Special features of pedagogical communication in a foreign audience at university

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Abstract — This article provides an analysis of the features of pedagogical communication at the stage of Pre-university training of foreign students. The focus on this stage is explained by the fact that it is very important for foreigners to adapt to the educational and professional environment of a Russian university. The paper covers pedagogical conditions which contribute to successful interaction between a teacher and a foreign student. This article indicates the necessity for the teacher to have skills, techniques and methods of pedagogical communication. The authors provide the system of teacher’s professionally important skills which are necessary for pedagogical communication with Russian students and the communication skills which are necessary for teaching to a foreign audience. The authors describe the intercultural specificity of communication between foreign students and a Russian teacher. The paper considers pedagogical communication with the given audience as a social and role pedagogical interaction, aimed at formation of foreign students’ skills and abilities of intercultural communication. The authors’ research allows identifying principles of cross-cultural communication at the stage of pre-university training.

Keywords — foreign students, pre-university stage, pedagogical communication, cross-cultural communication.

I. INTRODUCTION

Pedagogical communication aimed at students’ personal development is the basis of professional work of Russian university teachers.

The term pedagogical communication appeared in the West in the late 1970’s, later many researchers got interested in the subject (E. Bern, E.G. Boyer, D. Zand, G. Zimmel, E. Stones, N. Flanders and others).

Russian researchers have been interested in studying multiple aspects of communication such as: psychology of communication (G.V.Gusev, A.B. Dobrovich, Ya.L. Kolomenski, A.A. Leon’t’ev, I.V.Strahov and others), issues of mutual understanding between teachers and students (A.A. Bodalev and others), professional and pedagogical communication as a process of continuously developing and changing forms of communication (V.A. Kan-Kalik); structure, functions and units of pedagogical communication (I.A. Zimnyaya, V. A. Petrovski and others), dialogue as a means of teaching communication (D.A. Leon’t’ev, E.I. Rogov, E.O. Safonova) and many other aspects.

It is recognised that most of the researchers considered the issues of pedagogical communication in relation to school education and, to a much lesser extent, in relation to university education (L. V. Bazarova, G. S. Baitishchev, I. A. Galkina, O. V. Ivanova, T. V. Leon’t’eva, A. A. Lobanov, A. S. Robotova, L. V. Stoyanova, N. D. Tvorogova, E. V. Tuchina, V. L. Chunova, I. G. Shaposhnikova and others). This issue has been researched even less in relation to pedagogical communication between a Russian university teacher and foreign students (T. A. Klenova, E. D. Maksimchuk, I. M. Popova, L. F. Svoyskina, E. G. Shumanskaya, L. P. Tsokol’). A lack of attention among Russian researchers to the issue of pedagogical communication with foreign students at university emphasizes the urgency of the issue and requires further development.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Professional pedagogical communication as a special form of teacher-student interaction

Currently, there is a contradiction between insufficient consideration of the interaction between university teachers and foreign students during the process of pedagogical communication on the one hand, and its urgency, on the other hand.

The purpose of our research is revealing pedagogical conditions promoting fruitful teacher – foreign student interaction at Russian university.

Methods of research: studying and analysis of the pedagogical and methodical literature devoted to the issue,
supervision, conversation, survey, questioning, testing, pedagogical experiment, mathematical data processing methods, etc.

Experimental research base: Pre-university Training Faculty of the Volgograd State Technical University, 205 students.

Our attention to the Pre-university stage is explained by the extreme importance of the adaptation period for foreigners to train in the educational and professional environment of Russian university [1]. It should be noted that all over the world training of foreign entrants at universities of the country are preceded with training at Pre-university courses [2], but at Russian university this stage is an obligatory part of foreign citizens training.

