ENHANCEMENT OF THE TEXT COMPETENCY IN PHILOLOGY STUDENTS WITHIN COGNITIVE AND COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

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Abstract: The paper details principles of work for enhancing the text competency in philology students within the cognitive and communicative approach. In the research, a set of methods are used, including both theoretical and empirical ones (forecasting, observation, assessment of the text-based activity). It has been found that in the process of improving the text competency, texts are sampled so as to meet communicative needs of students; as a didactic unit, the complex syntactic whole (CSW) is determined within which functional semantic types of speech (FSTS) are singled out. The study process relies on first learning analysis of the text while taking into account specific circumstances where its FSTS occur, next – reproducing a text of the set type and style, and finally, producing one's own utterance.

Keywords: language and literature teachers, cognitive and communicative approach, text, methodological system, text competency.

1 Introduction

In the system of the contemporary philological education, professional training of future language and literature teachers incorporates not only the knowledge of fundamentals of subjects determined by the curriculum but also motivation for the continuous pursuit of self-education and self-improvement. In other words, professional abilities of future language and literature teachers are directly associated with their ability to learn and ability to use the acquired knowledge in practice.

The objective of the cognitive and communicative approach is to form and develop professional skills that are necessary for modern language and literature teachers, to teach students fluent spontaneous speech by cultivating a system of professional pedagogical knowledge in them. This approach is based on consideration of students' individual particularities, opportunities, and interests. It is aimed at helping them in their professional self-fulfillment in the spheres of cognition and communication. It is also the condition for the development of cognitive and communicative facets of future language and literature teachers in the process of their higher education training.

One of the most important instructional media that contribute to enhancing learners' speech activity is the text. It acts as a unit of learning integrating in it the semantics of concepts under study, detailing their functional characteristics, and being a part of a speech act. For students of philology, the cognitive and communicative approach to working with the text, its units, categories, and formation means, is especially important; the same applies to pedagogical tasks, too, which are fulfilled via text-based activity. This is so because success of future specialists, their mobility, and competitiveness in the labor market largely depend on the high level of communicative competence – compulsory constituents of which is the ability of text-based activity and the ability to create professionally important texts and incorporate them into the process of professional communication efficiently.

Relevance of this research is determined by the tasks of enhancing skills and abilities to analyze, reproduce, and produce texts using the material of FSTS.

2 Literature Review

Research into the text, into the processes of understanding and producing it relies on concepts elaborated by L. S. Vygotsky (1999), N. I. Zhinkin (1982), A. A. Zalevskaya (2001), I. A. Zimnyaya (1989), A. A. Leontiev (2010) and on results of numerous experiments summed up and theoretically conceptualized in the works of L. I. Velichko (1983), A. D. Deykina and T. M. Pakhnova (2002), N. I. Ippolitova (1998), G. V. Kolshansky (1985). The researchers' works are distinguished by the integrated approach: in them, the questions of structure, categories, and attributes of the text are combined with the technique of acquisition thereof. The scientists analyze specific circumstances of formation of the text-based activity in students (Belova & Kashkareva, 2015), paying special attention to training of future language and literature teachers (Belova et al., 2019). They emphasize the importance of practice-oriented training, too (Shukshina et al., 2018) and they identify opportunities granted by the text-based activity in supplementary education (Kashkareva et al., 2018). Alongside this, methods of enhancing students' communicative competency are discussed (Babushkina et al., 2017; Kadakin et al., 2017). Other authors identify pedagogical technologies of learners' socialization by means of introducing them to the texts of Russian literature (Zhindeeva et al., 2018) and pay attention to specific features of the study text (Aleksandrov & Vorontsova, 2015). The process of learning is also influenced by the polycultural composition of participants of the educational space, so researchers frequently discuss specific features of learning within the polycultural educational space of higher educational institutions. Some works can be noted representing the text in its culturological aspect (Ashurova, 2020), analyzing its didactic potential in conditions of bilingual learning (Mosin et al., 2017), detailing the technique of forming students' ideas about resources and esthetic capacities of the very language and about the way its esthetic capacities are brought together in the text (Vodyasova, 2017), and so on. It should be noted that exploration of the text, teaching its interpretation and reproduction is an extremely useful kind of work at practice classes: during it, functional and systemic approach to language studying is carried out, and interdisciplinary relationships become quite obvious, too. As a result, the linguistic system (vocabulary and grammar) and language material (texts) are presented in the process of learning in a seamless way, manifesting itself in speech activity (the processes of speaking and understanding). Thus, it is completely justly stated by A. D. Deykina and T. M. Pakhnova (2002) that "the text becomes the pivot, key concept of the discipline, and text-oriented learning creates the speech environment for students which contributes to enhancement of the sense of language and development of linguistic feeling…" (p. 5).

