

Improving Non-Philology Students' Language Skills in Russian: Creative Approach Context

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Abstract

Teaching Russian as a foreign language (RFL) to non-philology students has been an active area of research for the last several decades. There has been a constant increase in the number of students learning Russian, due to the growing role of the Russian language in the academic environment and to the development of international relations in this area. The ultimate purpose of teaching Russian to international non-philology students is for them to speak Russian fluently (first of all, in a specific discipline), to express their thoughts, to understand their interlocutors, to reproduce and interpret orally and in writing the information obtained from print and audio sources. Learning Russian for professional purposes for non-philology university students is not only a means of mastering their future professions, but also a possibility to competently communicate in the professional environment and easily adapt to constantly changing working conditions. The article is devoted to the issue of implementing creative approach in teaching Russian (specifically – speaking, or, communicative skills) to non-philological students. The issue of interaction of creative and critical thinking is taken into consideration. Some elements and techniques suitable to creative approach, suggested by psychologists and methodologists and also presented examples of using these methods in teaching Russian, are discussed in this research. This study also examines the current situation in Uzbekistan with teaching Russian as a foreign language in a bilingual environment and resulting difficulties, such as language and psychological barriers, inhibiting the effectiveness of used teaching methods. The authors analyze the high level of foreign language anxiety of non-linguistic students, mainly caused by the conventional summative assessment approaches typical for the traditional teacher-centered teaching model, and reveals the benefits of creative approach.

Keywords: approach, creativity, Russian, speaking skills, communicative skills, method, technique.

1.0. Introduction

*I keep six honest serving men
They taught me all I knew:
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who
Rudyard Kipling*

Progress and achievements of the recent years has created new opportunities and conditions for studying foreign languages in Uzbekistan. The higher education system of our country aimed at training highly qualified specialists capable of professionally directed communication not only in their native language, but also in a foreign language. Therefore, in the course of professionally oriented Russian language study it is necessary to prepare students for communication in this language in situations typical for their future professional sphere. Modern professionally oriented training is aimed at mastering the language as a means of communication within the chosen profession. In this case, the Russian language is a means of increasing communicative competence and personal and professional development of students and is a prerequisite for the successful professional activity of a specialist graduate of a modern higher school, able to conduct business contacts with foreign partners. However, the success of verbal communication depends not only on the speaker's desire to come into contact, but also on the ability to realize his or her verbal intention, which depends on the degree of knowledge of language units and the ability to use them in specific situations of communication

Modern education — is one of the most important means of solving problems, of not only society, but also individuals. In any state the nature of the system of education is determined by socio-economic and political systems, as well as historical, cultural and national characteristics of the country. Taking into account the ideas of the great teachers, the wishes of parents and students a choice of methods and means of training depends on the needs of society. When a society was in need of collectors, hunters and fishermen (in ancient times), there existed a primitive pedagogy (teaching) route, which produced gatherers, fishermen and hunters with a simple example («Do as I do! Follow me!»). That was enough to raise (brought up) gatherers, fishermen, hunters, and even soldiers. When a society was in need of orators and philosophers, there appeared a pedagogy (studios of ancient Greece), focused on the education of the orator or philosopher

in the classes of rhetoric in public discourse (and when Socrates introduced a new methodology, now known as the Socratic method, he was sentenced to death.) When society was in need of more artisan in this society there appeared technical schools (workshops) and, accordingly, pedagogy for teaching technical skills and experience. When society needed more educated engineers and doctors, there appeared pedagogy of learning (schools, colleges, universities). And it was found that the existing methods of teaching and problem solving are not sufficient to meet the needs of society, there were schools for creative thinking, creative school education, and creative approach to problem solving.