Thus, a teacher providing pedagogical communication at university should be able to carry on productive dialogue with students on the basis of mutual understanding, partnership and cooperation. It should be mentioned that according to the learner-centred approach a student is considered as an active subject of pedagogical interaction, as an equal partner of pedagogical communication organizing his activity independently. Due to this approach focus on cooperation becomes a key element of university teacher’s activity. As it is noted in the dissertation of A.A. Galkina «The Organization of pedagogical interaction between teacher and students during studying a foreign language (based on the study conducted at a technical university) », «at the present stage of development of higher education, the process of studying foreign languages should be understood not as individual activity of students with teaching materials, with the subject of studying, but as a kind of communicative interaction, an important function of which is to establish interaction between teachers and students with each other. During that interaction the task of assignment of speech experience in language new to them is realized» [3, p. 9].

In the context of this article we do not consider it necessary to analyze various points of view on relationships between the concepts communication and interaction. We shall notice only, that there are points of view, according to which communication is secondary to interaction. For example, O.V. Ivanova in her dissertation «Features of pedagogical interaction between the teacher and students during studying a foreign language: based on the study conducted at a non-liberal arts university» says: «pedagogical interaction between teachers and students in the process of studying a foreign language may be implemented through pedagogical communication during class time and non-class time» [4, p. 6].

We suppose that communication is a wider concept, because interaction as cooperative activity of people cannot proceed without communication, whereas communication does not necessarily result in interaction. Learner-centred interaction provides partnership in studying and carries out the dialogue function. It is a special form of communication between a teacher and a student, which allows them to coordinate interactions leading to mutual enrichment in intellectual, emotional, cognitive and personal spheres. Emphasis on cooperation becomes the basic part of university teacher work: pedagogical communication with students is not going to be productive without pedagogical creativity.

Taking into account the fact that pedagogical activity is creative the question arises: what is the interrelation of professionalism and creativity in the teacher’s work? N. V. Bordovskaya and A. A. Rean don’t consider these concepts as synonymous. On the one hand, educational work demands a creative approach, on the other hand, the result of creativity depends on the professionalism of the teacher. The researchers note that pedagogical creativity is effective if it is based on high professional and pedagogical competence. The level of professionalism of the teacher and productivity of the pedagogical activity which by all means is creative, depends on «competence (pedagogical, socio-psychological, differential-psychological), and also on a level of development of professional pedagogical thinking» [5, p.141].

Pedagogical communication provided by a teacher covers all aspects of pedagogical activity. It is realized also by students who, according to L. N. Kotikova’s research, name «the ability to manage communication» [6] to be among the other necessary qualities of a foreign language teacher.

B. Communication skills of a university teacher

A teacher, communicating with students, on the one hand, communicates with them in the process of pedagogical creativity; on the other hand, he carries out creativity in the process of pedagogical communication (V. A. Van-Kalik). Although pedagogical communication is a special kind of creativity, we think that skills, tricks and techniques of pedagogical communication can be taught. It should be considered that among professionally important qualities of the teacher it is not enough to know well means and patterns of pedagogical communication. Besides such knowledge presence of communicative abilities is necessary. Effectiveness of pedagogical communication depends on the level of communicative abilities.

Due to the fact that relations between a teacher and students are formed through a communication mechanism, it is important to systematize professionally significant teaching skills on the organization of pedagogical communication and to master this mechanism. It’s for a reason that all researchers studying pedagogical communication name necessary, from their points of view, communication skills.

The researcher I. V. Barabasheva who has tried to create a model of the ideal foreign language teacher, based on student polling, notes that 102 out of 160 characteristics concerned the communicative component of professional competence [7, p. 23]. That is, from the point of view of Russian students, communication skills of a teacher are very important.

Previously in their monograph «The organization of professional and pedagogical communication at formation of fundamentals of the intercultural communication at Russian university» [8] authors have summarized the experience and have offered a list of communicative skills which university teacher should have because the communication will not be productive without them. Thus,
unlike our predecessors, we have identified two types of skills:

a) The communication skills necessary for communication with people in everyday life;

b) The communication skills necessary for implementation of successful pedagogical communication.

1. The communication skills necessary for communication with people in everyday life:

1. Ability to communicate with people in any circumstances;

2. Ability to improve communicative culture;

3. Ability to control emotional and mental state considering the fact that mood can be a factor which both stimulates and inhibits the creative state of a teacher;

4. Ability to set yourself up for communication (autotraining), to expect satisfaction with upcoming communication, to anticipate emotional experiences and results of communication.

