian Language and Business Communication" first, then "Speech Communication") reveal that many first-year students lack basic communication and speech skills and the ability to build a speech interaction in accordance with the specific situation of communication.

Limited communicative skills in the native language, as well as the low level of foreign language proficiency of first-year students, make the work of the teacher very difficult. Students, on the other hand, face problems in their studies and lose interest in the subject, leading to poor results in mastering general foreign language and then professional oriented foreign language. The current situation forced us to search for such means, methods, and techniques of teaching that would contribute to the development of communicative competence of students, increase the efficiency of learning and students' motivation to study a foreign language, knowledge of which today is an important condition for the competitiveness of a specialist in the labour market, one of the means to implement personal professional ambitions.

3. Research Questions

The focus of modern education on the acquisition of professional and universal competences by graduates of higher education institutions, which allow them to comprehensively apply the knowledge obtained at the university to solve professional problems, makes it relevant to think about ways and means to optimize the learning process.

It was mentioned earlier that successful interaction with customers or business partners in the field of hospitality requires good professional training as well as a high level of developed communicative competence. Therefore, higher education teachers are constantly searching for new techniques and methods of work to make the students' learning process as effective as possible.

3.1. Feasibility of an interdisciplinary approach to teaching a professionally oriented foreign language

Since each competence, as mentioned above, is formed through the study of several academic disciplines, and communicative competence from this perspective is no exception, the question of the desirability of using an interdisciplinary approach to the formation of foreign language communicative competence of students inevitably arises. Interdisciplinary learning itself is not new: Komenský argued that "everything that is interconnected must be taught in the same way" (Cited from Gracheva, 2016). Contemporary research on interdisciplinary linkages (Barabanova, 2004; Blinova & Kirilova, 2013; Gracheva, 2016; Kolos, 2021; Tyurina, 2015; Vinogradova, 2016) emphasizes that their origins lie within a subject, so the establishment of links between subjects in higher education teaching practice is a necessary teaching condition for forming a system of knowledge in students.

The need for an interdisciplinary approach to the professional training of future specialists is also because at the present stage of civilization development, against the background of the complex nature of emerging problems, there is a need for specialists able to mobilize knowledge from different scientific fields in their professional activities. When training such specialists, it is of paramount importance to develop systems thinking, the ability to see a problem in the unity of its multifaceted connections and relations.

Among the main methods of implementing key objectives of the interdisciplinary approach used in classes with students, we can highlight both reproductive and problem-based questions and tasks that require recalling and synthesizing knowledge or applying skills from different disciplines in a new

situation, etc., which allows forming the ability to generalize knowledge and think logically; promotes simultaneous development of communicative and professional-communicative skills as well as informational, academic and social skills. In studying, the knowledge of students becomes not only definite, but also generalized, which enables future professionals to transfer this knowledge to new situations and apply it in practice. Among the didactic advantages of implementing interdisciplinary links are the mutual use of information, the elimination of duplication, and the development of a unified system of world-views (Vinogradova, 2016).

Before the interdisciplinary approach, it is necessary to define the range of speech and specialized disciplines that can be integrated into an integrative system after adjusting their curricula. Foreign language can serve as the basis for interdisciplinary links, where professionally oriented teaching correlates with the subject disciplines and the development of communicative competence in the classroom correlates with the goals of speech science disciplines.

3.2. Using the didactic potential of fiction to develop professionally oriented foreign language communicative competence as part of an interdisciplinary approach

The basic communicative and didactic unit within the communicative-oriented teaching of a foreign language is a text. In this case, as has been repeatedly noted by researchers, an objective reflection of the characteristic features of the life of a particular people, its culture is any artistic text.

The use of fiction in foreign language classes contributes to the creation of a natural socio-cultural environment. The didactic potential of such texts lies in their cognitive value, as they contain information about different spheres of life in the country of the studied language, reveal the mentality of native speakers; thanks to fiction texts prejudices and conventions in the perception of a foreign culture are overcome. In the lessons, real-life situations described in authentic texts contribute to the acquisition of language as a means of communication, and the texts themselves provide a meaningful basis for learning all kinds of speech activities.

