

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF APPLYING THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: The research article is devoted to the problem of using communicative methods of teaching English to HEI students. The purpose of the article is to analyze the effectiveness of using a communicative approach in teaching English as a foreign language to students at higher educational institutions (HEIs). In the course of the study, it was determined that the major indicators of the students' communicative competences, in particular their drive to take initiative in communication, the development of listening skills, reflection, free use of various situations of professional communication are enhanced threefold, showing a distinct progressive change. Eventually, it is expected to investigate which of the communicative methods of teaching English to HEI students will prove to be more effective.

Key words: innovations, English language, HEI, communicative methods, teaching methods, educational innovations.

1 Introduction

One of the main prerequisites of a modern foreign language study program for HEI is the implementation of a communicative method of teaching. The communicative method is a mixture of traditional and intensive methods, which has a great number of advantages. The underlying idea is an approach based on the similarity of language acquisition with that of young children learning their mother tongue for the first time (Akmal, 2019).

The purpose of the study is to experimentally test the study that was theoretically substantiated previously, namely the research of a set of pedagogical conditions that contribute to the effectiveness of the students' communicative competence formation. In the process of achieving the goal of this study, the following tasks were addressed:

1. To identify the formation level of the personal and professional communicative qualities in learners of English.
2. To test experimentally the method of forming the communicative competence in HEI students.

The teaching process evolves around the learner of the English language. To elucidate the new words and rules, the teacher uses familiar vocabulary, explains grammar with visual illustrations, gestures and facial expressions. The purpose of learning a foreign language is not only professionally-oriented learning of four interdependent language activities (listening, speaking, reading and writing), but also a good command of a foreign language to express their thoughts. The teaching English methodology studies the ways that lead to language acquisition,

takes into consideration the form and content of language phenomena, as well as their functions, primarily the communicative one, and seeks to teach students to exchange information by using the language studied, to participate in the language process (Cash & Culley, 2015).

Teaching English through communicative methods entails such language-learning activities that include all manifestations of the native speaker's language behavior. This study emphasizes the fact that the ultimate goal of teaching English in the HEI, along with reading literature in the specialty, the ability to construct a message, participate in a conversation, discuss the material that is read. That said, the future HEI graduate must have communicative professional skills – these are the features necessary for the organization of interaction and information exchange, e.g. with foreign professionals (Kilgour et al., 2015).

The main means of such interaction is natural language, which has informational and communicative properties. Language is a form of human communication in a specific social context (Burns, 2010). At the same time, information is the most reliable and most accomplished means of social interaction. Therefore, strengthening the communicative orientation in the study of English in the HEIs is one of the most important reserves for improving the efficiency of training of future specialists, who will face the latest challenges of today. The main means of such interaction is natural language, which has informational and communicative properties. Language is a form of human communication in a specific social context (Burns, 2010). At the same time, information is the most reliable and perfect social means of communication. Thus, strengthening the communicative orientation in the study of English in the HEIs is one of the most important prerequisites for enhancing the efficiency of training the future specialists, who will deal with the latest challenges of current reality.

Thus, (Svyrydiuk, 2019) notes that the introduction of communicative tools in the process of teaching English enhances the level of learning material. On the other hand, (Passov, 1991) holds that the communicative components in the process of learning English can increase the level of learning motivation of HEI students (Krasnopolsky & Tyshakova, 2020). believes the use of communicative means to be an effective method of forming foreign language professional competencies in HEI students (Borysko, 2011). notes that the formation of foreign language competencies of the future specialist should be based primarily on the use of communicative teaching methods (Zagorodnya & Stogniy, 2019). put for the idea of applying the communicative methods to foster intercultural communication of future professionals. Psychologists and educators characterize the student's activity in the learning process as "mental effort" or "initiative, interest" (Disman et al., 2017), as "the ability to change the surrounding reality" (Kasumi, 2015).