In recent years, functionalism has been suggested among the prevailing focus areas of the text research. It relies on the activity-based, communicative, information and functional, and cognitive research results. It also takes into account both extra- and intra-textual attributes, in other words, the correlation of particular devices for expressing the semantic structure of the text with its aim based on its kind and genre. In characteristics of the said approach, it is noted to consider preconditions of author's freedom in choosing certain semantic structure expression devices. So, for example, Zh. E. Fomicheva (2014) stresses that the text is simultaneously the result of speech activity, its product, and the very text creation process, due to which it is processual and dynamic by its nature (p. 284). As viewed by a number of researchers, the most important aspects of functionalism are the communicative and the cognitive approaches. The former emphasizes consideration of the text as the communicative act kernel, ensuring the opportunity for analyzing it in the process of communication (as a subject-process unity). Meanwhile, what matters for the latter is the fact that in the text, the speaker's and recipient's knowledge about the reality is expressed, which ensures reconstruction of cognitive

mechanisms of text generation and understanding. A. A. Chuvakin (2007) is completely right arguing that when the communicative and cognitive approaches are coupled, the opportunity is created for one to see the text as a unity of the cognitive, subject, and communicative activities, to see the text "in its life" (p. 333–334).

In works discussing linguistic methodology, it is given that it is in the text that a certain communicative intention is brought together, and it is to this task that all its components are subordinated. So, the smallest unit of communication is required which incorporates all properties of the text being analyzed or generated, i. e., which is a model for learning. According to the researchers' idea, the principal attributes of this model have to be its topical and semantic unity, completeness in detailing a particular topic, and a set of structural-semantic and grammatical attributes organized in a special way. There are several definitions of such a unit; the authors opt for the term of the complex syntactic whole (CSW) (Vodyasova, 2012, p. 11). Within the CSW, functional semantic types of speech, or FSTS (also termed rhetorical modes), are singled out on the logical and semantic basis; they have stable semantics expressed in the relevant language structure (Vodyasova, 2018, p. 157). So, it is taking into account the correlation of logical and semantic principle with the functional syntactic one that is considered the most fruitful basis for singling out FSTS. FSTS are present in the text depending on its kind, objective, and conceptual idea. One speech type changing another is associated with the author's efforts to express his or her idea more completely, describe his or her standpoint, help perceive it better, and influence the readers or listeners more efficiently. Analysis of FSTS is important for not only cultivating grammatical skills and abilities in students, but also for enhancing their processes of understanding, interpreting, and producing the text, based on the knowledge of structure and pragmatic capacities of speech types.

3 Research Methodological Framework

The objective of this research is to identify ways of enhancing the text competency in philology students within the cognitive and communicative approach. According to the objective set, the following tasks are completed: a) to characterize the essence of the text-based activity within the cognitive and communicative approach; b) to identify problems solved in the process of enhancing students' text competency; c) to define as the principal didactic unit the CSW within which FSTS are singled out; d) to describe specific features of occurrence of FSTS; e) to detail efficiency of enhancing the text competency within the way FSTS are brought together.