To prepare students for foreign-language professional communication, works whose characters are presented in situations related to their work activities are of particular value. These are authentic industrial novels, which can serve as a source of new linguistic units and as material for learning tasks. Production novels provide examples regarding the use of foreign language professional terminology in various business communication situations; they reflect national business practices, business etiquette, values, and traditions of business culture, etc.

The production novel is characterized by the highest level of detail in the professional activities of its characters (Kerer, 2013), their business relationships, and the presence of terminology in the text that corresponds to the protagonists' fields of work, professionalisms and professional jargon. Using special vocabulary in the work gives the reader an "immersive" effect, allowing you to be fully immersed in the atmosphere of the particular production or service sector the author is describing (Nikitina & Pavlova, 2015).

Assignments that require students to use special vocabulary when analysing situations described in a production novel and evaluating the speech behaviour of characters or when justifying proposed ways of solving production problems and avoiding conflicts contribute to the development of students'

communicative skills and at the same time allow them to immerse themselves in their future professional sphere and develop the skill of practical application of the knowledge acquired in the classes of special disciplines. The efficiency of such work depends to a large extent on a well-chosen text material. The main criterion for selecting works of fiction for business foreign language lessons is their authenticity and professional orientation (Mokhova, 2017).

3.3. The role of digital technology in an interdisciplinary approach to foreign language teaching

The growing interest for digital technologies recently could not but affect the field of education. The digitalization process of education can be thought of as the introduction of modern technological tools into education, which

— allows lifelong learning via the Internet in an online format;

— provides conditions for individualization of the educational trajectory based on innovative technologies, involving extensive use of the Internet, e-mail, video communications, etc.

Digitalization of education has entailed a change in the ways of teaching, intensified the search for new forms of educational process organization and the introduction of innovative technologies (artificial intelligence, blockchain, virtual reality, cloud technologies, etc.) into educational practice, which has led to the need to update pedagogical technologies. The changes have affected not only the educational content, but also the forms of learning: new technologies allow connection to databases, information networks, and the use of multimedia.

Integrating the digital language environment into the educational process in higher education today is imperative, as the assessment of foreign language proficiency assesses students' ability to communicate not only in the real world, but also in the digital environment. Using the web, students, and teachers have unlimited access to foreign language learning materials: authentic texts, videos, films, online dictionaries and online translators, supplementary material on the topics being studied, making it easier to prepare for classes and making the learning process more interesting.

Thus, the challenging task of developing students' skills in understanding the spontaneous speech of native speakers can be achieved by using authentic film and video clips in the classroom, where both visual aids and knowledge of the communicative situation as a whole contribute to the understanding of the characters' speech. As part of their homework, students can, if necessary, repeatedly view episodes that are difficult to hear for various reasons (fast pace of speakers, interference, etc.) or use electronic dictionaries to translate new words which cannot be understood from the context.

As is well known, the hospitality industry requires the specialist's ability to find information in a foreign language on the web and to understand it adequately, to correspond with clients and foreign partners, to promote their business (hotel, restaurant) in social networks, etc.

Students at an advanced stage of English language learning can intensify the learning process and make it attractive for students by reading electronic versions of a variety of periodicals – American, British, Canadian (http://www.mediainfo.com/emedia); the listening of podcasts that help enrich vocabulary and provide information about current events in different areas of life (BBC Learning English website, section 6 Minute English), and the use of blogs that perform an informative and communicative

function and allow you to develop not only listening but also speaking and writing by sharing opinions, comments, feedback on events (http://elf-english.ru/blog/page/7/, as well as http://anglophone.ru/blog/) (Ivinskaya, 2016). According to Ivinskaya, the use of podcasts and blogs in the process of learning a foreign language develops students' creativity and communicativeness and allows them to plunge into a foreign-language communicative environment (Same place).

Due to the pandemic of online e-learning, the Microsoft Teams platform has proved its worth and has enabled many additional tools to be used in the learning process: chat rooms, free web-based versions of Word and Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneDrive, etc. as well as integration with external educational services. In fact, the platform has broadened the possibilities of the educational process, not only in a distance format, and has made the learning process of different speech activities more effective, as it has intensified the work of the students (Balovcev et al., 2020; Olkhovaya & Poyarkova, 2020).

