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TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO STUDENTS IN MULTILEVEL GROUPS

The article is devoted to the methods of teaching a foreign language to students in multilevel groups of non-language specialties in higher education institutions.

Article's purpose. *Methodological strategies of multilevel teaching have been identified and substantiated, which will promote the effective formation of professional communicative competence in applicants for higher education and optimize the process of learning a foreign language in groups with different levels of speech training. It was found that one of the ways to solve this problem is to use a differentiated approach to teaching a foreign language, which takes into account the individual characteristics of higher education.*

Methodology. *The psychological-pedagogical and methodical literature on the researched topic has been studied and analyzed; empirical methods have been applied: purposeful observation of the educational process; questionnaires and interviews, comparisons.*

Scientific novelty. *Domestic and foreign experience of differentiation of education in multilevel groups has been studied; the content of the concept of multilevel approach to foreign language teaching has been determined; the difficulties of teaching a foreign language for professional purposes in groups with different levels of training have been clarified; methodical strategies of the organization of work in multilevel groups on the basis of the differentiated approach have been offered.*

Conclusions. *It has been concluded that the features of the technology of differentiated learning and the system of evaluation of its results require the development of special methods of control over educational and cognitive activities of higher education students and testing of acquired knowledge, skills and abilities. Prospective areas of further research include the study of the shortcomings of the application of a multilevel approach to teachers and the negative aspects of learning for higher education and solving the problem of assessing professionally oriented foreign language communicative competence of non-language graduates.*

Keywords: *multilevel approach, multilevel group, teaching strategies, differentiated teaching, non-core discipline.*

Target setting. *Urgency of research.* According to the requirements of current foreign language programs for non-language institutions, the main function of teaching a foreign language is to form higher communicative competence in higher education students. During the course they must master a foreign language at a level that involves communication in the professional sphere.

The experience of teaching a foreign language in a professional field proves that one of the factors that complicates the preparation and conduct of practical classes in non-language free speech is, as a rule, the low level of speech training.

At the same time, the problem of implementation of level differentiation in daily practice of foreign language training of students in the conditions of group organization of educational and cognitive processes in the universities remains rather an actual *one* for the modern teacher of a foreign language.

Actual scientific researches and issues analysis. The problem of organizing classes in a foreign language in multilevel groups of students in non-language specialties has been the subject of many studies in the methodology of teaching foreign languages. Among modern domestic Methodists, it is necessary to mention Y. V. Pavlovska, V. Y. Kolisnyk, N. V. Lominska, K. M. Gavrylenko, L. M. Nikitiuk and others, who in-depth study the disadvantages and advantages of heterogeneous groups, the difficulties of teaching and learning a foreign language in a professional field, as well as the advantages of applying a multilevel approach to teachers and positive aspects of teaching for students.

The results of research on English language teaching methods in multilevel groups are reflected in the works of foreign authors J. Bell, D. Badden, K. K. Shank, J. Scrivener and others.

Noteworthy are the scientific achievements of the famous English teacher Carol Tomlinson on the importance of differentiation in the teaching of foreign languages in multilevel groups.

The main attention of the article is aimed at finding such methods of working with the students, which allow the whole group to work on one material, and each student to master the generally accepted program, according to the level of his educational opportunities.

So, *the article's purpose* is to identify and substantiate methodological strategies for multilevel teaching that will contribute to the effective formation of professional communicative competence of the students.

Methodology. Study and analysis of psychological, pedagogical and methodological literature on the research topic; empirical methods: purposeful observation of the educational process; questionnaires and interviews, comparisons.

Scientific novelty. The object of the study is the multilevel differentiation of the educational process of the students in non-language specialties in the universities. Achieving the goal involves solving the following tasks: 1) to study domestic and foreign experience of differentiation of education in multilevel groups; 2) determine the meaning of the concept of a multilevel approach to teaching a foreign language; 3) to find out the difficulties of teaching a foreign language for professional purposes in groups with different levels of training; 4) to offer methodical strategies of the organization of work in multilevel groups on the basis of the differentiated approach.

Results of the research. The experience of teaching a foreign language in multilevel groups proves that the effectiveness of the class is primarily determined by the teacher's ability to involve all students in active participation. The teacher must skillfully combine the two tasks of the work: to support the cognitive activity of stronger students and to provide accessible material to weaker ones to differentiate the learning process. Thus, the key concepts of our study are «multilevel group» and «differentiated approach».

The general meaning of the first is defined as a group of students with different levels of reading, listening, writing and speaking skills. In a general sense, the term «level differentiation» is used to denote a teaching technology in which each student has the right and opportunity to master the curriculum at different levels.

Level differentiation is expressed in the fact that by studying in one program, students can learn the material at different levels and develop different levels of skills and abilities.

Under the differentiated (multilevel) approach to teaching foreign language we understand the division of students into groups according to the level of knowledge, skills and abilities within one academic group. Moreover, the teaching process is carried out according to a single curriculum and common materials. This micro-level of differentiation is sometimes called internal.

