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MOTIVATION IN THE DIVISION OF THE STUDENTS INTO LANGUAGE GROUPS

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Abstract

The modern society strongly needs competent specialists who are able to orientate in the market conditions and ready to the constant development. Foreign languages are represented as one of the key driving forces of socio-economic and cultural progress of the society. Although the knowledge of foreign language is in a great demand nowadays, the quality of training is still very poor in the non-specific faculties. It happens because some circumstances are not admitted. They are the motivation of the students, the correctly adopted program, learning environment and the opportunity of the cooperation of all the participants of learning process. This article focuses on the importance of the degree of students' motivation in the distribution into the language groups. The results of the conducted work confirmed again that motivation is really a fundamental element in the distribution mentioned above. Besides we offer to divide students into the language groups only in the beginning of the second semester due to their achievements in the first semester and the results of the placement and the motivational tests of the first semester. Moreover the young people must have the possibility to move to another group due to their results in the end of the current semester. In this work we offer the principles that should be considered during this division.

Keywords: Motivation, learning training, motive, learning process.

1. Introduction

Increased consolidation of the relations between our country and other foreign countries in different directions dictates the necessity in training the professionals of high rate. The modern society strongly needs the morally and well-educated, professionally trained and enterprising young people, who will be able to solve vital and urgent professional challenges and realize professional activities competently.

1.1. Factors to improve professional education

Nowadays the factor considered to provide the competence in professional practice of the specialists, just the beginner, is the knowledge of foreign language. Presently foreign languages are represented as one of the key driving forces of socio-economic and cultural progress of the society thus cause the interest directed to them more and more. Everything being said above actualizes the role and the demand in studying the foreign language in professional activity from the point of its practical use. It's undoubtedly the reason of both the special attention is being paid to the professional education in general in the present time and the high requirements to the educational process in particular that is closely connected with the quality of education.

Currently the future specialist must have quite outstanding knowledge, abilities and skills. Moreover, he has to be intelligently developed, pragmatic, initiative, dynamic, being able to orientate in the market conditions, being ready to the constant development. Besides, he is to be communicative to get on well with people (Lubozheva, 2017). The process of the creating of such "ideal specialist" is very difficult and laborious. It takes great physical and moral exertions from both the teachers and the students. Everybody clearly understands the importance of the foreign language for the future recruitment of the young specialists. There is hardly any company that does not require the knowledge of foreign language as the term of recruitment of the future employee. But, despite this relevance, there is the lack of such professionals and still the quality of foreign language education in unspecialized university is very poor. What's the reason? In our opinion the success depends on, firstly, the motivation of the students, correctly selected organizational and technological environment, collaboration both between teachers and students and between students in the group.

In this article we will try to prove that to follow the terms mentioned above we need to have the groups with the students being divided not just due to their language knowledge. Doubtlessly we must admit how motivated this person. It's the very term that will certainly give the opportunity to choose the program correctly in the nearest future.

1.2. Concept "motivation"

Motivation is often treated like something abstract and immense. That can't be touched and can't be seen. But we still can say than it is presented among our students. May be somebody would say that motivation is an issue of our own subjective judgment, but we can notice the presence of motivation on the lessons through the students interested in the training. So, to start with we will surely turn to such concept as "motivation".

According to Heinz Heckhausen (Heckhausen, 2003) "motivation is not the only process equally penetrating the behavioral act from the beginning till the end. More likely it is formed of diverse processes, which perform the function of self-regulation in different periods of the behavioral act, firstly before and after the implementing of the activity. A direction of different functional abilities use is also depended on the motivation. Motivation can explain the choice between various possible activities, between different perception options and possible contents of thinking;

besides with the help of motivation you can interpret the intensity and persistence in fulfilling the chosen activity and achieving its results".

Ignatyuk N.A. (Ignatyuk, 2015) considers, that "motivation - is a cycle process of constant impact and transformations where the subject of the action and the situation mutually influence each other and the result of this interaction is the behavior".

To continue we can add the idea of such investigator as Podlasie I. A. (Podlasie, 2006), who is sure that "motivation – is the inner energy making the person be active both in the life and at work".

Danilova O.A. (Danilova, Somkin & Meshkov, 2016) admits that the motivational system of any man has a complicated structure and says: " it has a very sophisticated multilevel system of incentives including needs, motives, interests, ideals, ambitions, settings, emotions, norms, values and so on. This structure of motivational sphere defines the direction of the personality of the man who has a diverse character due to the content and the structure of the motives being dominated at the current period".

Definitions mentioned above are various, but the authors agree that "motivation is the main driving force both in the people's behavior and activity and in the formation process of the future professional" (Starodubsceva, 2014). In our work we're going to follow this definition.