3.4. Project-based learning technology

The project method, which is the basis of project-based learning, helps to implement the idea of linking theory and practice and to involve future professionals in professional activities by creating conditions that are close to the real world. This interactive, problem- and problem-solving method relies not only on the use of a variety of techniques and learning tools, but also on the integration of knowledge and skills from different fields of science, technology, and engineering (Petukhova & Kravchenko, 2017). This method involves the independent creation of a product (educational, scientific, informational, creative) within the framework of the task set by the teacher, which involves searching for information, discussing ideas and solutions to the task, planning mechanisms for achieving the result, preparing the "product" itself and reporting on the work done and the results obtained. Project-based activities as part of the foreign language training of students not only help them to consolidate previously learned language material, learn new words and terms, but also to deepen their understanding of a specific problem related to their future profession and to actualize interdisciplinary connections. Students can see and make use of interdisciplinary connections when working on information and/or practice-oriented projects (Rybinskaya, 2015).

Practically, any level of linguistic and specialist training can be used, provided that this level can be considered by the teacher when formulating the project task and determining the complexity of the problem it deals with in terms of the students' professional skills.

Final and critical stage of the work is the presentation of the results of the completed project, as students learn public speaking skills and the ability to analyse and evaluate their activities. Major criteria of the final evaluation include the scope and completeness of the development, creativity, originality of the proposed solutions and the use of digital technology to implement them; quality of execution and design of the project, prepared oral presentation; level of speech culture of the speaker; answers to questions from the audience.

4. Purpose of the Study

The analysis of ways and means to optimize the teaching of professional-oriented foreign language to Hospitality Management (bachelor's programme) students has allowed us to formulate the aim of our research. The main objective is to substantiate the feasibility of using interdisciplinary integration in the formation of communicative competence of students who will have to communicate with business partners and clients both in Russian and foreign (English) language in different situations of professional interaction in the future. We also aim to identify the didactic potential of using digital technologies and project-based learning in the implementation of an interdisciplinary approach in professionally oriented foreign language teaching.

To achieve the objective, the following tasks had to be carried out:

- study and analyse the methodology of the interdisciplinary approach;
- identify the range of speech and specialized disciplines that contribute to the development of students' communicative competence;
- to identify the didactic potential of fiction in the development of communicative, socio-cultural and professional competences of future hospitality professionals;
- to determine the effectiveness of using digital and interactive (project-based) technologies in the learning process as part of professionally oriented English language teaching based on an interdisciplinary approach.

Considering the text as a basic communicative and didactic unit, we chose the novel Hotel by A. Hailey, which in our opinion can contribute to the main goal—to prepare students for foreign language communication in situations of professional communication (Serpikova & Serpikova, 2019; Temyakova, 2014).

In the first stage of the experiment, the authentic text of this workplace novel provided the basis for the development of tasks that required not only the students' foreign language skills, the ability to consider the national specifics of business communication, but also their communication skills in their native language as well as special knowledge in accordance with the training profile. Therefore, the need to integrate the teaching material of speech-related and specialized disciplines to form professionally oriented communicative competence of the students has been raised. The present work, which is a continuation of the study we started earlier (see Serpikova & Serpikova, 2019), develops and supplements the ideas expressed in it on the development of communicative competence (CC-4) based on interdisciplinary integration, but already considering the opportunities offered using digital and interactive technologies (project method, in particular) in the educational process.

The practical significance of this study, in which we attempt to substantiate the feasibility and effectiveness of using the interdisciplinary approach in the development of communicative competence of students, lies in the possibility of using the proposed tasks in the educational process that form and develop professionally relevant communicative skills of students, which are in demand in their future work activities. These assignments, created because of authentic sources (the text of A. Haley's novel "Hotel"; the film of the same name, created based on this novel), correlate with educational material not only of speech disciplines ("Russian language and business communications," "Speech communication," etc.), but also of specialized (special) disciplines ("Professional ethics and etiquette," "National features

of hospitality," "Introduction to the speciality," "Hotel management," "Psychology of business communication," etc.).

