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INNOVATIVE PRODUCTIVE METHOD OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Increasing amount of international students in Russian Federation in recent years has caused changes in the content and structure of foreign languages learning. Communicative competence in conditions of multilingualism becomes the basis for fundamental professional training of international students. In this regard, productive method of teaching foreign languages allows systematizing methodological basis for integrated language learning by international students. Moreover, foreign languages learning based on the core principles of productive method provides students' creative development and self-realization intensified by linguodidactic technology *Personal multilinguistic portfolio* (PMP) developed by us. The article reveals the content of this linguodidactic technology in the system of international students' professional training. The paper shows theoretical and practical methodological aspects of teaching foreign languages to international students who have low level of Russian and middle or low level of the English language. To verify this technology we conducted the experiment using the methods of scientific and pedagogical research. As a result we found out how the English, Russian and native languages may interact and correlate with each other during the foreign languages learning. We determined the dynamics of students' communicative competence formation, including linguistic and discourse aspects. The results of the experiment showed the effectiveness of the developed PMP technology and its successful introduction in the educational process.

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1. Introduction

The ability to use foreign languages productively is recognized as one of the main professional competences of students in Higher school. However, in practice, foreign language training in a technical university cannot provide sufficient linguistic and intercultural basis for effective professional communication. It is more difficult to teach foreign languages to international students who have low level of the Russian and English languages. Teachers and students are faced with the problem of optimizing foreign-language professional training with an aim to effectively form professional language competence as the primary goal of education in higher school that “lies at the heart of all internationalization activities” (Popova, Kogan, & Khalyapina, 2017, p. 1103).

Moreover, development of modern foreign languages learning heavily relates to the theory of intercultural communication as the basis of productive methodological model of teaching languages in different social and cultural contexts. Foreign languages teaching beyond the intercultural paradigm cannot provide high educational outcomes. Especially in the field of teaching foreign languages international students, we should take into account management factors of intercultural communication and information environments (Aladyshkin, Kulik, Michurin, & Anosova, 2017; Evseeva, Obukhova, & Tanova, 2017; Gashkova, Berezovskaya, & Shipunova, 2017; Kolomeyzev & Shipunova, 2017; Kostikova, Prishvina, Ilyushina, Fedotova, & Belogurov, 2018; Shipunova, Berezovskaya, Gashkova & Ivanova, 2017; Spihunova, Rabosh, Soldatov, & Deniskov, 2017).

It should be noted that objectives and content of foreign languages learning depend on the requirements of the modern society, global labour market and personal needs of every student. However, in the process of foreign languages teaching, it is also important to take into account special documents, conceptions and educational standards where modern understanding of goal-setting in the sphere of education is presented. Analysis of contemporary educational standards of higher school makes it possible to conclude that there is a tendency towards its practical orientation. This methodological direction determines introduction of the productive learning in the sphere of foreign languages teaching providing high quality of education.

1.1. Contemporary development of productive method

The analysis of the scientific pedagogical literature on the topic of productive learning made it possible to conclude that, it is a method that promotes formation of students’ professional skills and their personal qualities development. “Productive learning is a method in which students work in groups to teach each other the information and are guided by their teacher. The students become the teachers and are just directed by their actual science instructor” (Candrasekaran, 2014, p.16). We can note, that this issue was discussed in a number of publications (Bakar, 2014; Bashmakov & Gorjaev, 2014; Krylova & Leontjeva, 2008).

Productive learning is connected with the implementation of the concept of professional guidance of students, which has become widespread in the US and European countries as a system of profession oriented training in the middle and higher school (work-based learning). Such kind of learning allows to strengthen continuity between the school and professional education, to solve the problem of developing

the necessary personal and professional qualities of pupils in order to achieve high professional results in the future (Costley & Abukari, 2015; Major, 2016; Meyer, 2014; Nottingham, 2017; Raelin, 2010; Ramage, 2014; Slotte & Herbert, 2006; Talbot & Lilley, 2014).

In recent years, a considerable amount of scientific work has been done on productive method, its verification and introduction into different levels of education. These papers also describe the ways of increasing productivity of education in Russia (Almazova, Khalyapina, & Popova, 2016; Bashmakov & Gorjaev, 2014; Kabanova & Kogan, 2017; Saigushev, Savva, Gnevak, Tsaran, & Vedeneeva, 2017).

1.2. Productive method of teaching foreign languages

We should note that scientific research in the sphere of productive foreign languages learning in the different levels of education has been done in Russia recently (Almazova, Eremin, & Rubtsova, 2016; Burtasenkova, 2014; Koryakovtseva, 2018; Chamina, 2015; Krylova, 2014). However, in the sphere of higher professional education in Russia productive method is not implemented thoroughly enough.

Analysis of the theory and practice of foreign languages learning permits the conclusion that the main methodological trends in this educational sphere are:

- communicative competence formation;
- professional language competence acquisition;
- development of students' personal qualities.