When planning a practical lesson in a multilevel group, the teacher must, first of all, take into account the difficulties that he may face.

There are some problems that disrupt the teaching process:

1) minimum learning potential. The student group combines people with different individual psychological qualities, who have different levels of speech training, different propensity to learn languages, unsystematically attend classroom practical classes. Under such conditions, the teacher focuses on the middle level, «strong students» are not interested and it is difficult to study for «weak» students [1; 2]. As a result, both «strong» and «weak» students due to low motivation do not achieve proper success;

2) a lack of educational material. Textbooks are usually designed for a specific level of language and do not offer much flexibility, do not provide additional exercises that would allow the teacher to take a differentiated approach. As a result, he must adapt the materials himself to make them more comfortable to the appropriate levels [2, 71];

3) a lack of classroom hours. There are strict time limits in the universities, which do not allow the student to move forward in the study of educational material at a speed that corresponds to his individual abilities. Obtaining real results of multilevel group work takes more time than under conditions of its homogeneous composition [3]. The number of hours for studying a non-professional discipline is reduced, damaging the skills of graduates;

4) difficulties with the professional profile of training. When teaching a professionally oriented foreign language, the teacher may feel unprepared to deal with professional mistakes made by the student. The teacher is generally not an expert in the field to be considered. There are also linguistic, methodological and didactic

difficulties related to the peculiarity of the translation of a text that is not always clear to the teacher due to specific terminology[4].

Given these difficulties, the teacher can and should apply special strategies for managing a multilevel group to maximize the teaching potential of each. Possible ways to overcome these problems:

1) settings (adaptation and modification). Multilevel teaching requires thorough teacher training. He must be well aware of the individual characteristics of students, skillfully divide them into groups, clearly consider their own teaching activities in the classroom (content and structure of each lesson, system of control and verification of results), adapt to the environment, change learning approaches, the nature of material without changing content or conceptual complexity of the educational task, starting from the level at which students are. The approach to learning according to different degrees of complexity of the educational material encourages the teacher to self-improvement [4; 5];

2) grouping of students. Work in micro-groups (numbering 4-5 students of one or different levels), in pairs, individually at several levels of learning within one group;

3) differentiation of goals, requirements, control methods and evaluation criteria. In the practice of differentiated teaching, the teacher's ability to apply the current assessment of students taking into account the different initial level of academic knowledge is extremely important. By studying in one group according to a single program, students can learn foreign language material in different amounts. The assessment method may look different for each student. It is necessary to compare the qualitative changes (both improvements and deteriorations) that occur in the attitude to learning, in the achievements of the same student. Goals may be different for each student. The teacher can vary the requirements for students to perform tasks in a single lesson or during the study of the topic (scope, level of complexity, time and method of performance, form and method of demonstration, etc.);

4) dosage of the teacher's help. He must provide assistance to varying degrees; skillfully use the means of encouragement. Psychological support of the teacher is especially important in the process of teaching students with initial language training. He must help such students, motivate them, and be sure to celebrate their success in the presence of the whole group. It is possible to help the teacher during the test. It is recommended to distribute the options of control works according to the degree of complexity. It is important to give clear instructions to lower level students. To achieve an understanding of the tasks, allow stronger students to explain to weaker ones using their native language;

5) error correction. It is rational to be pickier about stronger students, requiring them to have a higher level of accuracy. Do not exaggerate with the correction of weak students; be more careful in correcting mistakes, so that everyone feels a sense of achievement, rather than disappointment in the task. Stronger students probably need more correction;

6) selection of tasks of different complexity. The teacher should develop and apply multi-level exercises for middle, weak and strong students. Different tasks are prepared for couples of different levels, for example, an interview in which one asks questions and the other answers; role play in which one of the roles is more important; two sets of questions to understand the text. Mandatory and optional tasks with additional materials are assigned if students have completed the main tasks;

7) different time of tasks. The teacher should provide a reserve of time for completion, build the pace of the lesson in accordance with the abilities of students;

8) the use of supports. Provide students with the necessary semantic, verbal, illustrative, schematic supports to complete the task – specially created to help build independent expression. Supporting materials of different levels, especially visual ones, from the list of words used in the text to the transcript with deleted individual words will help students with different levels of competence to cope with the task;

9) the order of the survey. We consider it appropriate to start the survey with the most successful students, ending with those for whom the process of learning a foreign language is more difficult. Less successful students, listening to the answers of the stronger, get a sample of the correct answer. This helps them to use and memorize the new material correctly. It is recommended to interview specific students when working in groups of different levels, and not to address the audience in general, because in the latter case, stronger students do not give the opportunity to weaker to express themselves [5, 24]. It is advisable to ask before naming the student. Therefore, everyone must listen;

10) individualization of homework. In extracurricular activities of students, while doing homework, the teacher has the opportunity to organize the work so that the abilities of different students are fully manifested, their creative approach to the tasks is developed. Individualization of homework is an opportunity for students to work at their own pace, style on topics of their choice. Individualization can be done through project work, which allows all students to work both at home (preparing a project or part of it) and in pairs (preparing a presentation or defense of their work).

