

Authentic Video Recordings of Russian Movies as a Tool for Developing Nonverbal Communicative Competence

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Abstract—Communicative foreign language teaching requires creating conditions in the learning process which are close to real ones. The use of authentic video records can solve several problems at once in the educational process: non-native speakers are actively involved in the culture of the language being studied, learn to evaluate the communicative act in the complex of its components, drill the skills of listening comprehension and foreign speech understanding. According to psychologists, up to 80% of the information is transmitted non-verbally in the process of communication. Due to this fact we find it possible to introduce the definition of nonverbal communicative competence, this will be considered in the study.

Keywords—nonverbal communicative competence; communicative act; gesture; intercultural communication; competency-based approach; authenticity

I. INTRODUCTION

Changes in the field of education have led to the emergence of a competence-based approach, which is the foundation for developing and introducing new educational standards.

The focus is on the development of a competitive, mobile, creative and independent professional personality having key skills to solve practical problems. Within the framework of the new educational paradigm, a new model of a future specialist should be formed, that has a number of key competencies. Researchers identify different competencies: sociocultural, social, discursive, strategic, communicative, subject (A.N. Shchukin), value-semantic, general cultural, educational and cognitive, informational, social-labor (A.V. Khutorsky), etc.

II. COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH FOR TEACHING THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

A. Competency and competence

The key terms of the new approach are the definitions of competence and competency, the correlation of which is discussed in the works of I. A. Zimniaya, A. V. Khutorsky, D. A. Makhotina, B. D. Elkonina, D. O. Ivanova, O. E. Lebedev and other researchers of the late XX – early XXI century.

Thus, A. V. Khutorsky considers competence in the sense of pedagogics: competence is “an alienated, predetermined social requirement (norm) for a student’s educational

background, necessary for his/her qualitative productive activity in a certain sphere” [1]. According to the researcher, competency is characterized by the experienced person’s mastering the relevant competence, including personal attitude to it and the subject of activity.

I. A. Zimniaya, having analyzed the existing discrepancies in the definition of these terms, has come to a conclusion that competence and competency are “related, but phenomenologically different concepts” [2]. Competences are the content of competency. Thus, a competent person is a person, who has key competencies – the ability to put into practice abstract and theoretical knowledge. Competency is proclaimed as a basic unit of measuring human education.

B. Key Competences in Teaching the Russian language

Teaching the Russian language involves the formation of a language personality that owns a number of key competences: language, linguistic, cultural (linguoculturological, sociocultural), intercultural competences (when learning Russian as a foreign language). In continuation of A. N. Schukin, we believe that all the above-mentioned competencies constitute the content of a communicative competence – “the ability to use language as a means of communication, to participate in speech activity in accordance with the goals and situation of communication within the chosen field of activity” [3].

Emphasizing the idea that the communicative act includes not only words, but also gestural and mimic components, in our opinion, it is more appropriate to single out **nonverbal communicative competence**, the mastering of which is important for effectiveness of interpersonal and especially intercultural communication. We consider the nonverbal communicative competence as the ability and readiness of a language personality to use gestural and mimic components in accordance with communicative goals and intentions in the process of communication, to recognize the nonverbal behavior of the interlocutor in order to increase the effectiveness of interpersonal and intercultural communication. This idea is of particular importance when teaching the Russian language to foreigners, when poor awareness of nationally marked nonverbal signs can lead to cultural shock and discomfort in the process of communication.

Before considering the means of forming nonverbal communicative competence, we should discuss the functions of nonverbal components and their national specificity.

III. THE ROLE OF GESTURES IN THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Nonverbal signs in the process of communication perform a number of functions. I. N. Gorelov discovered two main functions of gestures: accompaniment of the verbal part of the message and autonomous expression of meaning, regardless of the verbal part of the utterance. At the same time, in some cases, the nonverbal part of a statement may disprove what has been said before, that illustrates "a wide range of autonomous opportunities of nonverbal communication" [4]. I.N. Gorelov expressed another important point: he demonstrated with examples that the verbal part of the message "is placed on" the previously straight-lined scheme of nonverbal communication.

G.E. Kreydlin, the founder of nonverbal semiotics, distinguished the following functions of gestures in the communicative process:

- the function of regulating and controlling the verbal behavior of the speaker and the listener (gestures accompanying greeting, persuasion, agreement, threat, etc.);
- the function of displaying immediate vocal acts in the act of communication (gesture "crook a finger at someone" with the meaning of the request, gesture-question, gesture-suggestion, etc.);
- communicative function of transmitting semantic information to the addressee (gestures-emblems);
- the function of transferring the emotional state of the gesticulative;
- deictic function (directing or specifying a location using gestures);
- expressing human physical actions with gestures;
- rhetorical function (strengthening of certain speech aspects) [5].

Thus, the analysis of theoretical works on studying nonverbal communication units leads to the conclusion of the crucial role of gesturing and mimic components in communication. This has been confirmed by studies of psychologists, who emphasize that we transmit nonverbally up to 80% of the information to the interlocutor.