2.0. Creative Approach in Education

Nowadays, when education is changing due to changes in the demands of society, the learning process in higher education focuses mainly on the development of the kind of thinking that develops skills of analysis, i.e. — teaching students how to understand the requirements, follow or create a logical argument, to find out answer, eliminate incorrect paths and focus on the right. Thus to develop critical thinking. However, to meet the needs of the community in the creative specialists began to develop different kind of thinking, aimed at the study of ideas, opportunities, looking for many right answers, not just one — creative thinking. Both of these types of thinking are essential to successful study and work, but the latter is not very well developed, studied, and therefore, in most cases, ignored in higher education. The main distinguishing features of these two types of thinking proposed by Robert Haris. Data are presented in the table below:

Critical thinking	Creative thinking
analytic	generative
convergent	divergent
vertical	lateral
probability	possibility
judgment	suspended judgment
focused	diffuse
objective	subjective
answer	an answer
left brain	right brain
verbal	visual
linear	associative
reasoning	Richness, novelty
yes but	yes and

In any action to deal with any mental problems are very important both kinds of thinking. First of all, any problem should be analyzed and this is a generation of possible solutions, then it is necessary to select and implement the best solution, and, finally, to evaluate the effectiveness of solutions. This process shows the alternation between the two kinds of thinking, critical and creative. In practice, both types of thinking and working together are not truly independent of each other. So, what is creativity? To address this question it is necessary to understand the concepts, creative, creativity, thinking and understanding the brink of data fusion concepts.

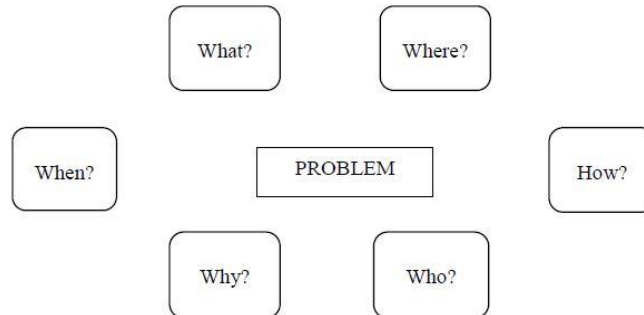
Creativity — the process of activity, creating a qualitatively new material and spiritual values, or a result of the new subjective. Creativity (from the English. Create — create, Eng. Creative — creative, creative) creative ability of the individual, characterized by a willingness to create fundamentally new ideas that deviate from traditional patterns of thought and received a part of a talent as an independent factor, and the ability solve problems that arise in static systems. According to Abraham Maslow — a creative focus, innate characteristic of all but lose most under the influence of Thinking — is higher cognitive processes, activities to transform reality, creating a new, change existing condition. Hence we conclude that creative or creative thinking — is the creative ability of the individual towards the transformation of reality, creation and implementation of new ideas. The man in today raises a lot of needs and challenges, which makes a variety of mental problems. This is related to a number of different classifications of thinking proposed by psychologists, philosophers and educators.

3.0. Effective Techniques to Teach Russian as a Foreign Language to Non-Philological Students

At the moment, there are numerous techniques within the creative approach to teaching Russian as a foreign language, but complete classification does not exist so far. Learning foreign languages is an excellent area for the formation and development of the foundations of creative thinking. As you know. Creative thinking is necessary first of all the teacher to create an atmosphere in the classroom sending country-specific target language, as well as to send a new linguistic material through the lens of culture, as well as to maintain the motivation of students to educate themselves in this area of knowledge, as the means to teach the language to teach to live and think in that language. Students creative thinking is necessary to complete perception of culture, and the culture of the country to skip the target language through the prism of its usual perception of the world, as well as the utterance pragmatic tasks related to the culture and way of life and a foreign language.

4.0. Case 1

With one of the simplest method of developing creative thinking we face every day in every situation when we face any problem. Let's name it «Ask questions» or «Idea Generators». This method can be used in different activities in class beginning from just asking questions and also after giving to the students some problem solving task. There are only six questions that one student can ask another or teacher may ask student:



Teacher may also draw a mind map of the problem with these six words as nodes on the map as presented on the scheme: Also using this method can be organized role playing activities, story telling activities or it can be as worming up before beginning new theme or project etc.

An example of methods of forming creative thinking can be a well-known to teachers of English language — Brainstorm (brainstorming), which is based on the principle of dilution to the time of the two phases of the creative act: the generation of ideas and their critical evaluation. Usually the thought process they are so fused that most emerging ideas swept aside by the individual immediately, even before he has time to find them embedded in the rational. Options for using this technique in the learning process can be many, for example, when students offered some problematic topic for discussion or text for further discussion and the students in pairs or groups to present their solution to the problem and then analyzing these decisions come to the same uniform. Also to this method include a description of student pictures, or transfer of associative units for some concepts.