In accordance with its objectives, the study was carried out in several stages:

— analysis of the content of the work programmes for the disciplines" Russian language and culture of speech", "Business communication", "Foreign language" (general course and business foreign language), "Introduction to the profession", "Hotel management", "Professional ethics and etiquette", "National features of hospitality", "Psychology of business communication" in terms of presence in the content of these disciplines aspects, to some extent associated with the theory and practice of interpersonal communication, and the role of these disciplines in the formation of communicative competence of students;

— within the framework of an experimental study on the possibilities of an interdisciplinary approach, identifying the didactic potential of a work of fiction, as well as a film based on it, in the formation and development of communicative, socio-cultural and professional competences;

— studying the possibility and feasibility of using digital and interactive technologies (project method) as part of the professional orientation of foreign language training for students.

5. Research Methods

In 2018 to 2021, the first-year students (120 in total) in the Hospitality Management programme were given a start-up check of their native language and English language proficiency. The results of this control showed a low level of communicative competence among yesterday's schoolchildren. This fact has forced us to look for new ways and means of intensifying the learning process to form and develop communicative competence of students at the level required for self-realization in professional activity. For this reason, we focused on our observations of the learning process, considering the empirical material accumulated in both Russian and English classes. Furthermore, the linguistic and methodological literature on the formation of communicative and linguistic competence in teaching both native and foreign languages has been analysed (Baklovskaya, 2017; Krasnoshchekova, 2018; Pyrkova, 2018) and the innovative technologies currently used in higher education (Volkova, 2015; Zakharova, 2020) practice have been studied.

To achieve the aim of the study, a team of authors used the following working methods:

— theoretical, including (1) analysis of scientific papers on the problems of interdisciplinary approach to teaching in higher education; (2) study and summarization of domestic and foreign experience of applying innovative technologies (including digital) in the practice of teaching foreign languages; (3) analysis of studies summarizing the experience of professionally oriented training in foreign languages   in a technical university; (4) comparing the working programs of the educational disciplines of the "Hospitality" training area, within the framework of which the communicative competence of students is formed, to identify common topics or overlapping directions for such disciplines in the development of communication skills of students;

— empirical, including questionnaires and tests of students with subsequent generalization of the results; observation of the experiment on the introduction of new technologies and methodological techniques most effective in terms of forming communicative competence of students; interviews with

senior students to identify and analyse their communication difficulties in working with clients during the production practice.

6.   Findings

To substantiate the feasibility of using interdisciplinary integration in the formation of communicative competence of students on the example of working with an authentic fiction text, we have structured the educational work with students in terms of common themes and overlapping areas that contribute to the development of communicative skills of students. The selected disciplines were integrated into an integrative system for this purpose, which, on the one hand, helped to avoid duplication of learning information, as teachers did not repeat learning material already studied by students in other disciplines, thereby saving time, which teachers are always short of. On the other hand, work on the development of pupils' communicative skills in their native language, considering their future activities in the hospitality sector, has intensified this process in English classes.

As early as the first stage of our research, an analysis of the curricula of speech and profile disciplines recommended for study by the Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Education (3++) in the Hospitality Management training area allowed us to identify the common range of topics, and in the process of further work, to specify the list and content of interdisciplinary elements. Having the obtained data, as an experiment, we turned to the original version of A. Haley's novel "Hotel" (Hailey, 2018), the authenticity and professional orientation of which (hotel activity) meets the basic criteria for selecting a work of art for use as educational (illustrative) material in classes built on the principle of interdisciplinary integration (Dudnik, 2011).

 Problematic questions and assignments based on typical hotel business situations described in the novel were offered as material for reflection and discussion. Therefore, students were asked to analyse the W. Trent and O'Keefe argument and thereby gain an understanding of the two models of hotel service organization and the way hotels organize their meals (full-service and quick service).   The analysis of the various hotel services and personnel helped to illustrate the role of communication culture in hospitality and the importance of business etiquette to the students.

The communication problems that students encounter in work placements most often include the difficulty of understanding the spontaneous speech of native English speakers. To develop listening skills, students were given tasks based on authentic film footage:

1) voice the onscreen dialogue scene from the feature film based on A. Haley's novel "Hotel," a trailer for the film (https://www.kinopoisk.ru/film/14991/?from_block=zen_widget), paying attention to intonation and pronunciation;

2) after listening to the dialogue presented in the film, identify the phrases/expressions in the characters' speech that help to support dialogue communication;

3) acting out a specific situation using these phrases.

In doing their homework, students were able to use electronic dictionaries and, if necessary, repeatedly refer to those episodes that might be difficult to hear for various reasons (fast pace of the speakers, some interference, etc.).