IV. NATIONAL SPECIFICS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

There is no need to prove that gestures in different cultures have different meanings. The founders of linguistic and cultural studies - E.M. Vereshchagin and V.G. Kostomarov - said that the rules for using nonverbal language should become the same object of study as the norms and rules of the verbal language. Nonverbal communication is considered by them as a "national phenomenon" [6].

E.Hall wrote in his works about the necessity to learn culture, his studies laid the foundation for the development of the science of intercultural communication (1954). He understood the education process as a process of analyzing specific examples of intercultural communication, which resulted in expanding the intercultural competence of students and overcoming difficulties in everyday communication with people from another culture [7]. So, since the 60s of the XXth century grew a scientific interest to the problems of intercultural communication. The researchers understood that when teaching culture it is impossible to limit oneself to the transfer of knowledge in the field of language learning.

Learning foreign languages implies the interpenetration of cultures, especially if representatives of different cultures are involved in the learning process. It is not enough just to teach vocabulary and grammar of a foreign language, successful communication is impossible without taking into account the communicative context, the communication situation. When studying a foreign culture, the objects of comparison are the components and realities of culture, the national identity of the communicative space.

A comparative study of nonverbal units is an important stage in the formation of foreigners' nonverbal communicative competence, which allows to identify both universal features of gestures and the national component in the meaning and usage of nonverbal means. In addition, the application of the method of comparative studies in teaching expands the scope of teaching the Russian language, increases the interest in the linguistic consciousness of native speakers of the studying language.

V. THE PROBLEM OF DEVELOPING THE NONVERBAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE AUDIENCE

The problem of developing the nonverbal communicative competence is associated with the choice of teaching aids, the use of which contributes to the effective learning of the culturological course content. In our opinion, the focus here should be on the use of authentic video recordings, which in turn solves two problems of teaching Russian for a foreign language audience at once.

Firstly, authentic material is the main tool for a foreigner to incorporate into a foreign culture, a new worldview. Authentic text is a text which is not adapted for a foreign language audience; it is created by native speakers for native speakers. Secondly, for a complex presentation of nonverbal behavior in the teaching process, it is necessary to use video recordings that allow to estimate the communicative act in its dynamics, taking into account how the verbal and nonverbal parts correlate, what functions the gesture performs in a particular communication situation. Authentic video recordings present the authentic communicative conditions. Culture comprehension of the language being studied is inextricably linked with the ability to correctly interpret nonverbal signals used by native speakers [8].

The use of video records requires implementing information and communication technologies, multimedia

teaching aids in the learning process. These aids help to make learning environment vivid and full of visual presentation of information, thus the “interactive information interaction” is implemented [9].

As video recordings for foreign audience we have chosen episodes from Russian movies. We suppose that the analysis of the communication situation presented in records and included both the verbal part and examples of using Russian gestures, will allow foreign students to develop skills in understanding and recognizing nonverbal signs of communication.

In this research we used authentic video recordings of the National Corpus of the Russian Language (NCRL). The multimedia corpus, opened in 2010, has great practical significance. It contains extracts from movies of the 1930-2000s, which represent a parallel video and audio sequence, as well as text transcripts of the sounding speech and gestures observed in shots. In the Multimedia corpus it is possible to search not only by the spoken text, but by gestures either (drumming fingers on something, folding hands on the chest, etc.) and by the type of speech action (denial, irony, praise, etc.). In the search results, video clips are available for viewing and listening online as well as for downloading.

We present examples of tasks using authentic videos from the NCRL, with the purpose to form nonverbal communicative competence.

VI. CASE STUDY FOR DEVELOPING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCES

In the educational process, the study of the characteristics of native speakers’ nonverbal behavior is possible in the process of case studies and special training courses, the main content of which is the work with authentic materials. At the first stage, it is important to conduct an experiment in order to find out if the foreign students understand the gestures specific to Russian communicative behavior, what difficulties they experience when trying to interpret a particular gesture. It is enough to offer them photos and ask for comments. Further work on the formation of nonverbal communicative competence should be organized in accordance with the obtained results.

At the first lesson, it is logical to start a conversation from explaining the importance of a body language, about the place it occupies in the structure of communication. Actually, considering the peculiarities of the Russian communicative behavior in general, students can be invited, for example, to read the text “And why Russians do not smile?” on the site “It’s time to speak Russian”. A smile emphasizes the peculiarity of the Russian mentality.

Before watching and analyzing videos, you can refer to the main sub-corpus of the NCRL and offer students episodes from texts which contain usage examples of nonverbalisms.

Work with videos is planned in accordance with the objectives of teaching. At the first lessons, the goal is to teach students to recognize and understand nationally-marked nonverbal units.

The first type of tasks is aimed at developing the skills of understanding gestures that are either culturally determined or universal in different cultures, but at the same time in each culture are filled with additional meaning. Originally Russian gestures are: *give the finger, scratch one’s (back) head, throw the cap to the ground, do a lot of chest thumping, put a hand on heart, etc.*

The additional shade of meaning or even the opposite meaning in different cultures has the following gestures: *the gesture “OK” (a ring is formed with fingers), a finger at the temple, a nod, etc.*

Before watching a video episode, students are offered pre-text (preliminary) tasks for acquaintance with vocabulary, asked questions in accordance with the subject of the video presented.