With that in mind, in order to achieve a creative level of cognitive activity, the teacher must specifically create certain conditions for the activation of cognitive activity and use a system of tools and techniques, the implementation of which would enhance learning. (Astawa et al., 2017) Such techniques include, e. g. the use of learning situations and a system of professionally oriented role-playing games (Lee, 2019).

The essence of the communicative concept during the teaching of English in HEI draws heavily on the idea that in the process of training, special conditions are created in which students, drawing on the knowledge acquired independently solve communicative problems by means of English. The emphasis is laid on the way of organizing training with the help of active methods and developing motivation for the formation of foreign language professionally-oriented communicative competence of the future specialist (Smynova & Musorina, 2016).

Teaching English is ever increasingly viewed as a way of addressing not only of communicative and cognitive, but also developmental tasks (Svirydiuk, 2019). This method focuses on teaching the adequate expression of opinions depending on the goals, conditions and interaction participants. Language is understood by methodologists as a phenomenon of culture and civilization.

The formation of cognitive activity in the process of learning English is crucial taking into account the self-esteem and self-control of students. Currently, the HEI professionals have focused their efforts on such significant issues for modern methodology as:

1. Substantiation of the theoretical foundations of English language teaching at different educational stages in the context of modern personality-oriented philosophy of education and the main provisions of the theory of intercultural communication.
2. Development of state standards on foreign languages (including English), modern programs and coursebooks of foreign languages for different educational levels, as well as including for different national and regional conditions.
3. Research of theoretical and applied aspects of professionally-oriented teaching of foreign languages in the conditions of multilevel system of experts training in various directions of preparation (Smyrnova, 2017).

As (Vasylyk, 2019) notes, the formation of foreign language communicative competence of students of non-language specialties should become an integral part of their professional training. According to (Zagorodnya & Stogniy, 2019), foreign language communicative competence envisions the acquisition of knowledge and skills that would help to act in a specific foreign language situation, and also contributes to the formation of intercultural competence of a person in combination with their professional activity.

In psychological and pedagogical research, various components of the complex synthesis of structures that form competence are identified. Cognitive (according to the terminology of some researchers also called substantive, theoretical, conceptual or informational) is the most salient component that can yield the measured results.

The educational communication in the university is known to be limited by the role interaction "teacher-student" and "student-student", takes place during school hours and has a generalized purpose – learning a foreign language (in the context of our study). Therefore, we shall proceed to consider, first of all, the role of this discipline in the formation of communicative competence of students (Kobayashi, 2018).

The specifics of learning a foreign language involves a number of features, such as: the duration of the learning process, an increased complexity of language activities, the need to regularly do various exercises assigned, the remoteness of the ultimate goal, etc., which promote the development of such traits as diligence, perseverance, patience, determination. In particular, to perform any task in a foreign language, the student must accomplish plenty of operations.

The consolidation of communicative knowledge and skills is hardly possible without mastering the language tools by which communication is structured. However, the knowledge of words (vocabulary), grammatical forms, constructions, which is often the process of learning a foreign language in high school, is necessary but not sufficient. A specific feature of the subject "Foreign Language" is the constant presence of a communicative situation. When interacting people not only send and receive information, but also get to know each other (Khan, 2013).

The major mechanisms of human cognition in communication are, as we know, identification, empathy, reflection. It is the best option for every communicator to know and use these mechanisms. Basically, in the process of communicating in the

native language, it occurs automatically, often unconsciously, spontaneously. Communication of students at foreign language classes facilitates self-control and is a favorable "foundation" for meaningful training of communication skills. Thus, in the process of communication in a foreign language, taking into account the peculiarities of the communicative situation encourages the trainees to better understand their partner. For example, if, when constructing a statement, the student takes into account such factors as the listener's awareness, formal or informal mode of communication, etc., then this statement becomes more effective. Observing the reaction of the interlocutor, students decide whether more arguments are needed, whether any subjective characteristics are appropriate, whether opposition or generalization is necessary, etc.

Communicative tasks related to paraphrasing, both at the level of words and at the level of supra-phrase unity, teach the students to establish relationships between specific and generic concepts, to express the same opinion with the maximum possible number of language options, which brings variety to communication.

