New Interactive Tendencies in Teaching Russian as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

The paper discusses the new interactive technologies in teaching Russian as a foreign language. Based on a review of literature, research, theory, internet resources and current teaching practices the paper considers both theoretical and practical aspects of the usage of interactive technology in teaching Russian as a foreign language. The author demonstrates that learning Russian plays a vital role for foreign students studying medicine in Russia, being a prerequisite for their educational and professional work performance during their studies in a Russian university. The new modern technologies of teaching such as interactive teaching technologies largely contribute to the increase of foreign students' motivation for learning the Russian language, and the efficiency of the learning process, as well as to the development of an active verbal communication during the classroom activities. Teaching experience demonstrates the effectiveness of interactive technologies for the development of speaking proficiency, interpersonal and communication skills. Based on the theory of teaching practice at university and on the literature review as well, we specified the core characteristics of the interactive technologies compared to the traditional methods of teaching. Our review's results make it possible to suggest that interactive technologies implementation should be based on mechanisms of dialogue, reflexivity and collaboration. These mechanisms contribute to the formation of the communicative as well as professional competence of foreign students.

Keywords: Interactive Technology; Russian language; Methodology of teaching; Students

1.0. Introduction

It is evident that a significant place in the education system strengthens the position of any language in the world nowadays. The prospect of a partnership of cooperation with Russia, where Russian is a state language, creates the need for a practical learning of the Russian language by foreigners. This also explains the need for the existing of contemporary export of educational services within the framework of the preparation of specialists for foreign countries.

Currently, teaching Russian as a foreign language has been actively developed as a relevant and promising area. Interest in the learning of the Russian language is constantly increasing worldwide. Every year, more and more foreigners living in Russia and abroad are interested in the Russian language, are willing to learn it and become competent Russian speakers [1, 2].

The grasping of the basics of the Russian language is a prerequisite for the educational and professional work performance while studying at a Russian university. Increasing foreign students' motivation for learning Russian, searching for methods, techniques and technologies to increase the efficiency of the learning process, and supporting an active verbal communication during the classroom activities is a relevant problem. The solution of this problem requires the use of new teaching technologies [1, 3, 4, 5].

2.0. Methods

The methods of investigation comprised analytical and descriptive methods of the research, theory and current teaching practices review, existing literate & internet resources review, as well as a method of teaching experience review [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15].

3.0. Results

Our review results make it possible to suggest that the use of interactive technologies in teaching Russian as a foreign language for students represents a new methodological approach to the training process organization. Aiming to form students and teachers' personal attitude towards the educational process, this approach is reported to proceed from the mechanisms of dialogue, reflexivity and cooperation, providing educational actors' involvement into the training process and their personal responsibility for its results [3]. Based on the theory of teaching practice at universities and on literature

review results [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15], we specified the core characteristics of the interactive technologies compared to the traditional methods of teaching in the following Table.

Features	Traditional forms of teaching	Interactive technologies
Main Subject	Teacher or lecturer is the main subject of the educational process	Students are the main subjects of the educational process
The activity of students	The passive activity of students	High students' activity and interaction
Style	The authoritarian style of interaction	A more democratic style of interaction
Source	The teacher is the main source of information, the only knowledge translator. It is the teacher who decides how and what to study and forms the students' views.	Communication & collaboration are the main parts of the teaching process. The teacher is a partner and coordinator of communication. Openness, interaction of the educational process participants, equality of their arguments, accumulation of joint knowledge, the possibility of mutual evaluation and control.
Forms of classwork activities	Lectures, training exercises, self-paced work, final papers, tests	Individual, pair and group work, project work, role-playing games, work with documents and various sources of information, web-quests, computer technologies

The analysis of the distinctive features of interactive technologies of teaching Russian as a foreign language demonstrates their compliance with the modern requirements of training, confirms the effectiveness of their usage in the contemporary conditions of training. In simple terms, students can more easily understand and memorize the material they have studied through active involvement in the learning process. Based on this, today, the main methodological innovations are associated with interactive teaching technologies.