2. The communication skills necessary for implementation of successful pedagogical communication:

5. Ability to be constantly ready to contact with students;

6. Ability to think ahead about the strategy and tactics of communication;

7. Ability to plan a specific objective and super-objective to be met in the process of communication;

8. Ability to purposefully organize communication and manage it;

9. Ability to have techniques of management of one’s own health state in communication with a student audience;

10. Ability to make emotional contact with the audience and to create positive atmosphere;

11. Ability to develop influence on students and to organize a pedagogically expedient system of teacher-student interaction during training;

12. Ability to understand stimuli and motives of students’ behavior during communication;

13. Ability to keep to an optimal pace of communication;

14. Ability to make students creative through correctly provided communication;

15. Ability to control the process of communication with a student's audience from the point of view of professional and pedagogical tasks and culture of communication [7, pp. 71-73].

A legitimate question arises: are there any special communicative skills, by which it is possible to implement pedagogical communication with foreign students? First of all it should be emphasized, that all general skills necessary for implementation of successful pedagogical communication with Russian students are also important for foreigners. Besides, when teaching foreign students at Russian university it is necessary for a teacher to provide pedagogical communication taking into account a number of factors, the main one of which is the specific intercultural character of students communicating with the teacher. Unlike Russian students, foreigners are in a new for them sociocultural environment, wherein they experience significant psychological, emotional and physical stress. Taking into account that within the first academic year foreign students adapt for new requirements of the Russian higher education system teachers should meet a goal: to bring the level of sociocultural, personal and educational development of foreign students as close to the level of Russian first-year students as possible. Recognizing that the main part of foreign students coming to study in Russia are poorly informed about the culture of communication and about the Russian speech etiquette, the teacher should teach them intercultural and interpersonal communication in new conditions. Actually, dynamics of pedagogical communication in a foreign audience depend on the development of knowledge and skills of intercultural communication. Thus, we consider it necessary to add the third type to two types identified by us earlier (we keep continuous numbering):

3. The communication skills necessary for implementation of successful pedagogical communication with foreign students:

16. Ability to contact in any conditions even without knowing the intermediary language;

17. Ability to influence a foreign audience depending on its national composition;

18. Ability to sustain optimum pace of communication depending on the language level of the audience, as well as on the national composition of the group;

19. Ability to organize various extracurricular activities for foreign students;

20. Ability to prevent intercultural and other conflicts in the audience;

21. Ability to compare different national cultures, not supposing opposition;

22. Ability to avoid pressure and edification;

23. Ability to overcome psychological barriers in communication with the representatives of different countries;

24. Ability to manage socio-psychological processes in the study group of foreign students;

25. Ability to help foreigners in successful secondary socialization;

26. Ability to use the «integrative» style of behavior;

27. Ability to understand the motives of foreign students behavior in communication with the teacher and with each other;

28. Ability to move the level of sociocultural, personal and educational development of foreign students as close to the level of Russian first-year students as possible.
C. Intercultural communication as a part of pedagogical communication

In a modern approach to teaching Russian in a foreign audience it is supposed that it is impossible to teach a language without culture. Teaching Russian as a foreign language is a process of intercultural pedagogical interaction in a multicultural Russian university. The teacher and the foreign student are the main subjects of intercultural pedagogical communication, but at all degree levels students also communicate with other foreign students from different regions of the world and with Russian students. If a teacher has intercultural communication competence as far as is necessary, it will contribute to the formation of students’ intercultural communication competence. Intercultural communication is considered as an equal form of interaction between representatives of different cultures on a subject-subject level. We agree with the British culturologist R. Lewis, who defines culture as a specific behavior model [9]. Considering the process of teaching Russian to foreigners we should better speak not about the exchange of signs and information, but about the meaning of those signs in the different cultures.