The need to introduce the productive method in the process of teaching foreign languages to foreign students is associated, first of all, with the problem of developing their communicative competence. Foreign students are forced to implement communication in several languages. Since they are studying in Russia, they need to develop the Russian language. Many of them study English as the main language of international communication. At the same time, they use their native language. In this regard, the productive method provides constructive interaction of several languages in the professional education that develops students' communication skills.

In order to make sure that the communicative competence of foreign students needs to be developed, we conducted linguistic test that revealed their level of Russian and English. We identified the level of the core subcomponents of the communicative competence and found out that these competences had a low level of development in all study groups (Tab. 01.).

Table 01. The level of the students' communicative competence development

Competences	1 st group	2 nd group	3 ^d group
Linguistic	52%	51%	49%
Sociolinguistic	43%	45%	44%
Discursive	39%	41%	40%
Socio-cultural	42%	37%	35%
Social	43%	40%	39%

In our research we used linguistic tests. For each task in the test, the students received points. The test results are presented as the percentage: the number of received points from possible 100%.

Thus, we have established validity of the pedagogical experimental research, which allows us to introduce the productive method in teaching foreign languages to foreign students. The results of our scientific research will be shown below.

2. Problem Statement

Language learning in contemporary global environment becomes one of the basic conditions providing successful professional achievements in different fields. For international students it is more important to have highly developed plurilingual and pluricultural competence which “refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw” (Common European framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment, 1986, p. 168).

The practice shows to successfully form plurilingual and pluricultural competence while training international students it is necessary to take into account such factors as:

- different linguistic capabilities of the students;
- insufficient number of academic hours for a foreign language course;
- inadequate use of productive method in teaching foreign languages.

2.1. Contradictions in the theory and practice of teaching foreign languages to international students

In this connection, it is possible to single out some contradictions in the theory and practice of teaching foreign languages to international students between:

- requirements of modern educational standards and not enough effective methods of teaching foreign languages to international students;
- accepted methodology of teaching foreign languages in the system of Russian higher education and the need to introduce innovative productive methods;
- the necessity to form high level of language proficiency and reduction of classroom academic hours for foreign language course.

2.2. Productive professional and communicative training of international students

Nowadays we may ascertain the importance of foreign-language learning constructed on the basis of productive method which enables to solve the problem of forming professional language competence of students and their personal qualities. Moreover, the development of productive educational activities of students allows optimizing students’ independent learning when reduction of the classroom academic hours decreases the effectiveness of foreign language teaching.

Although there is some research in the sphere of productive foreign languages learning in higher school in Russia (Almazova, Eremin, & Rubtsova, 2016; Burtasenkova, 2014; Chamina, 2015; Krylova, 2014), it should be recognized that there is still no holistic productive method of foreign languages

training providing effective plurilingual learning of international students studying in Russian universities. Can we raise the question that development of the innovative productive method will solve the problem of efficient professional and communicative training of international students in higher school?

3. Research Questions

Within the framework of this research, we will define theoretical basis of productive foreign languages learning including core methodological principles and conception of productive linguodidactic technology. We will describe innovative productive method of teaching foreign languages to international students using Personal multilinguistic portfolio technology and represent results of the pedagogical experiment that we conducted to verify efficiency of the developed method.

3.1. Methodological basis

The problem of productive method development is connected with the substantiation of methodological basis determining the targets, techniques, content and conditions of teaching foreign languages to international students. Methodological basis of the productive method includes core methodological principles that cover specificity of teaching foreign languages in multilingual environment. Moreover, these methodological principles determine students' educational and communicative activities as the foundation for the formation of key professional competencies.

3.2. Productive linguodidactic technology design

Conception of productive linguodidactic technology determines the content of *Personal multilinguistic portfolio*:

the main functions of Personal multilinguistic portfolio;

the basic sections of Personal multilinguistic portfolio.

Personal multilinguistic portfolio is defined as a technological means of students' self-management, self-rating and self-motivation activity.

4. Purpose of the Study

Research objectives are:

- to analyze and determine core methodological principals of the productive foreign language learning in higher school;
- to develop conception of productive linguodidactic technology;
- to develop the content of Personal multilinguistic portfolio;
- to analyze and represent results of pedagogical experiment.

5. Research Methods

To substantiate the relevance of our research we conducted a corresponding content analysis of syllabuses and the content of 'Professional foreign language course' in master's and graduate educational programs in Peter the Great St. Petersburg polytechnic university. We made conclusions about the possibility of introducing productive method of foreign languages learning into the educational process. Practical realization of the developed innovative method was implemented within the framework of the pedagogical experiment. We have analyzed results of the experiment. We used the methods of scientific and pedagogical research: system and structural analysis, synthesis, study of scientific papers, generalization of experience and experimental work.

