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Research paper

The Use of Project-Based Learning Technology in the Process of Independent Language Learning of University Students

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Abstract

The main task of Russian higher education is to prepare young people for independent improvement of their knowledge, create aspiration and readiness for continuous self-education and equip them with necessary skills. To provide the conscious approach in students' independent foreign language learning and to create an effective motivation for it, it is necessary to use project-based learning technology in the process of language learning. Project-based learning technology helps students to improve their skills in four types of speech activities – reading and listening at the initial stages of the project work, speaking and writing interviews at subsequent stages of the project work. The main aim of the represented work is to study the effectiveness of using project-based learning technology in the process of independent foreign language learning of university students. The authors give different approaches to the definition of educational technology, reveal the concept of project-based learning technology in independent language learning, distinguish three main stages of project creating (design, technological and productive stages). The results and conclusions of the research can be used by teachers and lecturers at the English classes, seminars and in such lecture courses as "Technologies of foreign language teaching in primary schools»", "Theory of foreign language teaching".

Keywords: *University student, education, project-based learning, educational technology, independent learning, foreign language, student-centered learning.*

1. Introduction

A special emphasis in Russian higher education is made on the development of students their personal qualities in order to be competitive in an increasingly globalized labor market, the development of their self-educational skills, abilities to self-awareness, self-control and self-improvement in their future professional activities.

In modern society continuous self-education becomes one of the main conditions of progress of human society, the world in general and, of course, a condition of vital success of separately taken person. Self-education becomes particularly important in the context of lifelong learning, where the planning, organization, management, and implementation of education depends on the individual, and the process of education develops into the process of self-education. An American philosopher and psychologist John Dewey emphasized that the most important attitude that can be formed in a man is that of the desire to continue learning (Dewey, 1916).

Russia's integration into the unified Higher Education Area coincided with the development of the third generation of state educational standards of higher professional education, which are based on the competence-based approach, involving the development of students' self-education process, and thus the formation of their self-educational competence (Tregubova, 2013).

The analysis of the Russian educational standards of the third generation, works of domestic and foreign researchers, has allowed us to define self-educational competence as the integrative characteristic of the person which includes knowledge, skills, methods and experience of self-education and also personal qualities manifested in needs, abilities and readiness for implementation of the activity directed on achievement of personal, professional, social self-realization of the person. Thus, within our research we refer self-educational competence to the most significant Generic competencies which has to be formed at all students, irrespective of their future profession (Sagitova, Khasanova, 2016).

Modernization of Russian education, trends in international educational integration, deep structural changes in the economy, the internationalization of the different spheres of life significantly affected the role of foreign language as a subject (Nazmieva, 2014; Kadyrova, Valeev, 2016). Today we need not only to motivate our students in foreign languages learning but also foster their self-education in foreign languages learning. And one of the ways, to provide the conscious approach in students' self-directed learning and to create an effective motivation for it, from our point of view, is to use personality-oriented technologies in the process of independent foreign language learning.

2. Methodological Framework

2.1. Objectives of the Research

The main purpose of our research is to study the effectiveness of using personality-oriented technologies in the process of independent foreign language learning of university students.

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2.2 Theoretical and Methodological Basis of the Research

The leading approach to the study of this problem is competence-based approach. The concept of the competence-based approach is the following: competence-oriented education is aimed to the complex development of knowledge and methods of social and professional activities, providing successful functioning of the person in key areas of activity for the benefit of himself or herself, society and the state in general (Sakhieva, Fedorova, 2016). Competence-based approach is focused mainly on the achievement of concrete results and the acquisition of relevant competencies that is why it involves the use of personality-oriented technologies of the formation of self-educational competence of university students in the process of foreign language learning.

3. Results

3.1 Personality-Oriented Technologies in the Formation of Self-Educational Competence of University Students

The formation of self-educational competence of university students we have considered in the process of foreign language learning, which is built on the basis of the experience of self-educational activity of students and is aimed at formation and further development of this experience, in accordance with what requires finding and use of innovative educational technologies. One of the most effective technologies aimed at the formation of self-educational competence of university students in the process of foreign language learning, from our point of view, are personality-oriented technologies that increase the activity of students and promote the development of their language skills (Fakhrutdinova, Kondrateva, 2016).

In psychological-pedagogical literature there are different approaches to the definition of educational technology: some researchers of this problem (V.V. Guzeev, B.T. Likhachev, P.I. Pidkasistyj, O.N. Filatov and others) understand educational technology as a set of tools, systems, principles and rules applied in didactic practice; a characteristic feature of the second group of definitions of educational technology (V.S. Bezrukova, M.I. Makhmutov, G.K. Selevko, M.A. Choshanov and others) is the definition of educational technology as algorithm of interaction of subjects of pedagogical process, leading to the achievement of goals; supporters of the third approach (V.P. Bespalko, G.D. Mitchell, V. Strykowski and others) identify educational technology with pedagogical system or as an independent scientific discipline; the researchers of the fourth approach (R. Kaufman, V.M. Shepel, M. Eraut and others) define educational technology as an interdisciplinary conglomerate (Sagitova, 2014).

The term "interactive technology" can be interpreted as technology, which allows students to interact with each other, and the term "interactive learning" can be interpreted as learning built on interaction and collaboration. The essence of interactive technology – is learning in collaboration and cooperation of all students, including teacher.