5.0. Case 2

Another technique that has found a place in the teaching of foreign languages and a number of other humanities — is synectics. She identifies two processes that can be used in the work, such as:

1. turning unfamiliar to a familiar
2. turning familiar to unfamiliar

With the first stage, which is very important, we are familiar better. When we are faced with a new challenge, we, first of all, try to understand it, to study, to correlate with the known and the situation we experience.

But the creative process is not less important is the second process, which we used to work a lot less. The transformation of the familiar in the unfamiliar — is a coup, a distortion, a change of perspective on everyday things, events. And considering how well-known the unknown is the basis of creativity and it is on this aspect focuses synectics. This technique is valuable in the development of oral and written language, as motivates students to think about the usual things, but from unusual angles, such as assignment to write a letter on behalf of myself neighbor, relative, or an enemy in a foreign language in the student generate many ideas to express which it will use a foreign language, but with an excellent proficiency in a language of thought may be from the outset in a foreign language.

6.0. Results

Summing up research studies in the Russian language teaching to non-linguistic (non-philological) students, the following main features of RFL teaching in non-philology academic disciplines can be singled out (Table 1). It should be noted that division by training areas is rather tentative, since all of these areas are interrelated and may be applied comprehensively.

TABLE 1: DEVELOPING LANGUAGE SKILLS AMONG NON-PHILOLOGY STUDENTS ACCORDING TO THE MAIN RFL TEACHING METHODOLOGY AREAS

<i>Training areas</i>	<i>Language skills</i>			
	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Speaking</i>	<i>Writing</i>
Personality-oriented	Choice of methods, content, teaching techniques and learning aids depending on the learner's interests, goals and the Russian language learning objectives.			
Cultural	The learner's adaptation and socialization in a new cultural and language environment, stimulation of interest in studying the Russian language and culture, activation of acquired language skills, formation of socio-cultural competence			
Communicative	A means of professional communication in a specific discipline	A means of enriching the learner's Russian vocabulary, thus facilitating a more efficient reading/ understanding of texts	A means of professional communication in a specific discipline	–
Innovative	Efficient, quick and independent (including distance learning) knowledge acquisition, enhancement and expansion, innovative learning strategies, reduced training time (direct contact with the teacher), easy access to information			
Linguistic Methodology	–	A means of enriching professional vocabulary, teaching basic academic Russian, effective Russian language teaching	A means of acquiring skills for producing coherent texts independently in scientific and professional communication	A means of acquiring skills for reviewing and annotating professional literature
– Test-oriented	–	A means of preparation for test assignments in academic and professional communication	–	A means of preparation for test assignments in scientific and professional communication

The four language skills acquisition (listening, reading, speaking, writing) depends, first of all, on the academic discipline and on the linguistic competence level of the learner (Surygin 2000). As a rule, at the basic level, the learner's interests have little to do with the chosen field of study: in the preparatory, 1st and 2nd year courses, the RFL teacher aims at developing those language knowledge and skills that will allow the international student to communicate in a new language, to take university courses in the chosen field of study and to show interest in Russian culture and language (Levina 2003). At the more advanced level, given the learner's gradually increasing need to work with specific and specialized texts, the teacher is expected to develop the international learner's language skills necessary for adequate professional communication in Russian, to emphasize the foreign professional's acquisition of the most important communication skill in professional life, which is his or her active involvement in practical activities and communication.

Conclusion

Today, many researchers ask whether Russian as a foreign language can be effectively taught and learnt in an artificial bilingual environment by non-native speakers and if yes – what should be done to design a Russian language lesson for non-philological (non-linguistic) students with the active use of creative approach. The implementation of creative

approach gave Russian language and literature teachers a clearly positive answer to the first question, laid a strong foundation for building a Russian language community within a group of students, and set the direction for the further development of professional Russian language in Uzbekistan. Giving students of different major and new opportunities to communicate in Russian within common native language community compensates for the lack of speaking situations during the class (creates educational language environment), increases the motivation of students and helps to embrace the modern learner-centered education paradigm. Using the methods described in the paper, and using the skills and capabilities of their creative thinking you can improve students' motivation to learn foreign languages, to improve the mastery of the material, giving interdisciplinary knowledge, and develop skills in creative thinking in students.

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