6. Findings

As a result of our research, we came to the conclusion that an innovative productive method of teaching foreign languages to international students in higher school is really efficient. It provides operative foreign-language training of students, their communicative competence and professional skills development in the conditions of reducing academic hours and multilinguistic educational environment.

In this regard, we developed theoretical and practical foundations for foreign languages productive teaching to international students: methodological principles of teaching foreign languages and conception of productive linguodidactic technology which was verified during the pedagogical experiment.

6.1. Theoretical basis of productive method

Implementation of productive method in the sphere of foreign languages learning is connected with substantiation of theoretical aspects that include core methodological principles.

Integrated multilingualism. This principle means that teaching foreign languages international students should be implemented on the basis of the holistic comparative linguistic system developed by each student personally. Students should simultaneously compare linguistic systems of the native, Russian and English languages in a professionally oriented communicative context. The task of the teacher is to design linguistic content of education with the principal aim to integrate students' professional knowledge in the field of multilinguistic educational environment.

Productive communicative context. The main goal of the foreign language education in higher school is an effective communicative training of students in the context of their future profession. The content of this training includes the main professional knowledge as the basis of students' professional competence. Stimulation of students' productive communicative activity provides development of their professional skills and personal qualities. Involvement in productive educational activities gives students the opportunity to display their own initiative, independence, responsibility, self-realization, which positively affects the development of practical skills important for future specialist.

Socio-cultural context of foreign languages learning. Multilinguistic education is strongly connected with the development of social and cultural awareness of students. For international students it is very important to pass the process of socialization in the foreign country successfully. They have to

learn a lot of social and cultural information of the host country. In this sense foreign languages learning becomes a substantial cultural and linguistic support for international students. The role of the teacher is expanding, including the support of students in overcoming cultural and language barriers.

Productive pedagogical stimulation of students. The basis for successful multilingualism is the developed communicative activity of a student. Communicative activity may be supported by the pedagogical stimulation of students' mental and personal activity by the means of the productive method. The main objective of students' productive educational activities is the development of their productive thinking, creative abilities and educational autonomy as the methodological basis for self-development and self-education of the individual.

Individual approach. This principle means that foreign languages teaching should be based on such pedagogical and methodological conditions that emphasize the intellectual dignity of each student, noting the special value of his/her point of view, a personal approach to solving the problem, a unique vision of the situation, an individual style of thinking. The individualization of the foreign language acquisition ensures the development of the communicative competence of each student, regardless of students' initial language level.

The conception of productive linguodidactic technology

Developed methodological principles of teaching foreign languages to international students formed the basis for productive linguodidactic technology modelling. For many years, the authors of this paper have been developing the productive method in foreign languages education. On the basis of elaborated methodology we have designed productive linguodidactic technology of Personal multilinguistic portfolio that provides effective language learning.

The concept "technology" has recently become widespread in the theory and practice of teaching foreign languages. We define this term as the complex of a student's and teachers' actions aimed at achieving the certain goals of education.

Psychological and pedagogical basis of the productive linguodidactic technology is the concept of modern educational technologies in teaching foreign languages (Nechaev, 2002). This concept determines subject position of a student regardless of age, social status and pedagogical conditions (teacher's direct or indirect control, independent learning, autonomous learning etc.). In connection with this, the teacher uses special monitoring educational tools providing high educational outcomes.

Content of Personal multilinguistic portfolio

Productive linguodidactic technology of *Personal multilinguistic portfolio* is defined as a system of students' educational actions based on the self-management, self-rating and self-motivation activity. PMP is compiled in three languages: in the native language of students, in Russian and in English. It may have the form of paper Portfolio, digital Portfolio or electronic Portfolio.

As practice shows, in teaching foreign languages portfolio may be used not only as the method of assessment but also as the method of development. Personal multilinguistic portfolio increases students' professional skills and quality of their autonomous learning. It gives additional motivation to self-development. Using of *Personal multilinguistic portfolio* allows applying linguistic knowledge for the new communicative contexts according to students' professional and cultural environment.

The main functions of *Personal multilinguistic portfolio*:

1. Educational – demonstration of professional competences and personal skills.
2. Estimating – demonstration of educational results.
3. Representing – presentation of personal educational and professional achievements.

The main sections of *Personal multilinguistic portfolio* are presented in three languages (in the native language of the student, in Russian and in English):

1. Language file: professional lexicon; discursive grammar; general language.
2. Monitoring file: lexical and grammar tests; self-assessment tests; questionnaires.
3. Intercultural communication file: professional communication practice; academic writing practice; professional reading practice; autonomous communicative activity.
4. File of personal achievements: awards, diplomas, certificates, letters of gratitude etc.