The use of authentic videos in the teaching of professionally oriented English, as close to the linguistic reality as possible, allowed students to get an idea of the socio-cultural reality of the country of the target language, as well as to see the combination of verbal and non-verbal codes of foreign-language communication.

The interview in English is a serious test for many of our graduates when applying for a job, as the employer assesses not only the professional skills and personal qualities of the applicant, but also his or her language skills. Students in the Business English class focused on this aspect of their training. Work was carried out in several phases. In the first stage the trainees were given the homework of writing a CV and in the second stage they were given the task of preparing for an interview for a management position at the St Gregory's Hotel.

When completing the assignments, students relied on practical experience of CV writing gained in classes in the discipline Russian Language and Business Communication, as well as on materials from the Ingles online school (https://englex.ru/). The Ingle website provides a sample CV and an algorithm for writing it, a list of the vocabulary needed to describe personal qualities and skills and which English phrases are best to use (see https://englex.ru/how-to-write-a-cv/). There are also the most common interview questions, how to answer them correctly, what not to do and what not to talk about at a job interview (https://englex.ru/how-to-pass-job-interview-successfully/), and a recording of the webinar "You're Hired!"

Taking the CV texts as a basis, the interviewer teacher (in strong groups a student) interviewed each of the students in the group applying for the manager position at the St Gregory Hotel as part of the role play "Interviewing for a job"…

Because of the students' interest in the use of various multimedia tools, gadgets, programmes, applications and their high motivation and performance in digital tasks, we offered them a group project work" Creating and designing the St Gregory Hotel website layout (thanks to an online constructor)".

From the text of the novel and after watching the film based on it, students know that the St Gregory's, the largest and once one of the most upmarket hotels in New Orleans, Louisiana, occupies a huge, fifteen-storey building, with 30 to 40 rooms on each floor. Once renowned for its hospitality and luxury, the hotel can no longer be called a bustling… The hotel has everything guests need for a comfortable stay: a spacious garage for hotel guests, lifts to take guests and their luggage to the right floor. The hotel has bellboys on hand to take heavy luggage to your room; there is also a restaurant and bar where hotel guests can enjoy delicious food and drinks; and other services are also available.

The assignment was formulated as follows:

"Based on what you've learned from reading the text of the novel (and/or watching the film adaptation), create a high-quality and user-friendly bilingual hotel website (the main version is in English) to attract new customers and increase profits. The primary purpose of the website is to provide the user with complete information about the hotel and to allow the user to book the chosen room. When designing a website, the following should be considered

1) the website design should appeal to users and reflect the style of the hotel;

2) the availability of a multilingual version is an additional advantage for the website (the main thing in this case is a high-quality translation without losing the meaning of the text));

3) the website should contain a description of the hotel and its rooms (room descriptions should be accompanied by high-quality images so that the client can see all the advantages of the hotel); information on where the hotel is located and what services are available on its premises; up-to-date information on hotel rates, seasonal discounts, special offers;

4) a booking module that allows the user not only to choose a suitable room, but also to make an online booking and choose a convenient method of payment (an important element of the website that has a significant impact on increasing direct sales);

5) to make it easy for the user to contact hotel representatives and get the information they are interested in, the website should include contact details; feedback forms; forms for ordering transfers".

Before starting the project, we recommended that students consult English-language sources on hotel business issues and analyse similar websites of British or American hotels of the same class.

In their project work, the students used the Tilda website builder (https://tilda.cc/ru/), which can be used to create a website without programming skills by following step-by-step instructions, with helpful tips and links to resources (https://tilda.education/how-to-build-website).

In order for the hotel business to grow and generate income, it is not just necessary to create a website with the necessary set of options, but also to start actively promoting it on social networks, which help to communicate with hotel guests and contribute to increased profits (Pechetitsa & Chernov, 2015). Solving this problem was the next stage of the project work.

Designed by the students, the bilingual website of the Hotel Saint Gregory and the hotel account created in the social networking site allowed to check the level of communicative competence of the students (knowledge of terminology, grammar skills, etc.); their ability to perceive, analyse, summarize and systematize information from authentic sources; their ability to work independently with electronic dictionaries, databases, basic information retrieval systems—both in Russian and English; their ability to translate professional business information from one sign system to another (for example, from text to tables, charts, graphs, and vice versa). During the project, the skills, and competences acquired by the students from different subject areas were in demand (in addition to those already mentioned, the disciplines of Informatics, Information Technology and Systems in the Hospitality Industry, among others, can be added).