The materials used in training must be aimed at the formation of competent communication. According to the results of a number of Council of Europe projects aimed at developing a system of teaching foreign languages in the framework of the communicative approach, competent communication includes the language competence (command of language material for use in the form of language expressions); sociolinguistic competence (ability to use language units according to communicative situations); discursive competence (the ability to understand and achieve coherence in the perception and generation of individual statements); "strategic" competence (the ability to compensate by verbal and nonverbal means of language deficiencies); socio-cultural competence (the degree of familiarity with the socio-cultural context of language functioning); social competence (ability and willingness to communicate with others) (Kasumi, 2015).

Apart from the universally accepted types of speech activity (reading, listening, speaking, writing) and structural-linguistic formations (dialogue, monologue, different varieties of speaking and messaging, etc.), the communicative approach to foreign language learning also takes into consideration the perception, that is communication as a process of information transfer and interaction; the specifics of human speech behavior (language etiquette, communication techniques in different situations, role repertoire of verbal impact in various situational and thematically conditioned acts of communication).

The contemporary methodological concepts suggest focusing on the English language and the implementation of contextual learning. The solution to this problem is feasible only on a broad basis of integration with such scientific fields as philosophy of language, linguistics, psycholinguistics, linguopsychology, etc. Considering the contributions of methodology, psycholinguistics, psychosociolinguistics, etc. the linguopedagogical approach forms the personality under the influence of professional information studied in a foreign language. In such a way a foreign language professional communicative competence is formed, which includes language competence, professional competence, as well as behavioral and information competence according to the level of age and professional knowledge (Hin, 2017).

Drawing on the analysis of the theory and practice of the problem, we can conclude that the communicative qualities of the future specialist can be formed in the process of professional training and the leading role may belong, alongside the professional disciplines, to the foreign language while making use of the professional literature (Akmal, 2018). However, so far there is no in-depth research in students that would confirm the effectiveness of the perceiving the educational material specifically by students (Agbatogun, 2014).

2 Methods and Materials

During the study, the available materials on the effective use of the communicative method in teaching English were carefully analyzed. Drawing on the purpose of the experimental work, a thorough selection of exercises aimed at the formation of communicative skills in all types of speech activity was carried out. In the process of working on the teaching of monological and dialogical speech, various situations were elaborated, in which way the students acquired the ability to exchange information, express attitudes (confidence, doubt, criticism, compassion), language etiquette; learned to put questions in English, to confirm or deny something; perform language actions (offering services, advice, etc.).

A set of the following pedagogical conditions was developed and tested:

- the development in university students of certain personal and professional communicative qualities;
- contextual-situational approach to foreign language teaching;
- learning a foreign language on the basis of communicative exercises that facilitate the formation of communicative skills.
- In the course of the study the following main components of communicative competence were identified:
 - structural (cognitive, motivational-evaluative, reflexive);
 - functional (perceptive, linguistic, interactive-practical).

The positive changes that have taken place under the influence of experimental methods are highly likely to be the best way to testify to the quality and efficiency of the studied processes is. For example, to assess the impact of communicative training on personality, it is important to find out what changes have taken place in each student: whether he became more open and confident in communication, learned to understand verbal and nonverbal language of the interlocutor and so on.

A total of 222 respondents were interviewed – 1st and 2nd year students of the humanitarian faculties of several universities (Khmelnyskyi Humanitarian and Pedagogical Academy, Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, Khmelnyskyi National university). Without dwelling on the substantive points, we are bound to say that if all the lists of personal characteristics were put together, a fairly long list would be drawn. When studying the qualities offered by the students, it became clear that many of them were mentioned repeatedly, differing only in their wording. The sample of such a number of students is representative and reflects the level of foreign language competencies in HEI students of humanitarian faculties.. Students were invited to take part in an online lecture after which they had to answer open-ended questions.