6.2. Results of pedagogical experiment

Interaction of languages and cultures

We conducted the survey to determine the level of language proficiency by international students who studied in Saint-Petersburg polytechnic university. 20 graduate students of the first course took part in this survey. The questionnaire consisted of 15 questions. As a result, it was revealed that the native languages for this group were Chinese (40%) and Arabic (60%). The first foreign language for them was English (100%). We found out that they studied English in order to get acquainted with the culture of another country (40%), some students studied English at school (40%), to communicate with friends (15%) and for communication on the Internet (5%). All respondents studied English for more than 3 years. They all had different of language proficiency: the majority at the intermediate level (45%), at the elementary level - 30%, upper-intermediate - 25%.

The second foreign language for them was Russian. They studied Russian from one to three years (85%), more than three years (15%). The level of proficiency in Russian was different: elementary level - 60%, intermediate - 30%, upper-intermediate – 10%. A significant part of the respondents was learning Russian with an aim to get higher education in Russia (60%). The results of the questionnaire showed that students needed Russian not only for education. They were interested in the Russian culture (25%) and they wanted to communicate with Russian friends (15%). We found out that international students need to aware cultural and social context of surrounding environment. While students are studying in Russia they need to be acquainted with new people, to communicate with them and feel confident themselves in the new linguistic and cultural environment.

Thus, it can be assumed that in the minds of international student all three languages interact.

Communicative competence development

During the pedagogical experiment, we tested the development of communicative competence of students. We checked the students' communicative ability development, the following subcomponents forming the individual as a communicator: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive, strategic, socio-cultural and social competences.

The first-year international students of the postgraduate course participated in the experiment. There were 44 students in two groups. The students from the first (control) group were learning Russian

and English without using PMP. The students from the second (experimental) group were learning foreign languages with the use of PMP.

The experiment was conducted for four months. At the beginning of the experimental work, we identified the level of the core competencies development in the English and in the Russian languages. We found out that these competences had a low level of development in both groups (Tab. 02). The level of development of communicative competence was determined on the basis of the test control. Tests included tasks for which students received points. The test results are presented as the percentage: the number of received points from possible 100%.

Table 02. The level of communicative competence development at the initial stage of the experiment

Competences	Control group	Experimental group
Linguistic	52%	51%
Sociolinguistic	43%	45%
Discursive	39%	41%
Socio-cultural	42%	37%
Social	43%	40%

At the intermediate stage of the experiment, we also monitored the development of the competencies. The study showed that the competences of students from the experimental group are developing better than those of the control group (Tab. 03). However, it is obvious that it is not enough to state a significant advancement of students in learning foreign languages. Therefore, we continued our experimental work.

Table 03. The level of communicative competence development at the intermediate stage of the experiment

Competences	Control group		Experimental group	
	Initial data	Findings	Initial data	Findings
Linguistic	52%	54%	51%	62%
Sociolinguistic	43%	45%	45%	67%
Discursive	39%	41%	41%	65%
Socio-cultural	42%	44%	37%	63%
Social	43%	45%	40%	61%

At the final stage of the experimental work, we again checked the level of students' competence development in both groups. Studies have shown a significant increase in the level of competence development in the experimental group and not a significant increase in the competence development in the control group in comparison with the initial indicators (Tab. 04).

Table 04. The level of communicative competence development at the final stage of the experiment

Competences	Control group		Experimental group	
	Initial data	Findings	Initial data	Findings
Linguistic	52%	56%	51%	86%
Sociolinguistic	43%	51%	45%	84%
Discursive	39%	53%	41%	89%
Socio-cultural	42%	52%	37%	81%
Social	43%	54%	40%	91%

The data presented in the tables confirm the effectiveness of our experimental work. Test control has made it possible to determine a significant increase in the level of students' communicative competence development in the experimental group. Thus, the conducted experimental work confirmed the effectiveness of using PMP in foreign languages teaching of international students.

7. Conclusion

The conducted research allowed achieving the main objectives. We determined core methodological principals of the productive foreign language learning in higher school, analyzed the content of productive linguodidactic technology, elaborated conception and the content of Personal multilinguistic portfolio and conducted pedagogical experiment.

The study confirmed the possibility of the productive foreign languages learning in the higher school. Elaborated innovative productive method of teaching foreign languages to international students provides integrativity and efficiency of professional higher education. Productive educational activity of students develops their communicative competence as the discursive basis for professional multilingualism. The productive method raises the effectiveness of the Professional foreign language course in the postgraduate programme. On the one hand, this method allows developing individualization of the foreign languages acquisition by productive communicative activity implemented in PMP. On the other hand, this method provides internationalization of professional higher education by multilingual and multicultural educational activity.

Thus, we may conclude that innovative activity in the field of the teaching foreign language is a necessary condition for development of the modern system of higher school. Productive method of teaching foreign languages is an innovative element of the higher education, since it has sufficient cultivating and educational potential in terms of methodological resources renovation.

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