

## THE DIDACTIC ASPECT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE CREATIVE TEACHING

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### ABSTRACT

This article considers the problem of foreign language creative teaching; its actualization and necessity of its introduction reflect the dynamic nature of modern society development, which requires the formation of the creative personality and the search of real mechanisms for providing creative education. In the process of experimental work the legitimate use of new creative educational technologies, innovative forms and methods of teaching, that contribute to the formation of creative language personality, possessing the high level communicative competence, has been proved.

**Key words:** creativity, creative education, creative methods, foreign language teaching, competence approach, communicative competence, multicultural language personality, teaching speaking

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the XXI century under globalization conditions the foreign language knowledge level of a higher language school graduate must meet the international requirements and standards. This level, being the basis of multicultural language personality professional competence, is aimed at providing his/ her competitiveness both on the domestic and international job markets. The traditional foreign language teaching model, dominating in the Russian professional education system, is not generally able to fundamentally solve the problem of the high quality training and competitiveness of higher school graduates. Overcoming reproductive teaching style and the transition to a new educational paradigm, that provides cognitive activity and independent thinking of students, the ability to learn continuously and to define themselves not only in the sphere of professional activity but universal human values as well is one of the strategic directions of Russian education modernization. School should teach students to think and to learn – these are pedagogical imperatives of the modern era, which, in our opinion, is in tune with creative teaching.

Our research is aimed at identifying the educational potential of creative teaching as the most effective means of communicative competence formation in the process of foreign language teaching.

The study of the creativity problem has its own genesis. The nature of creativity was mentioned even in the works of ancient philosophers. As for the present, the concepts of “creativity” and “creativity” have been studied and presented in the works of foreign researchers – T.M. Amabile (1), E. De Bono (2), J.P. Guilford (3), E.P. Torrance (4), etc., and Russian scientists – T.A. Barysheva and Y.A. Zhigalov (5), D.B. Bogoyavlenskaya (6), I.A. Zimnyaya (7), E.P. Ilyin (8) and others. At first the creativity problem was the object of psychologists’ close attention. Starting from the second half of the XX century the creativity problem has been the part of Russian and foreign pedagogical science researches.

The development of creative approach to higher school teaching is represented in the works of modern Russian pedagogues and psychologists: V.I. Andreev (9), A.V. Morozov and D.V. Chernylevsky (10), and others.

The main methods of our research are theoretical ones (the systematic analysis of psychological-pedagogical, scientific-methodical literature on the research problem) and methods of empirical level (the method of the survey, questionnaires, pedagogical monitoring, experiment).

The main goal of the experiment was in identifying the level of student communicative competence formation while teaching speaking in the creative educational process.

During the experiment, the following tasks were solved:

- 1) to determine the initial level of students' communicative competence development;
- 2) to identify the level of its development formation, dynamics and tendencies on the intermediate and final stages of the experiment;
- 3) to use students' communicative competence level self-assessment results for its further development in the process of experiment on the basis of the portfolio;
- 4) to reveal experimentally the communicative competence development efficiency in the creative teaching conditions.

The experimental work was held at the Department of French Philology of Kazan Federal University. The senior students (of the 3d – 5th years) of the Department divided into two, control and experimental, groups were involved into the experiment. To determine the dynamics of student development and communicative competence formation the testing of student knowledge and skills was held three times. Moreover, in our experiment we conducted pedagogical monitoring on the basis of the European language portfolio, the so-called portfolio technology (11). The monitoring was aimed at the analysis and self-assessment of students' achievements and more accurate planning of their further educational activity on a foreign language acquisition in the creative teaching process.

The creative teaching, in our opinion, is the organization of such creative work, as a result of which it becomes possible for the subjects of educational activity to form new creative products distinguished by novelty, original solution, i.e. the work that is capable to satisfy the needs of a person in self-education, self-development and creative self-expression.

“The main task of creative teaching is creative potential opening and personality transformation in an active and creative person, as for being applied to the study at the University it is the student's acquisition of his/ her own individuality. For this purpose it is necessary to teach students to think independently, to have his/ her own point of view, to be able to justify and defend it in the discussion, to make non-standard decisions, to demonstrate the ability and willingness to apply creative qualities in practice” (12, p. 152).