4.0. Discussion

In modern psycholinguistics and social psychology, communicative activity becomes the key object of study. There are new psychological and pedagogical theories, which emphasize people's social interaction and collaboration, considered as interpersonal communication. In interpersonal communication, a person takes on a role, plays it and obtains an idea for how a communication partner perceives it, interprets the situation and coordinates his/her own actions [3, 4]. This interaction leads to the development of the person and his/her creative abilities, as well as the ability to think and be aware of oneself as a special person.

All mentioned becomes very relevant for linguistic training. Regarding this, new technology and forms of teaching foreign languages, particularly Russian as a foreign language, are being elaborated.

Technology is known to be the most effective way to achieve the objectives [2]. Being an integral concept, educational technology is considered as a model of educational activity of a teacher and a student (or a group of students) within preparing and conducting the educational process. New educational technology in language teaching refers to a contemporary stage of development of updated teaching methods and techniques used to form and develop students' communicative competence. Among modern educational technologies, there are interactive technologies based on the active interaction and communication between a student and a teacher and other students (the ability to work cooperatively in a group). They are based on interactionism, which is one of the most popular concepts of modern social psychology [5, 7, 8, 9].

Research indicates that interactive learning technology has been developed since the end of the 20th century in the United States (D. Halpern, C. Temple, D. Steele, K. Meredith) as a universal form of teaching various subjects for students of all ages, and jointly implemented by lecturers around the world [10]. These technologies are successfully used as for traditional model of teaching so in contemporary one, including a foreign language teaching, particularly Russian as a foreign language. The mastering of communication skills and social interactions of foreign students becomes the main goal of the contemporary methodology of teaching Russian as a Foreign Language. The process of communication serves not only as a leading learning objective but also as a means to achieve the learning goal. Due to this approach, communicativity ceases to be a simple phenomenon but becomes an essential principle of the learning process construction. The best option to develop students' communicative skills is collaboration [11]. According to educationalist Ken Robinson, education systems should recognize that "most great learning happens in groups", because "collaboration is the stuff of growth" [12]. Of course, to communicate in any language, learners need to talk to each other. Therefore, language classes are a very natural place to use collaborative learning strategies [13, 14].

Studies have shown that when learners work in groups it leads to their improved achievement, retention of learning and social relationships, as well as increase in their intrinsic motivation. It can lessen the stress of contributing to a whole-class situation and give more time for learners to work at their own pace. Development of collaborative learning skills in university settings helps to get students prepared for their future life and work as part of a team [15]. For example, working on group projects in university settings, the students get prepared for teamwork with common goals and collective, as well as individual, responsibility, which is required in most workplaces.

As our teaching experience shows the main objectives to use the interactive technologies in teaching Russian as a Foreign Language are the formation and development of communicative skills and activity (speaking, writing, reading, and listening comprehension), effective assimilation of educational material, as well as improving and maintaining interest in learning Russian. Using similar technologies in the classroom settings, students can generalize their learning and communicative experience. The primary focus should be on communication skills, collaborative activity and teamwork skills development. Pair work and group work are critical in a communicative classroom. In this process, the language teacher assumes the role of organizer, supervisor and a direct participant of communication, coordinates communication activities of students and helps them.

Interactive teaching technologies require special methods and techniques of the educational interaction, such as question-answer discussion, search of arguments for different points of view, exchange of opinions, and peer assessment. Interactive educational technologies fully meet modern requirements of training, representing a more democratic approach to training organization, aimed to raise students' intrinsic motivation, develop their personality, their cognitive activity and creativity. Among collaborative learning strategies and interactive learning technology used in our professional practice of teaching Russian as a foreign language, there are: work in pairs or in small groups, the chain, press conference, brainstorming, team games, assignments, linguistic games, puzzles, crosswords, role-playing and simulation games, case studies, project technology, technology of working with documents, the tandem method, interactive tours, quests and web-quests, literature and musical compositions, discussions, multimedia and Internet technologies, podcasts, edutainment technology, critical thinking development, contests of reciters / literary conferences, and festivals of Russian speech. These types of work are universal, since they correspond to the different stages of learning and can be used to develop social, cultural, and scientific speech skills.

5.0. Conclusion

The mentioned interactive forms of education are the basis for the development of foreign language communication skills and contribute to the formation of the communicative and social competence of foreign students. Professional teaching experience demonstrates the effectiveness and relevance of the usage of interactive technologies to improve interpersonal and communication skills.

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