Further, video episodes are shown; students receive transcripts of the sounding speech as a handout.

As an example we present the stages of the work with authentic video recordings, which illustrate a nonverbal unit “*to beat oneself in the chest/ to do a lot of chest thumping*”. The episodes using this gesture were taken from the Soviet (Russian) movies “My friend, Kolka!” (1961) and “Circus” (1936) (Fig. 1, 2).

Task 1. Watch the episodes from movies.



Fig.1. Episode from the movie “My friend, Kolka!” (1961).



Fig.2. Episode from the movie “Circus” (1936).

After watching the video, non-natives should answer the questions.

1) What gesture is shown in each video episode? (If necessary, the video is played 2-3 times).

2) What communicative situations do characters use this gesture in?

3) Do you understand the meaning of this gesture? What situation do you use this gesture in?

4) Do these gestures convey the feelings of characters? What is your assessment of their emotional state?

5) Do the characters pronounce any words when doing this gesture?

Task 2. Watch the episode without sound. Do you understand the content of the video? What is the function of the gesture?

Task 3. Play the situation using this gesture.

If the gesture is originally Russian, then its interpretation is based on etymology, and is used with linguo-culturological and linguo-cultural commentary.

If the presented gesture is familiar to non-natives, a comparative analysis of the nonverbal unit in the native and foreign language culture is carried out in order to reveal intercultural homonymy and synonymy or nonverbal units of opposite meaning. It makes sense here to acquaint foreigners with lexicographic publications, where the most frequent Russian everyday gestures, having independent meaning and are capable of conveying meaning regardless of the verbal context, are presented (G. Kreidlin Dictionary of Russian Gestures Language, A. A. Akishina and others "Gestures and Mimics in Russian speech").

The second type of tasks is associated with the analysis of nonverbal behavior of characters in general. It is difficult to separate a certain nonverbal unit from the communicative context. Therefore, the purpose of such lessons is to teach non-natives to perceive and adequately interpret the communicative act in Russian, mean by it the sophisticated whole, including not only statements, but also a wide range of extralinguistic and paralinguistic units.

For example, in the episode taken from the movie "My Friend, Kolka!" (1961), the nonverbal behavior of the characters is vividly presented: they *nod* by way of confirmation, *throw up arms*, *do a lot of chest thumping*, thus expressing emotions, *look away in discontent*, etc (Fig. 3).



Fig.3. Episode from the movie "My friend, Kolka!" (1961).

The analysis of nonverbal behavior of the characters implies watching the video without audio sequence. Students

should try to understand the meaning of what is happening only by the nonverbal signs used in the episode. Then, having already turned on the sound, the non-natives check themselves whether they interpreted the scene from the movie correctly.

Watching the video with sound allows to assess the correlation between the verbal and nonverbal parts of communication; it visually demonstrates the functions of gestures in communication: whether they preface, add to what was said or replace words; whether they are used to make contact or serve as a self-presentation of whoever uses them; induce something (for example, a glance that requires silence) or express the speaker's emotions, etc. The analysis of the situation helps to realize whether the use of gestures and words is congruent.

Students have the opportunity to "construct" a nonverbal portrait of a linguistic personality, to assess the emotional state, and determine what feelings and experiences the episode character is experiencing. It is important to take into account the gender aspect. G.E. Kreydlin believes that it is necessary to talk not about male and female gestures, facial expressions, postures, etc., but about male and female styles of nonverbal behavior that are characteristic of people of both sexes, although it is believed that the normal style of nonverbal behavior corresponds to gender human [10].

The analysis of the nonverbal behavior of a particular character can provide information about the poses, gestures that reveal his/her character and attitude towards other characters. Thus, "wordless relationships" help to recreate the present, the root in a person, that which lives in the depths of "I".

VII. CONCLUSION

To conclude, we emphasize that usage of modern technologies of teaching (digital, multimedia) allows to demonstrate the material in video and audio formats within the process of teaching, spark the interest of students to the studying phenomenon, and when we teach with gestures it is impossible to use texts only in education process.

The main goal of language multicultural education is to prepare students for active and full-fledged collaboration in the modern multicultural world by means of the language being studied [11]. Plunging into a foreign culture and reality, incorporating into a sociocultural context through the study of the Russian language, a person also learns different pictures of the world, reflected in the language being studied. Studying the peculiarities of nonverbal behavior of the native Russian speakers through authentic video recordings contributes to the multicultural development of a secondary language personality. The appeal to the NCRL provides a wide opportunity for the selection of material in order to compile electronic audiovisual tutorials and dictionaries focused on studying cultural component and features of nonverbal communication of native speakers. The use of NCRL allows not only to improve the existing teaching methods, but also opens up the prospect for creating fundamentally new approaches.

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