

ГУМАНИТАРНЫЕ НАУКИ В ОБРАЗОВАНИИ

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COMMUNICATION SKILLS AT JOB INTERVIEW: PEDAGOGICAL INSIGHT INTO THE PROBLEM

Abstract. *The aim* of the study is to justify the need of teaching students how to use communicative skills in foreign language during the job interview; to demonstrate how to form the corresponding verbal competences based on the analysis of the certain communicative situation.

Methods. The complex of complementary research methods are used in order to achieve the set goal: theoretical methods – analysis, synthesis, generalization of research papers; empirical methods – discourse-analysis of institutional communication; methods of data collection and storage; experimental methods – experimental learning, implementation.

Results and scientific novelty. It is shown how to build up pupils' competence of speech behavior during business dialogue, proceeding from a communicative situation. For the first time the job interview was described from the communicative point of view (strategic goals and verbal behavior of both communicators) based on the recordings of real job interviews.

Practical significance. The study results presented in the paper may be used in direct teaching communicative skills at the job interview, in theoretical courses (delivering lectures on cross-cultural education, teaching foreign languages, the language of the specialty, etc.).

Keywords: professional communication, job interview, communicative roles, job seeker, HR manager, foreign language.

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НАВЫКИ ОБЩЕНИЯ НА СОБЕСЕДОВАНИИ-ИНТЕРВЬЮ: ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКИЙ АСПЕКТ

Аннотация. Цель статьи – обосновать необходимость обучения студентов навыкам общения на иностранном языке во время собеседования-интервью.

Методы. В исследовании применялся комплекс взаимодополняющих методов: теоретических – методов анализа, синтеза, обобщения научно-методических работ, соответствующих теме работы; эмпирических – дискурс-анализа институциональной коммуникации, сбора и накопления данных; экспериментальных – опытного обучения, внедрения.

Результаты и научная новизна. На конкретных примерах показано, как формировать у учащихся компетенции речевого поведения во время делового диалога, исходя из коммуникативной ситуации. Впервые на материале серии записей реальных собеседований рассмотрена и изучена коммуникативная структура собеседования-интервью, продемонстрирован процесс выбора его участниками стратегических целей и возможных вариантов поведения.

Практическая значимость. Материалы, представленные в статье, могут быть использованы в учебном процессе при непосредственном практическом обучении студентов навыкам общения на собеседовании-интервью, а также в теоретических лекционных курсах при обучении межкультурному общению, методике преподавания иностранных языков, языку специальности и т. п.

Ключевые слова: Профессиональное общение, собеседование-интервью, коммуникативные роли, соискатель, специалист по кадрам, иностранный язык.

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In the context of changes in the system of the Russian higher education after Russia entered Bologna process (2003), training of specialists prone to self-realization, independence, competitiveness, social and professional activity has become of special importance. This refers to teaching foreign languages, in particular, Russian as a foreign language.

The goal of the present study is to prove that studying foreign languages is a direct path to mastering communicative skills in professional sphere.

Prof. Y. E. Prokhorov gave the clear answer to the question «What to teach the foreigner?» speaking about the concept of teaching intercultural communication via foreign languages at XI MAPRYAL Congress. The purpose for which the foreigner started learning should be taken into account while teaching the Russian language. It is necessary to provide the foreigner with extra-linguistic, existential knowledge and teach intercultural communication (not the language) in certain situations. The vital changes in a modern world of teaching goals are connected with resurgence of the pragmatic component of educational activities. Both the linguistic parameters and cultural components for the selection of material are being changed, too. In turn, the cultural components are connected with each specific communicative space (in which the linguistic identity may realize necessary wants of his/her being) [5].

Therefore, the importance of problems connected with the changes in learning goals, on the one hand, and insufficient studies of communicative principle implementation in certain situations of professional communication, on the other hand, justify the **relevance** of the paper.

The main goal of a teacher of the Russian language – to teach students how to use the acquired skills in the process of communication – implies the clear vision of “communicative competence” as a methodological concept. In our point of view, the best definition of this concept is given by M. R. Lvov in the «Dictionary on methods of teaching Russian»: «Communicative competence is a term which defines the knowledge of the language (native and foreign), its phonetics, vocabulary, stylistics, culture of speech, the competent usage of these linguistic means and speech mechanisms – speaking, listening, reading, writing – within social, professional, cultural needs of a person» [3, p. 92–93]. This is one of the most important characteristics of a linguistic identity which is acquired as a result of natural speech activity and during the special training.