1.3 Types of motivation

There are two types of motivation: internal and external. The last is presented by different external factors, people or circumstances, for example the studying in the university. The student has to learn the material in this or that subject otherwise he won't be able to pass exam. Such motivation will disappear at the moment when the factor caused it goes away. In this situation the student after the exam forgets all the information as the unnecessary because from the very beginning he has been aimed only to pass the exam but not to the use in real life the knowledge that he has got in the process of studying the subject. As you can see the external motivation is not effective because there aren't any internal incentives and the person does only the minimum that he is demanded to do. Besides, it's often accompanied by the psychological discomfort and stress.

The example of the external motivation can be the following external circumstances: reaching the success and the high results in any activity; self-affirmation, for example: the status in the society; identification and individualization; ambition to communicate with the other people; ambition to self-improvements.

As for the internal motivation, it occurs in people as a result of their own thoughts, ambitions, needs, emotional experience. They increase the recognition of the inner needs to commit the definite actions and to reach the achievements of particular results (Polyakova, 2014). Any student, who wants to learn foreign language and motivated to it, is able to do it without any difficulties despite the absence of special talent or great abilities. Namely this moment should be taken into account when the students are divided into the language groups as the educational activity is motivated mostly by the internal motives. The necessity to improve the results of any person activity strongly influences the efficiency of educational process. If the student gets satisfaction from the process of studying language, he will concentrate on the training more and at the same time he will become socially active more.

But we must not forget that when the person is rather young he has a problem of choosing life values. He tries to form the inner position in relation to himself, to other people and to the moral values. The transition from high school age to the students' life is followed by contradictions and breaking the usual ideas of life.

Everything that was the motive to study foreign language at school might lose its meaning at the university. If the person studied the language at school only just to get the certificate of high level in the end of studying at school, achieving the results he would lose interest to this subject

2.   Problem Statement

Training the competent specialist is a primary task for all high school nowadays. Moreover specialist with the good language training is in great demand. The problem is that high school must change the organizational structure of the educational process in general to prepare real specialists for their future professional life and in particular it must be done in every aspect of students training. To be sure in the future of our students we have started to change the organization of language groups. Taking into consideration that the students, who start training at the university, reconsider their positions in life, we decided to divide them into language groups in a way, which is not usual. A division of the students into language groups only due to their language training is not relevant. This criterion must be supported by another one like degree of students' motivation to study.

3.   Research Questions

3.1.   Is the level of language enough to divide students into language groups?

We think that the results, we have received after placement lexico-grammatical test and motivational test, having been written by the students in the beginning of the first semester are not really enough in the distribution the students into groups to make the most comfortable terms for studying foreign language. Though no one diminishes the extremely importance of them. The main reason of such a situation is that when the students write these tests they are not as responsible as we expect. They prefer to copy the answers of the students who are better than they are just to get the higher result. That was the very thing why we decided not to distribute the students in the beginning of the first semester.

3.2.   What is the best time to make division of the students into the language groups?

There is a tradition to divide students into language groups in the beginning of the first semester. Practice shows that the result of it is not always successful. The students often get poor results in the end of the first semester even if they had good points for their placement test in the beginning of the first semester.

3.3. What is a principle of the division of the students with help of motivation?

In division of the students into language groups the degree of motivation should be taken into account without any doubt. It will not only help us to make the terms of studying more comfortable for both students and teachers but it will surely increase the effectiveness of the educational process.

4.   Purpose of the Study

The study was conducted to understand the impact of motivation on the creating the most comfortable environment to study any language. Namely motivation plays the basic role in language training as it creates the

students who are constantly involved in the studying of any language even he has already graduated from the university.

The following hypothesis is the division of the students into language groups with the motivation admitted is more effective to improve the language training.

5. Research Methods

The research was conducted in two stages

5.1. Preliminary tests

To define the level of students' language training we used the placement lexico-grammatical test from the course New Total English that includes 100 issues in grammar and vocabulary. Every right answer can bring the student one point and maximum he can get 100 points. The students having got point from 0 to 20 are considered the students with beginning level of language knowledge, who are able to get from 21 to 35 – the students with the elementary level, from 36 to 60 –the students with pre-intermediate level, from 65 to 85 – the students with intermediate level and from 86 100 – the students with the upper-intermediate language training.

On the basis that during the training the internal motivation is more stable we used the method of T. D. Dubovitskaya (Dubovitskaya, 2005) to define the level of students' motivation to study. This method offers to diagnose the direction and the development level of internal motivation of students' educational activity during the training in particular subject.

It includes twenty statements. The students choosing the variant to answer can use a wider range of possible options: "true", «perhaps, it's true», «false», « perhaps, it's false». Analyzing the results, the author of this method highly recommends to combine the answers in two categories: positive ("true", «perhaps, it's true»), negatives («false», « perhaps, it's false»). The student can get one point for each similarity with the test key.

If in a result the respondent gets from 0 to 10 points, he is considered as the person, who is motivated by the external circumstances during the training, at the same time those who get from 11 to 20 are regarded as the people with internal educational motivation.

Supporting the ideas of T. D. Dubovitskaya, we also think that the internal motivation has its own gradation. To determine the level of internal motivation it's possible to use the following regulatory boundaries: 0-5points – low level of internal motivation; 6-14 points – average level of internal motivation; 15-20 points – high level of internal motivation.