To ensure that the practice-oriented projects proposed to students were usually interdisciplinary, teachers from the relevant departments were invited as experts to evaluate them objectively.

Note that digital technologies and multimedia products in foreign language teaching are only supporting tools. Therefore, their application in each case was determined primarily by the extent to which they would contribute to the students' ability to use a foreign language as a means of communication in the field of professional communication. As is known, a breakthrough in improving the quality of learning can only be achieved through "the thoughtful integration of educational and information technology" (Krasilnikova, 2013; Verbitskiy, 2019).

7. Conclusion

Improving the quality of training specialists with a new type of thinking, mastering the speech strategies and tactics necessary to implement professional activities in accordance with the requirements

of the digital economy, can be achieved through the implementation of new approaches to learning in higher education.

Practice-oriented and future-oriented graduate training based on an interdisciplinary approach is one of the most promising trends in the development of teaching methods in higher education today. This is confirmed by our experience of teaching business English to students based on this approach, which was achieved by referring to the text of Hayley's production novel "Hotel". When reading the novel, the students were able to familiarize themselves with the many technological and auxiliary processes underlying the "inner", hidden from the eyes of the customers, of the communication situations encountered in customer service, and thereby increase their awareness of their future professional field.

Besides, the classes discussed professionally relevant communicative situations and real problems of the hotel industry presented in the novel. Such discussion required students to take a comprehensive approach to problem-solving and intensified their speech activity. As a result, teachers were able to intensify their work on the development of students' foreign-language communicative competence and to avoid fragmentation and maintain unity in presenting teaching material with both professional disciplines and other speech-language disciplines.

The use of digital technologies in teaching students foreign-language business communication has enabled us to experiment more, expand interdisciplinary links, make the learning process more practice-oriented and effective, and involve almost all students in each language group in the learning process. Thus, practice-oriented communicative tasks with the use of multimedia tools contributed to a more active acquisition of new knowledge, such as the rules of speech behaviour in a non-cultural environment, and to consolidating it in practice. On the whole, access to English-language information resources of the Internet, the use of multimedia for working with film and video clips, as well as the use of the capabilities of the Microsoft Teams platform allowed to bring the learning process closer to the realities of our students' future professional activities, to make it more interesting and effective. The success of this work, it must be said, depended largely on the English teacher's awareness of the methodological possibilities of using digital tools, the ability to choose the best of them, appropriate to the aims and tasks of teaching in each particular case.

Project work as a means of engaging students in active cognitive, communicative and practical activities helped to increase students' motivation and to involve them in solving real practical problems using digital technologies and foreign-language Internet resources. The students gained experience of working with professionally relevant information, learned to perceive it adequately, to react to it, creating original statements instead of using memorized formulaic language formulas. In the process of working on the project, students have developed their skills in foreign language communication in the professional sphere, as well as the ability to navigate in the foreign-language information space, to transfer the knowledge acquired during the study of one discipline to another, and to apply this knowledge in non-standard situations. This project work, in fact, based on the plot of A. Haley's production novel "Hotel", required the students to acquire knowledge from several academic disciplines. The students, in turn, were able to see in practice the need for integrated application of the acquired knowledge.

The results of the project defence and the grades received by the students at the exam confirmed the effectiveness of the interdisciplinary approach to teaching a professionally oriented foreign language:

this approach develops students' communicative skills, activates their cognitive activity, and shapes their integrated professional thinking.

Arranging training in an interdisciplinary approach is not an easy process, requiring close collaboration between teachers from different departments and coordinated work programmes based on common themes or overlapping areas in the pre-selected disciplines. But it is this approach to learning that allows, on the one hand, ensuring comprehensive training of students, avoiding duplication of information and thus saving training time, and, on the other hand, solving the contradiction we faced between a highly specialized approach to the formation of communicative competence of students while studying different disciplines and the need to synthesize and integrate professionally oriented communicative skills of students, which are in demand in their future professional In our case, the discipline "Business (Professional) English" served as a basis for such integration.

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