To obtain the primary information, the most common characteristics (in the form of qualities, skills, abilities, readiness, etc.) were selected, which, in the opinion of students, are the most typical for an ideal communicative partner, such as rational use of language, rich vocabulary, language tools, flexible behavior. communication, logical speech, etc. Then all the selected semantic units, close in meaning, were combined and described using the appropriate term, hereinafter referred to as "quality".

Thus, a list was selected, which included 17 communicative qualities: a rational use of language; having good manners of communication and pleasant voice; choice of language tools available to the interlocutor; observance of norms of social and communicative interaction; adequate assessment of the situation and the interlocutor; coherence and logic of statements; flexibility of behavior in communication; adequate emotional charge of language; focus on humanistic communication; significance of the statement for the interlocutor; adequate self-esteem; adequate use of non-verbal communication; manifestation of adequate activity in communication; efficient design of speech; equal and friendly position in relation to the partner; striving for self-improvement in communication; richness of speech (Passov, 1991).

Next, the obtained data were summarized in a unified scale and they were assigned a reference number to each of these qualities. After assigning a reference number, the priority of these qualities was revealed in each of the above aspects of the communicatively competent personality.

To assess the overall qualitative changes in the formation level of professional communicative competence and communicative qualities and foreign language communication skills in particular, the nonparametric criterion "x-square" was used.

The above method of estimating dynamic changes allows to draw conclusions regarding the results of the experiment with a sufficient degree of probability due to the fact that it allows not to consider the analyzed statistical distribution as a function and does not require any preliminary calculation of distribution parameters and applies to ordinal indicators, which in our case are identified at the level of communicative qualities and skills formation.

Estimation of quantitative changes in the level of communicative qualities and communication skills formation was carried out using calculations of the average indicator (AI) and efficiency coefficient (EC) according to the formula:

$$AI = (a + 2b + 3c) : 100 \quad (1)$$

where a, b, c is the number of students who are at low, medium and high levels of communication skills and abilities. The effectiveness of the experimental study was calculated by the formula:

$$EC = AI_{EG} : AI_{CG}, \quad (2)$$

where AI_{EG} – the average in the experimental groups; AI_{CG} – the average in the control groups.

The absolute increase in the formation level of the G-indicator reflects the difference between the initial and final values of the studied factors:

$$G = AI(f) - AI(i) \quad (3)$$

$AI(i)$ – the initial value of the average indicator, $AI(f)$ – its final value. Consequently

$$\begin{aligned} G_{CQ} &= 2,11 - 1,63 = 0,48; \\ G_{CS} &= 2,23 - 1,55 = 0,68. \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

The results of assessments on the state of the formation levels of communicative qualities and skills are presented in Tables 2 and 3. The criterion "x-square" was calculated by the formula:

$$x^2 = (f_1 - f_2)^2 / (f_1 + f_2) \quad (5)$$

where f_1 and f_2 – the frequencies of the compared samples.

Basically, in order to obtain the reliable and objective data, it is only logical to diagnose changes in the individual profile of the communicatively significant personality qualities, value orientations, motivation in terms of interest in communicative activities. The result of these changes in personal and professional growth should be the communicative competence. Therefore, the final criterion is to logically choose the formation levels of this integrative quality of personality.

The formation level of communicative competence in students was determined by the following criteria:

- the degree of manifestation in students of the studied personal and professional communicative qualities;
- the degree of the students' mastery of communication skills;
- degree of the students' knowledge of a foreign language.

Table 1. Formation level of communicative competence

Low	Medium	High
knowledge of the basics of communication, as well as the ability to apply them to changing environments are expressed weakly; language characteristics are low; inability to control own behavior in communication	knowledge of the basics of communication is satisfactory, the inability to apply them in a changing environment; indicators of the language component are characterized by average indicators; the humanistic communication value orientations exist, but do not really manifest themselves	communicative priorities are aimed at the humanization of communication and attitudes; the language component is highly developed; high control over own behavior in communication, the ability to influence the interaction partner is of great importance.

Source: Passov YI (6)

The study was conducted using the Internet technology (Zoom), in particular all the tasks were completed online. Also, the students who participated in the study, were interviewed in Zoom.