When completing the objective and tasks of the research, the authors used theoretical level methods; the most important ones of them are analysis, systematization and expert appraisal of scientific and scientific methodological literature discussing problems of the text, methodological aspects of its understanding, perception, and production, comparison and generalization of statements suggested in various sources. When comparing different FSTS within the principal unit of the text – the complex syntactic whole (CSW), – the analysis of oppositions and the method of modeling were also used. The methods of observation and experiment have been carried out in the process of teaching students the text-based activity. In the experiment conducted at Mordovian State Pedagogical University named after M. E. Evseviev from September, 2020 to May, 2021, students of years III–IV (48 people) training in speciality 44.03.05 "Pedagogical education" profile "Russian language. Native language and literature" took part. The method of analyzing the text as a product of the text-based activity was used in assessing the formation extent of the students' text-based activity abilities. Predictive methods were employed when modeling the study process in variable pedagogical contexts.

4 Results and Discussion

Enhancement of the text competency allows comprehending the integral system of working on the text and being guided by the

principles of the cognitive and communicative approach to the said work. Owing to this, the students' activity can be forecast. So, in the process of this activity, which suggests orienting oneself in the communicative situation, identifying extra-linguistic factors which condition the genre choice, analyzing the source material (the initial study text), and processing it (interpreting and transforming the source information), integral communicative and cognitive units are created and interpreted, and the writers' repertoire of genres and topics is broadened. The students master new registers of speech, fundamentals of critical reading and academic writing, too.

Language teaching practice (teaching the native, non-native, and foreign language) has shown that in the process of enhancing the text-based activity skills and abilities, the following tasks are completed: 1) selection of texts meeting the students' communicative needs; 2) identification of the didactic unit containing all attributes of the text. Meanwhile, this didactic unit has to be quite compact in size: with a lengthy text, the process of learning cannot be carried out, as this leads to disruption of the main methodological principle "from the simple to the complex". As noted previously, it is the CSW that becomes such a didactic unit, within which FSTS are singled out on the logical and semantic basis. The FSTS represent typified varieties of monolog conditioned by communication.

The text competency enhancement process implies creation of the differentiated work technique relying on first teaching linguistic analysis of the text while taking into account specific circumstances where its FSTS occur, next – reproducing a text of the set type and style, and finally, producing one's own text. Proceeding from this, the study process is organized in such a way that the text-based activity skills and abilities were improved using the accessible material and already known assignment definitions, as it must not require additional time for mastering a new system of works algorithms.

Efficiency of the said technique was checked in the course of experimental teaching held at Mordovian State Pedagogical University named after M. E. Evseviev from September, 2020 through May, 2021. It involved students of the faculty of philology (years III–IV, 48 people) training in speciality 44.03.05 "Pedagogical education" profile "Russian language. Native language and literature". The first stage (September 2020) implied initial diagnosing of text-related abilities. The students performed viva voce and written works (miniature compositions, text editing, reviews, etc.) and completed tests. Results of the diagnosing have shown they sometimes fail at connecting parts of the text, wording its ending and they have difficulty using lexical diversity. This has enabled the authors to identify the strategy of subsequent work, having selected the relevant materials.

The second stage consisted in classes involving familiarization not only with distinctive features of linguistics concepts under study but also their text-forming role and text creation potential. The students were introduced to key topics using the material of certain assignments or within special practice classes.