It is known that the communicative competence as a generic term includes several components: linguistic, verbal (sociolinguistic), discourse, strategic and sociocultural competences. When the communicative competence is presented in a certain professional area, its discourse component becomes the most important among the others. It is essential to understand that the discourse competence is not only composition of logical and coherent texts but also «the knowledge of different discourse types and the rules of their formation, the skill to use the discourse types in accordance with the communicative situation and produce them taking into account extra-linguistic features of communicative situations, roles of the participants of the communicative situation, ways of their interaction...» [4, p. 252–253].

We would like to describe the preparatory stage of the role game that models the communicative situation of job interviews. The interview as a communicative situation is universal. It does not depend on professional activities (can be used at speaking classes) although it may be a part of professional communication (for example, as a part of «Tourism» or «Business language» courses). This type of communicative exercise – a role game – promotes spontaneous speech, helps to clear linguistic and psychological barriers, implements teaching of dialogues and monologues. In a role game a student may try on the role of a job seeker which is important for each student as a prospective employee.

The teacher should clearly explain to the students all peculiarities of the given communicative act and emphasize that the job interview is the most important stage at work placement when CV was already reviewed and approved by future employer. It is necessary to present the structure of a standard job interview.

Job Interview Structure

1. Establishing contacts. The goal of the interviewer is to create good company image and give an opportunity to relax for the job seeker.
2. Short conversation about the company.
3. Interview: the job seeker answers the questions and performs some situational tasks.
4. The job seeker is given an opportunity to ask questions to the interviewer.
5. Discussion of algorithm of further interaction [2, p. 3].

The process of immediate preparation to the role game includes some stages. The first stage involves studying of vocabulary (adjectives-characteristics, terms, abbreviations, nomenclature, etc.) and definitions. Students look at the job advertisements from different travel agencies: requirements, responsibilities, professional skills, self-presentation in case of lack of working experience. The samples of oral and written speech models, material for analysis, lexical and grammatical minimum are introduced through texts of real job ads.

Example:

*Vacancy: **CLIENT MANAGER***

***Business area:** Service sector: Tourism / others.*

***Working schedule:** full time.*

***Salary:** 600\$+.*

***Comments:** Western company in the market of business announces the position of client manager.*

***Requirements:** 21+, working experience with corporate clients, fluent English. Practice of negotiations and business correspondence are essential. Advanced computer user, interpersonal skills, conflict-free, can-do attitude. Knowledge of German is a plus.*

***Responsibilities:** ticket reservations, tour selection, visa processing, routing. The business trips are possible.*

Free meals.

Contact: H&R department

e-mail: info@assclass.ru

It is important that the texts are not adapted. In this case under the communicative approach the text is considered to be a material for teaching speaking, as well as the initial and the final element of studying.

The tasks which are introduced at this stage are built on the principle of subtest Speaking [6]. They make the case study look like real life situations. To cite one example: «Telephone conversation» is the situation in which the student-the initiator of the dialogue should inquire his/her interlocutor in accordance with the task. Here the advertisement is a text with less specific information. Therefore, it provides students with an opportunity to ask more

general and clarification questions as well as to develop the communication skills. **E.g.: You have read the newspaper advertisement of particular interest to you. Call the phone and ask thorough questions to evaluate your chances to win the competition.**

The corporate group "Travel with us" seeks sales managers for a new tourist office in Kazan.

Main line of work – domestic travel.

Requirements: standard.

Priority: work experience, education in tourism, personal computer user, foreign languages, operating office equipment. **Attn:** employment is possible exclusive of professional skills.

Guaranteed: decent salary and favorable working conditions.

Please send your CV:

– e-mail:

– tel.: ...

The further stage is dedicated to dialogues – live communicative acts: listening and reading dialogues-interviews, work with vocabulary and grammar, definition of main communicative tactics of the dialogue participants. Example:

• *Good morning. My name is Anna Falkovich. I have been scheduled a job interview on 10 o'clock.*

• *Good morning. My name is Vladimir. Have a seat, please. I was interested in your CV. You are a linguist, why have you decided to change the occupation?*

• *I like travelling very much. I like to meet new people and visit new places, that is why I have decided to find a job in tourism. The work in capacity of reservation manager may be a good start in my new career.*

• *You wrote that you speak good Russian. It is very important for us because we have many clients from Russia. However, you do not have any experience in this sphere. Are you acquainted with any reservation systems?*

• *Unfortunately, no. I am ready to learn.*

• *Well. What positive features can you list?*

• *I am neat, punctual, attentive, hard-working. I do not have bad habits, also.*

• *Excellent. I think we can take you on a probation period. You will be an assistant to the reservation manager for this period. Do you agree?*

• *Yes, of course! I think I will learn many things during this time.*

• *I am sure. Please, fill in this form and return it to our secretary. She will process all necessary documents. I am waiting for you on Monday.*

• *Thank you. See you on Monday!*

• *Good bye.*

This is followed by listening exercises in the form of dialogues and tests. It allows using all skills connected with communicative speaking skills.