3 Results

In the process of observing the students, it was noted that with the help of communicative exercises there occurred an intensification of their activities, effective acquisition of knowledge in class. They are willing to make on the spot dialogues on a given situation, to express their attitude, air opinions about what they have heard, to enter into a conversation, etc. Such tasks not only contribute to the formation of students' communication skills, but also to the formation of their overall professional communication competence. Before the experiment, students were asked to name the personality qualities which in their opinion should have the ideal communication partner (Darwish, 2016).

The research on foreign language teaching, as well as practical experience show that a dialogic language tends to be more effective for the formation of communication skills, through which students can realize their language potential to the fullest degree (Cash & Culley, 2015).

Learning dialogical speech was carried out in several ways: using a sample dialogue, based on the step-by-step composition of the dialogue and by creating communicative situations. The work on the first method was aimed at mastering by students of exemplary expressions in a foreign language, operating with language material in dialogical speech, performing various transformations of the dialogue, etc.

Step-by-step training (Cash & Culley, 2015) in dialogue was aimed at students' mastering the tactics and scheme of building a dialogue depending on speaker's intentions, developing skills and abilities to build a dialogue depending on the speaker's intentions, developing skills and abilities to build a dialogue for a given situation. Teaching dialogical (Liskin-Gasparro, 2007) speech through the creation of situations involved students mastering the skills indispensable for adequate communication in any situation in accordance with the communicative tasks in specific communication conditions.

At the initial stage of the experiment, students named priority qualities, for example (among the functional components of communicative competence):

Further we compare the data received and present them by means of the diagram (Figure 1):

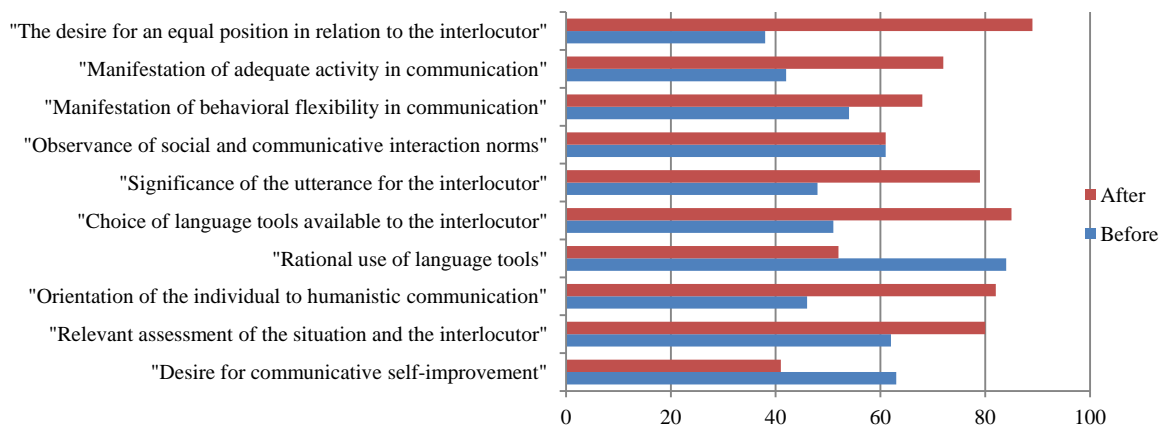


Figure 1. The change in the priorities of the functional component of communicative competence

Source: Compiled by authors on the data of research

Analyzing the data, we can say that students have solid knowledge of the basics of efficient communication, they maintain an interest in communicative self-improvement. The defining values in communication are personality, responsibility, creativity and individuality. Indicators of the language component are predominantly characterized by a high percentage. The flexibility of behavior, as well as strong knowledge in the context of the interactive-practical component of communicative competence are realized in "supportive relationships", emotional backing, relevant communication.

To identify the effectiveness of the experiment, we show the dynamics of the development of a overall image of the communicative "self" in students. The functional components of communicative competence (perceptual, verbal, interactive-

practical) and structural components (motivational-evaluative and reflexive) were monitored and they are presented in Table 2 and 3. Assessment of quantitative changes in the formation level of communicative qualities and communication skills is presented in Table 4.