Characteristic features of interactive technologies used in the formation of self-educational competence of university students in the process of foreign language learning are the following: subject-subject interaction of participants of the educational process, which has the forms of cooperation and communication; ensuring the unity of external and internal motives of the student, when the external is the motive of achievement, and internal – cognitive motive; implementation of competence-based approach and activity approach in teaching; building the process of teaching on the principles of student-centered learning.

When using interactive technologies of formation of self-educational competence of university students the teacher should: proceed from the fact that students should have an internal motivation for self-education; help the students to formulate and clarify aims and objectives of their self-education; develop scientific and methodical support of process of formation of self-educational competence of university students; be for students a source of experience of self-education, to whom they can always ask for help when faced difficulties in solving particular educational and self-educational problems; demonstrate students full confidence and support to them; provide psycho-pedagogical support to students in the formation of self-educational competence.

3.2 The Concept of Project Method in Foreign Language Learning

In the experimental work, organized on the basis of Kazan Federal University, we selected and used the following technologies of formation of self-educational competence of university students in the process of foreign language learning: project method, technology of cooperative learning, gaming technology, information and telecommunication technologies and portfolio technology. Let us consider in more details the project method which we use in the process of foreign language learning.

The project method, also discussed under headings like project work, project approach, and project-based learning, is one of the standard teaching methods. It is a form of action-centered and student-directed learning and an enterprise in which students engage in practical problem solving for a certain period of time (Knoll, 2014).

Project method is one of the most pressing contemporary technologies in teaching foreign languages. It combines the elements of problem-based learning and collaborative learning that allows achieving the highest level of mastery of any subject, and foreign language in particular. The project method, the founder of which was John Dewey – an American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer, we refer to the few educational technologies which can help to form a self-educational competence of university students in the process of foreign language learning (Dewey, 1916).

We define project method as collaborative, creative, educational and cognitive activity of students, who have a common goal, concerted methods, ways of activities and which are aimed at achieving the overall result for the solution of any problem that is meaningful for the project participants. Project technology can be effectively used as a form of extracurricular work in teaching foreign language, as an alternative way of organizing the educational training course in foreign language teaching and also can be successfully integrated into the traditional system of foreign language teaching (Sagitova, 2014).

For the rational organization of educational work it is necessary to understand that the projects can be of different types: research, creative, informational, role-playing, subject-oriented projects and others. In our research work we used research, creative, informational and subject-oriented projects that involve the performance of creative or research tasks within the framework of the study training course. Within the studied training course students of the first and second courses of the historical department were offered the following topics for the projects: “My Home Land – Tatarstan”, “The World About Us”, “Education System of the USA and Russia”, “Famous People of the Tatarstan Republic”, “Glance at London”, “The Olympic Games in Sochi” and others. The students of advanced level of the first and second courses of the juridical department were offered projects based on such problems as “The Russian Judicial System”, “The English Judicial System”, “The Court System of the USA”, “Police in Great Britain and the USA”, “Uniform Police” “Juvenile Delinquency”, “Capital Punishment – For and Against” and others.

The work on each project consists of three main stages: (design, technological and productive stages) and takes usually 4-8 classroom hours (2-4 sessions). At the design stage, as a rule, the type of the future project is determined, the project theme, main goals and objectives are defined, the sources of information are identified and ideas for future project are discussed. At this stage project groups are formed; tasks and duties among members of groups are distributed and individual work plans on projects are drawn up. At

the technological stage, students discuss and analyze the collected information, choose optimal variant of the project implementation, discuss the design of the project and select suitable illustrations. Students also are introduced with the models of lexical and grammatical processing of oral and written speech during the presentation. Students participate in a collective analysis of their projects, evaluate the role of each student in project work, and find out the reasons of their success and failures. The productive stage is dedicated to project presentations, where students defend their projects in the form of an oral report which is usually accompanied by a power point presentation. Each group decides for itself how to prepare a presentation of their projects, defines the speakers and distributes the roles. After the presentation the members of these groups analyze the project, comment on it and make their proposals. The whole groups participate in a collective assessment of the project results.

The project work requires sufficiently high degree of students' autonomy, coordination of their actions, active research, performing and communicative interaction. Students learn to work with scientific literature, acquire skills of critical selection and analysis of necessary information, which generally contributes to the formation of self-educational competence. During the project work students improve their skills in four types of speech activities – reading and listening at the initial stages of the project work, speaking and writing interviews at subsequent stages of the project work.

4. Conclusions

In the course of experimental work we came to the conclusion that the use of project method in the formation of self-educational competence of university students in the process of foreign language learning promotes: 1) the development of internal motivation of student to educate and self-educate; 2) creation of a holistic view of students self-educational activity, its dynamics and place in situation of solving specific educational and self-educational problems; 3) acquisition of experience of interpersonal and group interaction in the formation of self-educational competence; 4) the development of creative thinking, activity and autonomous work of students; 5) creation of conditions for the emergence of the personal attitudes, motivation; 6) the consolidation of the knowledge and skills necessary for the formation of self-educational activities; 7) reflection on their self-educational activity.

5. Recommendations

The results and conclusions of the article extend the study of the theory, methods and techniques in foreign language learning and teaching. The materials of this research can also be used by teachers and lectures at the English classes and in lecture courses on "Technologies of foreign language teaching", "Theory of foreign language teaching".

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