The teacher should make the students aware of some «extra-linguistic» competences such as gestures, behavior, and appearance.

Surely, in order to form the communicative situation which resembles the natural one the teacher of the Russian language has to be highly qualified, take into account psychological features and creative potential of the student group and its participants.

The teacher as a manager of a studying process should prepare students to the game linguistically and psychologically:

1. Describe the situation in details.
2. Distribute the roles and explain the goals to each student.
3. Present the verbal behavior program (define the strategic lines of each participant).

For example, in our case it is:

Description of the situation: A candidate for the position of a tourist manager © came to the job interview in a travel agency. He/she is going to discuss with HR manager the open vacancy and take part in the competition. During the interview the employer (E) asks questions concerning the job seeker's education, working experience, skills and knowledge. The personal questions (life goals, aspirations, plans, and achievements in the future) are also possible.

The role of the employer: the representative of a travel agency who is responsible for holding an interview with job seekers for the position of a tourist manager. The students should understand that it is a dominant role in the dialogue which realizes the main communicative strategies and tactics of dialogue (strategy of the job seeker diagnostics [1, p. 295–296], «control over initiative» strategy, tactics of opening and ending dialogues, etc.).

The strategic goal is to get as much information as possible from the job seeker concerning his/her professional skills, working experience and personal qualities; to find out to what extent the candidate is suitable for the position.

Program of verbal behavior: to try to establish an immediate contact with the job seeker and create favourable ambience for the dialogue; to find out to what extent the candidate is suitable for the position.

The student who plays a role of employer should ask questions as an active communicator.

The list of standard questions:

- Tell about yourself.
- What makes you different from other applicants?

- What are the 5 adjectives which represent your personality?
- What is your edge over others at this work?
- What attracts you to working for this position?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Why have you decided to change the job?
- Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
- What salary are you expecting?, etc.

It is possible to offer simple contextual tasks of the following type: «Describe an ideal workplace»; «Describe an ideal executive». Moreover, the important strategic goal of the manager is to keep an initiative during the course of dialogue.

Applicant's role is to present the candidate for a certain position (open vacancy). He/she has to demonstrate the professional quality, to describe knowledge and experience by using the self-presentation strategy.

Strategic goal is to make good impression with the company's representative; to persuade the interlocutor that the nominee is worthy of the position. The student should understand that the interview is a moment when «a person is deliberately selling himself once in a lifetime».

Verbal behavior program: to answer the questions of the interviewer in an appropriate way, to support the favorable dialogue ambience.

It is necessary to use the tasks for interpretation and understanding of communicative behavior of the partner in development of strategic skills. Consequently, the students might be offered to identify what tactics are used by the job seeker in a certain case. For example:

Task: **Watch the extract from the job interview. A) Identify what communicative tactics are used by the job seeker to realize self-presentation strategy while replying to the personal questions. B) Find and write down the linguistic markers of such tactics.**

The text of the interview:

E: – *First of all / could you please / tell a little bit about yourself //*

C: – *I am working at a large consulting company / since 2002 // I have been assigned tasks in stages // Firstly, / to arrange training in software products in personnel management for the company's clients // At a later stage / to provide support and consulting services / Further, there was a grand mission / to establish the consulting office // All these tasks were solved // The position / of the company on the market / is unique // because all these technologies / and the consulting systems / are also unique // We could offer the clients permanent maintenance / and full consulting // This is / first of all*

/ sui generis // Secondly / these consulting opportunities have broad range / they are precise / innovative both at the national and at global levels //

E: – *Have you taken part at the projects / or have you only supervised the office?*

C: – *Both //*

E: – *Both / yes?*

C: – *Yes / because there are fairly complicated projects / unique / when the personal participation is needed // And / anyway / I have participated in many projects / first of all / in negotiations // Not the search for the clients/ exactly negotiations // Secondly / in commissioning / when we present the results / explain the output //»*

Therefore, the students have to imagine the whole communicative picture of the interview: the speech behavior program of communicants (the HR manager and the job seeker), their strategic goals and verbal content of the tactics. The main applicant's strategy – the strategy of self-presentation – should be emphasized as this role is of vital importance for prospective employees. It is significant that in the process of learning Russian foreign students form verbal competences, acquire new knowledge in professional spheres that promotes social adaptation in their native country.

To sum up, in the present paper we have tried to prove the need to teach foreign students communicative skills in professional sphere on the example of the job interview. Such an approach opens prospects for further studying of the range of specific speech situations necessary for potential specialists. It also allows finding more efficient methods in teaching communicative skills at the classes of foreign language.

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