As it is shown, the AI in communicative qualities in the experimental group increased from 1.82 to 2.30; on communicative skills - from 1.60 to 2.37; and in the control group, respectively, in terms of communication skills - from 1.44 to 1.91 and in terms of communication skills - from 1.50 to 2.08, which allows us to conclude that the indicators in the experimental group were higher than in the control group (Figure 2). The absolute increase in the level of formation of communicative competencies is presented in Table 5.

Table 2. Dynamics of the formation level of personal and professional communicative qualities in students

Stages	Number of students	Number of students (in %)			
		Low level	Average level	High level	AI
1	Total: 222	41.6	39.7	18.7	1.77
	EG 120	34.2	49.5	16.3	1.82
	CG 102	57.3	41.7	1	1.44
2	Total: 222	34.9	35.1	30	1.95
	EG 120	23	53	24	2.01
	CG 102	42	44.5	13.5	1.72
3	Total: 222	26.9	30	43.1	2.16
	EG 120	7.2	55.6	37.2	2.30
	CG 102	28.1	53.1	18.8	1.91

Source: Compiled by authors on the data of research

Table 3. Dynamics of the formation level of foreign language communication skills in students

Stages	Number of students	Number of students (in %)			
		Low level	Average level	High level	AI
1	Total: 222	60.9	39	0.1	1.39
	EG 120	43.6	53.1	3.3	1.60
	CG 102	52.6	44.5	2.9	1.50
2	Total: 222	45.9	48.6	5.4	1.59
	EG 120	32.8	36.9	30.3	2.00
	CG 102	39.9	50.4	9.7	1.69
3	Total: 222	21.5	53.6	21.3	2.03
	EG 120	4.1	54.8	42.7	2.35
	CG 102	16.2	58.4	22.9	2.06

Source: Passov YI (6)

Table 4. Dynamics of indicators of AI and EC at different stages of research

Group	Stages of research											
	1				2				3			
	CQ	CQ	CQ	CS	CQ	CS	CQ	CS	CQ	CQ	CQ	CS
EG.	1.82	EC	1.60	1.07	2.01	1.21	2.00	1.12	2.30	1.22	2.37	1.1
CG.	1.44	1.2	1.50	1.07	1.72	1.21	1.69	1.12	1.91	1.22	2.08	1.4

Source: Compiled by authors on the data of research

Table 5. Frequency of comparing the samples

Levels	Number of students (%)				X2	
	Initial stage (f1)		Final stage (f2)		CQ (com. qualities)	CS (com. skills)
	CQ (com. qualities).	CS (com. skills)	CQ (com. qualities).	CS (com. skills)		
low	41.6	60.9	26.9	21.6	3.15	18.72
medium	39.7	39.0	30.0	54.1	1.35	2.45
high	18.7	7.1	43.1	24.3	9.63	24.0

Source: Compiled by authors on the data of research

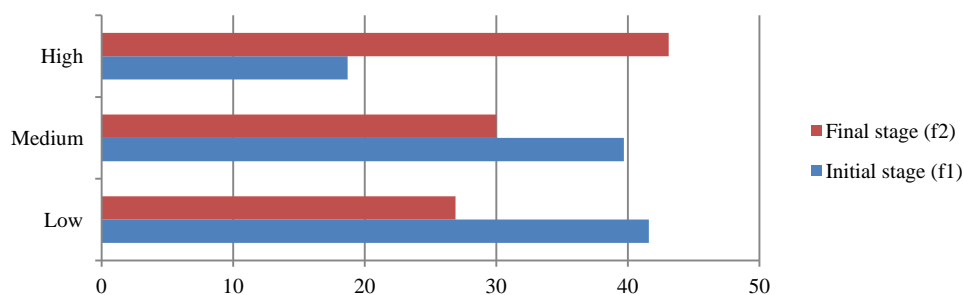


Figure 2. Indicators of qualitative changes in the formation level of communicative qualities

Source: Passov YI (6)

The presented tables show that the formation level of communicative qualities and foreign language communication skills in law students at the final stage increased almost three times compared to the initial stage of experimental research.