The technology of level differentiation has undoubted advantages. After all, it excludes «equalization» and averaging of students; gives students the opportunity to set real learning objectives, motivates the growth of interest in classes by weaker students, as there are tasks that they can honestly perform independently; provides the student with opportunities for independent orientation in a variety of educational material, methods of educational

work, choosing a feasible level of education, the opportunity to become a subject of cognitive activity [5]. The benefits of multilevel learning stimulate the maximum development of the student within the potential.

Conclusions. So, having analyzed the practical strategies of the multilevel approach, we have come to the following conclusions. Differentiated teaching allows to optimize the process of teaching a foreign language in multilevel groups. Under the multilevel approach to teaching a foreign language, we understand the preparation of students in a group according to a single program and curriculum, but taking into account their heterogeneous basic training. Differentiation of education is aimed at achieving different levels of knowledge acquisition by students who have different starting levels and different opportunities.

We offer a set of strategic techniques that can be used for the practical implementation of a differentiated model of teaching, namely: positive attitude and adaptation of the teacher to a multilevel environment; adaptation of educational approaches and materials (individual cards with adapted tasks and instructions; division of material into smaller components); changes in the pace of teaching and the nature of the material; increase the time for explanations; performing feasible tasks of different levels of complexity; clear formulation of basic and additional questions; preparation of the necessary didactic materials, taking into account the different amount of differentiated assistance; modification (reduction, simplification, adjustment, dosing, variation) of the content or complexity of educational tasks, guided by the curriculum; introduction of personality-oriented additional homework; distribution of options of control works on degree of difficulties; individual differentiation of assessment and conditions of tasks, as well as various forms of control over their individual performance; varying the requirements for students to complete tasks in a single lesson or during the study of the topic.

In our opinion, the problem of assessment, which is an integral part of differentiated teaching, remains unsolved. The existing system assesses speech competencies, but does not allow to assess the progress of the student (however, it reflects the intensity of work), therefore, does not encourage intensive work to overcome shortcomings in language training.

Based on the basic level of foreign language competence, it is necessary to develop a number of additions to the requirements at this level, increasing the content for different levels of subgroups (micro-groups) and differentiating the requirements for all types of speech activity, grammar and lexical skills.

Features of the technology of differentiated learning and the system of evaluation of its results require the development of special methods of control over the educational and cognitive activities of students and testing of acquired knowledge, skills and abilities.

Perspective areas of further research we can predict in the investigation of the disadvantages of the application of a multilevel approach for teachers and the negative aspects in the process of teaching foreign language to students in multilevel groups, and in the solving the problem of assessing professionally oriented foreign language communicative competence of the students of non-language specialties.

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НАВЧАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ ЗДОБУВАЧІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ У РІЗНОРІВНЕВИХ ГРУПАХ

Стаття присвячена методиці навчання іноземної мови здобувачів вищої освіти у різнорівневих групах немовних спеціальностей у закладах вищої освіти.

Мета роботи. *Визначено та обґрунтовано методичні стратегії різнорівневого навчання, що сприятимуть ефективному формуванню у здобувачів вищої освіти професійної комунікативної компетенції та оптимізують процес навчання іноземної мови у групах з різним рівнем мовленнєвої підготовки. З'ясовано, що одним із способів вирішення даної проблеми є застосування диференційованого підходу в навчанні іноземної мови, який передбачає врахування індивідуальних особливостей здобувачів вищої освіти.*

Методологія. *Вивчена та проаналізована психолого-педагогічна та методична література з досліджуваної теми; застосовано емпіричні методи: цілеспрямоване спостереження за навчальним процесом; анкетування та інтерв'ювання, порівняння.*

Наукова новизна. *Вивчено вітчизняний і закордонний досвід диференціації навчання у різнорівневих групах; визначено зміст поняття різнорівневого підходу до навчання іноземної мови; з'ясовано складнощі викладання іноземної мови за професійним спрямуванням у групах з різним рівнем підготовки; запропоновано методичні стратегії організації роботи у різнорівневих групах на засадах диференційованого підходу.*

Висновки. *Зроблено висновок, що особливості технології диференційованого навчання та системи оцінювання його результатів вимагають розроблення спеціальної методики контролю за навчально-пізнавальною діяльністю здобувачів вищої освіти і перевірки засвоєних знань, умінь і навичок. Перспективними напрямками подальших розвідок вбачаємо дослідження недоліків застосування різнорівневого підходу для викладачів і негативних аспектів навчання для здобувачів вищої освіти та розв'язання проблеми оцінювання професійно спрямованої іншомовної комунікативної компетенції здобувачів вищої освіти немовних спеціальностей.*

Ключові слова: *різнорівневий підхід, різнорівнева група, стратегії викладання, диференційоване навчання, непрофільна дисципліна.*

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