As the authors adopted the CSW as the principal didactic unit, what was necessary first of all was to provide the created methodological system with the text material, i. e., a set of CSW in which FSTS are singled out possessing characteristic features of narration, description, reasoning, or the contaminated forms thereof. The set of assignments was designed in such a way as to enable the students to use their background knowledge of linguistics as much as possible, on the one hand, and on the other hand – to readily learn any new facts required for completing communicative tasks successfully. They have received the following information: although there are numerous devices enabling one to express one's idea, the author must always bear in mind that whatever linguistic means, methods, and practices could be used, the information has to be represented in a precise, complete, and consistent way, while adhering to the rules for constructing particular genre texts, style options for beginning and ending, for passing from one part to another, practices of bringing together retrospection and prospection. The authors rate

the following ones as the most productive kinds of work: oral or written reproduction of the text heard or read featuring the required extent of compactness (plan, highlights); presentation of FSTS of various genres with conscious choice of language means organization up to the communicative task; speaking in front of the peer students defending a project. Some assignments were associated with creating FSTS in various styles (literary, publicistic, and academic scientific ones); others involved comparing the text continuation written by a student with the author one or comparing variants of one's own text to improve it. There were tasks of finding departures from speech esthetics in the created text and editing it; in yet other assignments, students had to demonstrate their ability to draw the relevant information from different sources, including those provided in the digital form on various information carriers, and so on. When developing the assignments, the students' personal interests were taken into account, as well as their involvement in the discussion process at the stages of defining objectives, planning, checking, and assessing the results of their text-based activity. This has enabled the authors to markedly increase the students' motivation for learning.

Repeated diagnosing was conducted in May, 2021 and implied a review work with elements of linguistic composition and test points. It has confirmed that the students' knowledge of specific circumstances of occurrence of certain FSTS optimizes the process of general and professionally oriented speech training. When summing up results of the experiment, it has been found that the students in working with whom the developed technique was applied feature a higher level of the text-based activity skills and abilities. The training set consisting of a system of assignments correlated with certain FSTS allows stimulating the students' text-based activity. It represents an algorithm of actions by completing which one creates conditions for analyzing, reproducing, and producing the text as a piece of speech in an individually optimal way. Successfulness of this process is also determined by the fact that all assignments are correlated with certain stages of the text-based activity. For higher efficiency of improving the text-based activity skills, all assignments have been supplemented with relevant reference materials. The latter have enabled the students to independently find out the semantics of linguistic categories being used and, importantly, all attributes identifying the FSTS, as well as the analysis parameters according to which texts of certain typological and semantic belonging are studied. The work is further facilitated by learning the procedure and practices of linguistic analysis of the text. This is observed because the very methodological system starts generating its own rules logically justified by the specific features of the topic under study and learning objectives – once it has gained the basis in the form of the materials bank containing CSW meeting the didactic objectives (texts of certain size, typological and stylistic belonging) and the analytical model to be applied to them.

5 Conclusion

Proceeding from the above, it can be stated that the students' knowing specific features of occurrence of a certain FSTS contains a developing potential and intensifies the process of their language training. This supposition is based on: a) specific features of the linguistic material determining the correlation of each FSTS with a particular set of devices of the language system; b) the broad opportunities granted by FSTS in generation of text; c) application of the new system of assignments for cultivating skills and abilities of fluent conversation. The cognitive and communicative approach to organization of instructional text-based activity suggests naturally involving students into the process of producing utterances. Meanwhile, attention must be paid to compulsory constituents of communication which represent extra-linguistic factors, among other things: motive-need, communicative goal, addressee, the structure and stages of the activity, its result, analysis of the obtained texts, and reflection or assessment of the efficiency of solving the set problem. Working with the text at classes is viewed as a specific kind of activity during which mutual exchange of thoughts and emotions, information

exchange takes place with the communication participants contacting directly.

Theoretical significance of the research is associated with identifying the didactic potential of FSTS. Its practical importance consists in the following: 1) the authors have identified practices and methods of linguistic analysis of the text, of reproducing and producing one's own text based on the material of FSTS; 2) they have suggested the technique for enhancing certain skills and abilities of the text-based activity which allows successfully improving the level of professional communication in the native (non-native / foreign) language; 3) the authors have introduced a system of purpose assignments – in other words, a set of assignments aimed at intensifying and optimizing improvement of students' text competency.

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