4 Discussion

Overall, the diagnostics showed changes in the initial state of the structural components of communicative competence in students:

- according to the cognitive component, the general level of language training of students has increased, the basics, principles of conducting conversations or discussions, interviews have been studied;
- according to the motivational-evaluative component, the focus on humanistic communication has consistently yielded priorities;
- according to the reflexive component, students gained experience of self-cognition and self-research, learned to analyze their communicative actions, as well as joint

actions with other people, felt a real opportunity to revise their own communicative behavior.

Thus, the analysis of the obtained data allows to draw conclusions about the progressive changes in the formation level of the studied phenomenon in students and allows to state the fact that a set of pedagogical conditions was developed and tested: the development of certain personal and professional qualities in students; contextual-situational approach to foreign language teaching; teaching a foreign language drawing heavily on communicative exercises that help increase the efficiency of students' communicative competence formation is necessary and contributes to the overall growth of the professional training level of future lawyers (Liskin-Gasparro, 2007).

In this study, in contrast to similar (Littlewood, 2011) studies it was found that the student's communicative competence is expressed in a set of qualities that are consistent with the reference profile of the ideal communication partner (Oradee, 2013).

This integrative quality of personality is due to the motivation of communication, manifested in the ability of the communicant to adequately correlate their own communicative and situational constructs with the communicative and situational constructs of the communication partner (Chimshir, 2018). Supposing that at the initial stage of the experiment the level of communicative competence of students was defined as "low", then as a result of implementing a set of measures to develop communicative qualities and skills of students in the form of experimental methods of conducting foreign language classes using the textbook "English for Students", as well as a selection of educational material focused on the communicative approach in foreign language teaching, positive changes were obtained in the indicators of the communicative competence components (Wirawan, 2019). The study of changes in the formation level of professional communicative competence was carried out using quizzes, questionnaires, rankings, scaling (Yusupova, 2020).

Drawing on the analysis of the obtained experimental data, it can be concluded that the average indicator of communicative qualities in the experimental group increased from 1.82 to 2.30; on communicative skills - from 1.60 to 2.37; and in the control group, accordingly in terms of communicative qualities - from 1.44 to 1.91 and in terms of communication skills - from 1.50 to 2.08, which allows us to summarize that the indicators in the experimental group were higher than in the control group. In dialogues, discussions, role-playing games, students acquired the ability to conduct business negotiations, conversations, presentations, learned to solve communicative problems.

5 Findings

The relevance of the study is substantiated by the need to elicit more effective means of teaching English in HEIs, because future professionals should efficiently integrate into global cultural and scientific processes. Mastering a high level of foreign language competences will help to enhance the intercultural interaction and help future professionals to be more efficient in their field.

Thus, the results of the research accomplished provide a basis for a general conclusion about the promising resource of the developed system of students' communicative competence formation in the process of learning a foreign language. At the end of the pedagogical experiment, analyzing the data, we can say that students have a strong knowledge of the basics of competent communication, tend to maintain an interest in communicative improvement. The defining values in communication are personality, responsibility, creativity and individuality. It should be emphasized that this study does not claim to be a full-scale and comprehensive coverage of the problem. Its new unexplored aspects were partially revealed and researched, as well as the complex of pedagogical conditions which promote the efficiency enhancement of communicative competence formation of the future specialist was considered.

The promising perspective for further research could be the elaboration of the feasible and accessible forms and methods of forming the communicative competence of future professionals, making ample use of the latest teaching methods of a foreign language; the examination of conditions and principles of strategic planning of the development process, formation of future specialists' readiness for professional activity. The conducted research provides an opportunity to carry out a more thorough work in the future in the field of improving the teaching of English in HEIs.

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Primary Paper Section: A

Secondary Paper Section: AM, AI