5.2. The assessment of the semester results

We suppose that it would be more sensible to monitor students' learning achievements during the whole semester. Young people were offered various tasks to improve their language knowledge and some tasks to check their progress. Among the checking tasks there were: 1) the oral monologue utterance; 2) oral dialogue utterance; 3) writing (formal and informal letters); 4) reading to get the main idea of the text and to get the definite information from the text; 5) translation of the information from English into Russian and from Russian into English; 6) project activity; 7) lexico-grammatical test. The students were able to get 100 points for the whole course of training according

to the point-rating system that had been introduce by the Department of business foreign in Chelyabinsk state university

6. Findings

6.1. The initial division of the students into language groups

The result of the preliminary lexico-grammatical test cleared up that the least point our students could get was 15 and the highest was 93. As there were just 2 people with the beginning level and 1 person with the upper-intermediate, we think that it would be more rational to join them to the group of the students with the nearest level. To fulfill this task we arranged three groups: 1) the students with low level of language training (we combined beginners and elementary level due to the placement test); 2) the students with average level of language training (pre-intermediate level due to the placement test); 3) the students with high level of language training (we combined intermediate and upper-intermediate level due to the placement test). So, we have got such data: out of 58 participants 10 students, who had got from 61 to 93 points, were distributed into the group with the high level of language training, 9 students with the results from 36 to 54 points, were distributed into the group with the average level of language training, 39 students with the results from 15 to 30 points, were distributed into the group with the low level of language training.

Besides data that we had got after the results analysis of the motivational test showed that out of 58 first year students of different groups there are 30 people with the high degree of motivation, 20 students with the average degree of motivation and 8 students with the low degree of motivation.

In addition to the previous information we noticed that not all the students with high level of language training have the high degree of motivation. In that way combining the results of two tests we got nine groups of the young people with different level of language training and different degree of motivation: 1. high level of language training and high degree of motivation (next HTHM); 2. high level of language training and average degree of motivation (next HTAM); 3. high level of language training and low degree of motivation (next HTLM); 4. average level of language training and high degree of motivation (next ATHM); 5. average level of language training and average degree of motivation (next ATAM); 6. average level of language training and low degree of motivation (next ATLM); 7. low level of language training and high degree of motivation (next LTHM); 8. low level of language training and average degree of motivation (next LTAM); 9. low level of language training and low degree of motivation (next LTLM). Therefore our students were divided into the following groups:

1. HTHM – 13students;

2. HTAM – 6 students;

3. HTLM – 11 students;

4. ATHM – 6 students;

5. ATAM – 7 students;

6. ATLM – 7 students;

7. LTHM – 2 students;

8. LTAM – 2 students;

9. LTLM – 4 students.

6.2. The final division of the students into the language groups

After analyzing the data of the students' progress in English, acquired in the end of the first semester, we managed to divide young people again into the groups mentioned above:

1. HTHM – 16 students;

2. HTAM – 6 students;

3. HTLM – 8 students;

4. ATHM – 8 students;

5. ATAM – 9 students;

6. ATLM – 6 students;

7. LTHM – 0 students;

8. LTAM – 1 student;

9. LTLM – 4 students.

We should admit the students didn't pass the motivational test

As far as we can see the number of the students in these groups has changed. Moreover, a more detailed analysis of the individual results of the students has given us the opportunity to notice that seventeen students with the high and average degrees of educational motivation have presented the higher results in the end of the semester than in the beginning, but at the same time nine young people with the average degree of educational motivation have worsened their level of language training. In general, these were the students with not just average degree of educational motivation, but with average and low level of language training.

7. Conclusion

Consequently, we come to the following conclusion:

1) motivation being a set of internal and external driving forces, that induce people to the activity, determine the boundaries and forms of this activity, give this activity the direction which is oriented to the achieving definite results is really one of the basic thing in the dividing the students into language groups. In that way we support the opinion of I. A. Zimnyaya, who is sure that high internal motivation is "starting mechanism" (Zimnyaya, 2015) of any person activity.

2) there is no critical necessity to divide students into language groups only due to the level of their language training. Motivation must be taken into account without any doubt. Even more, such division in the beginning of the first semester is unreasonable. It must be done in the beginning of the second semester and to do it it's necessary to admit the results of students' work in the first semester and the results of lexico-grammatical and motivational tests have been conducted in the beginning of the first semester;

3) to make the most comfortable terms of educational process we offer to unite the students into the language groups according to following principle: the first group includes the students with high level of language training and high degree of motivation and the students with average level of language training but the high degree of motivation; the second group involve the students with low level of language training but the high degree of motivation and the students of average degree of motivation but average and low level of language training; the third group should unite the students with average degree of motivation but the low level of language training and the students with low degree of motivation but high, average and low language training.

4) students must always have the possibility to move to another group due the results of the current semester.

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