Another important thesis in teaching is recognition of all cultures as equivalent in their essence and content. With reference to the studies of American anthropologists, we think that their views have seriously affected the development of foreign language teaching methodology and, in particular, teaching Russian as a foreign language. An American researcher, the founder of the intercultural communication theory E.T Hall Jr. for the first time paid attention to an inseparable connection between culture and communications [10]. The conclusion is it is necessary to teach a language together with the culture to foreign students. E.T Hall Jr. introduced a concept of “the cultural glasses” when a person sees the world from the standpoint of his culture. That can make a person feel the superiority of the native culture over the other cultures [11]. Milton Bennet has revealed the gradation of stages of ethnocentrism: from denying distinctions of cultures up to their recognition along with confidence in basic values. [12]. But in the learning process there comes a qualitatively different phase - from adaptation to another's culture up to its empathy and integration in a new sociocultural environment. Currently, western researchers pay particular attention to the study of theoretical issues of intercultural communication as well as to elaboration of practical recommendations. Like their Russian colleagues, they are wondering: what pedagogical principles, techniques and models are to be used for successful intercultural communication? [13, 14]. The main issue in teaching foreigners is understanding the meaning of the message by people belonging to different cultures. Many Russian researchers studied the problem of communicative behavior of intercultural dialogue participants in teaching Russian as a foreign language (E.M. Vereshchagin, D.B. Gudiv, P.N. Donets, V.G. Zinchenko, V.G. Kostomarov, V.V. Krasnyh, N.M. Lebedeva, O.A. Leontovich, V.D. Popkov, A.P. Sadohin, I.A. Sternin, E.F. Tarasov, S.G. Ter-Minasova, etc.). Nowadays, when intercultural communication becomes a subject of studying two directions are generated: descriptive, studying people’s behavior at the dialogue of cultures, and anthropological, which teaches intercultural communication [15, p. 17]. For successful intercultural communication foreign students need to know culturology, communicative competency, speech etiquette. We can agree with the researcher L. F. Svoikina who considers the concept of intercultural communication as a pedagogical category which covers the process of socio-cultural and academic adaptation of foreign students. She identifies readiness for intercultural communication as a structural part of the concept “intercultural communication” [16]. The authors of this article agree with that definition. The concept of readiness of the foreign student to communicate in Russian at an early stage of training we describe as a progressive process of formation of intercultural communication. In that process we can see the motivation of foreign students to study, their behavior features and an emotional estimation of what is happening. During the academic year at pre-university training faculty students from different countries gain the experience of interpersonal, interethnic and intercultural communication, learn rules of behavior in society new to them, learn to communicate in an international group and develop an individual style of behavior and communication [17].

Thus, communication is a condition of development and formation of the foreign student personality.

E. I. Passov defines communication as a channel of knowledge, means of development, tool of education, educational environment [18]. The researcher S.V. Drokina gives the following definition of intercultural pedagogical communication: “Pedagogical communication in a foreign language environment is a communication, which provides favorable social and psychological atmosphere for study, creates the best conditions for student motivation during the initial adaptation period to a new sociocultural environment, provides socio-psychological process management in the study group, and enables maximum use of university teacher’s personality traits in educational process” [19, p. 52].

In social psychology several functions of communication are highlighted. It is possible to distinguish three functions of communication in teaching Russian as a foreign language:

- communication function as the information exchange between the teacher and students in the learning process;
- perceptive function, which provides mutual understanding and creates an atmosphere for an audience; foreign students’ perception of the teacher’s personality;
- Interactive function, which provides a common policy and interactions between the students and the teacher [20, p. 15].

All these functions of communication are closely related and interconnected in intercultural communication. Communication, as a kind of activity of the teacher of Russian as a foreign language, has necessary communicative characteristics: sociability, wish to communicate, informative speech, minimization of lexical means and a maximum of possible nonverbal means, expressiveness, structure. They provide an implementation of the communicative function. For the perceptive function implementation it is necessary for the teacher to be able to
listen and hear students, to have empathy, to strive for empathy. The interactive function is created by cooperation, teamwork skills, cooperatively doing interesting tasks, and coordination of foreign students’ activity by preparation various educational and non-class activities.

Each teacher of Russian as a foreign language forms their own style of communication during work. The most notable features of communication style between the teacher and the foreign students can be identified. It is a combination of democratic, authoritative style and communication on the basis of passion for the cooperative activity. That style of communication is integrative [21]. Its use depends on national and psychological features of students.

According to our research we have determined [15] the following principles of the intercultural communication organization at the Pre-university stage of Russian university:

- The language teaching material should contain cultural information, including authentic materials, genre texts and dialogues;
- The application of play-based method, role-playing, including interview, dialogues, imitation of excursions, campaigns, trips, etc. helps master the behavior models in the new cultural reality;
- At the initial stage students should prepare for scientific activity: presentations and academic and practical conferences, preparation and defense of coursework should be carried out at classes;
- Active participation of foreign students in the Russian language Olympiads, in spoken Russian festivals, in recitation competitions, etc. helps them to adapt to sociocultural and the academic environment;
- Coordination of teaching materials in grammatical and lexical aspects between the academic subjects, styles and grade levels promotes efficiency of the process of the communications in training.

We can conclude that intercultural communication in a foreign audience at university is a means of adaptation and socialization, also it is the form of education of foreign students. It helps the teacher to show the features of Russian national culture to students. It is also a means of development of the student’s personality and formations of their professional competence.

### III. CONCLUSION

Pedagogical communication aimed at students’ personal development is the basis of professional work of Russian university teacher. Despite the attention of the modern researchers to the pedagogical communication it should be recognized that in relation to a foreign audience at university that issue is not sufficiently considered.

A contradiction between insufficient consideration of the interaction between university teachers and foreign students during the process of pedagogical communication on the one hand, and its urgency, on the other hand, have drawn our attention to that subject.

The purpose of our research based on Pre-university Training Faculty of the Volgograd State Technical University is to reveal pedagogical conditions promoting fruitful interaction of the teacher and the foreign student in conditions of Russian university.

Our attention to Pre-university stage is explained by the importance for foreigners to adapt to their training in the educational and professional environment of Russian university.

Significant attention is drawn to the learner-centred interaction as a special form of teacher-student interaction which provides partnership in studying and carries out the dialogue function. In contrast to many other researchers we consider that communication in comparison with interaction is a wider concept.

Although pedagogical communication is a special kind of creativity, we think that skills, techniques and methods of pedagogical communication can be taught. The efficiency of that communication depends on the level of communication skills.

It should be considered, that among professionally important qualities of the teacher it is not enough to have deep knowledge about means and patterns of pedagogical communication. The presence of communicative abilities is also necessary. The efficiency of pedagogical communication depends on the level of development of communicative abilities.

Due to the fact that relations between the teacher and students are formed through communication mechanism, it is important to systematize professionally significant skills of teachers on the organization of pedagogical communication.

Unlike the previous researchers we have identified three types of skills:

a) The communication skills necessary for communication with people in everyday life;

b) The communication skills necessary for implementation successful pedagogical communication:

c) The communication skills necessary for implementation successful pedagogical communication with foreign students.

The need to highlight the third type of skills is explained by the fact that when teaching foreign students at Russian university it is necessary for a teacher to provide pedagogical communication taking into account a number of factors, the main one is the specific intercultural character of communication of students with the teacher.

Special attention is drawn to the importance of Russian as a foreign language at the pre-university stage. Teaching the Russian language is a process of intercultural pedagogical interaction in a multicultural space of the Russian university.

The authors of this article describe the concept of readiness of the foreign student to communicate in Russian at an early stage of studying as a progressive process of formation of cross-cultural communication. In that process
the motivation of foreign students to study, behavior features and an emotional estimation of what is happening are shown.

Attention is drawn to the fact that within the first academic year in Russian university foreign students from different countries gain the experience of interpersonal, interethnic and cross-cultural communication, learn rules of behavior in society new to them, learn to communicate in an international group and develop an individual style of behavior and communication.

It is emphasized that pedagogical communication of university teachers and foreign students is a social and role pedagogical interaction, aimed at formation skills and abilities of cross-cultural communication. In teaching foreigners pedagogical communication is, on the one hand, a condition, on the other hand a prerequisite of implementation of cross-cultural communication, and third is a means of teaching cross-cultural communication.

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