In language education the main purpose of foreign language teaching at the University is the formation of language personality communicative competence. It is about “knowledge, skills and qualities of language personality that allow this personality to be efficient in speech and thought” (13, p. 142). The socio-cultural component of communicative competence is of special importance, and it involves students' mastering the national-cultural specificity of the target language country and the ability to build their verbal and nonverbal behavior according to this specificity, and also implies “...successful learning of facts of 2 and more ethnic cultures...” (14, p. 2136). “Communicative competence”, in our opinion, can be represented as an integrative property of the personality, his/ her ability to understand and produce foreign-language statements in various socially determined situations, taking into account the language and social rules that are observed by native speakers and as a set of skills that according to the purpose, means and methods are adequate to different communication tasks. Characterizing communicative competence, it should be noted that it has an internal structure and includes a number of interrelated components having certain relationships and forming certain integrity, unity. The main components of communicative competence are: 1) linguistic competence, 2) sociolinguistic competence, 3) sociocultural competence, 4) strategic competence, 5) discourse competence, 6) social competence.

The interaction of the communicative competence main components – of the linguistic and non-linguistic parts – is an essential requirement for the realization of the communication process itself, and of the communicative competence forming process as well in teaching foreign languages.

It should be noted that the competence approach in language education is aimed at strengthening practical orientation and formation of graduates' key and professional competencies. In our opinion, the competence approach means not only a particular form of organizing educational process, but also the formation of a creative educational environment that is of great importance.

The creative environment in a broad sense means the totality of favourable conditions motivating the development of creative personality, his/ her creative potential that is realized without compulsion from the environment. Distinctive features of creative didactic environment in teaching foreign languages are sociability of the educational process, pragmatic, developing and active nature of teaching in the inter-subject integration and strengthening sociocultural component as well as culturally oriented teaching. One of the goals is “the development of thinking, memory and imagination which are capable of forming both language and sociocultural competence of students” (15, p.104).

Under globalization conditions in the XXI century the acquisition of intercultural competence, which is expressed in the ability to enhance the knowledge continuously, to change the behavior and

attitude to other cultures so that to show flexibility and open-mindedness in the dialogue with native speakers of other linguo-societies, is of great importance (16).

Mastering a foreign language as a means of intercultural communication is impossible without knowledge of the socio-cultural and sociolinguistic characteristics of the target language country. Thus, in this context, it is important to use authentic materials (original publicistic and literary texts, documentary and feature films, multimedia programs, Internet resources, and etc.) in educational process and during independent work; the basic criterion of material selection being its linguistic-cultural and cross-cultural value.

Today educational Internet resources have great advantages:

- the urgency, novelty and availability of materials, the possibility of their use for solving creative tasks;
- variety, linguistic and cultural value of authentic materials;
- audio - and visual information on the theme studied.

New information and communication technologies due to their didactic properties contribute to more complete realization in practice of sociocultural, multicultural and competency-based approaches in teaching foreign languages, and create virtual language and cultural environment. Didactic possibilities of modern information and communication technologies allow a completely new look at the organization of educational process. For example, along with the traditional book editions there is an opportunity to widely use multimedia textbooks with an interactive structure, as well as educational Internet resources selected by the teacher on the theme studied: hotlist, treasure hunt, subject sampler, multimedia scrapbook, and webquest. With the help of information and communication technologies the cognitive process can be directed according to students' interests. These technologies contribute to the development of students' self-organization and develop their creativity abilities. Creative educational technologies, including search and research, games, interactive, command forms and methods of students' work contribute to the interpersonal interaction formation in the target language.

The use of information technologies promotes not only foreign language communicative competence development in all variety of its components, but students' information competence development as well (mastering new information technologies, understanding the range of their use, and a critical attitude to information distributed). Giving more freedom for students' creativity activates their interests and increases their language learning motivation.

Thus, shifting to active teaching methods in conditions of higher education information technologies allows giving considerable time for solving creative, cognitive problems in teaching foreign languages. The introduction of information technologies changes students' educational activity that becomes constructive, interactive, reflective and more creative.

Thanks to new information Internet Web 2.0 technologies students acquire the opportunities for the development of a fundamentally new form of self-cognition and foreign language learning (17).

The formation of the student autonomy as his/ her personal characteristic is one of the principles of foreign language creative teaching. "The problem of development of cognitive independence... is due to the growing need for optimization of educational process and is still under the close attention of the didactics scientists" (18, p.1). Students' independent and creative realization of educational activity has a positive impact on the acquisition of communicative competence and promotes sustainable habit of independent work on the language studied.

The maximum approximation of the educational process to the process of real communication is most effective while using interactive and collective forms of foreign language teaching that encourage communicative activity, speech initiative, increase of the motivation, development of reflection, critical thinking, social perception.

We believe that active methods of foreign language teaching are in tune with creative methods, enriching the student activities with the elements of problems, creativity and scientific search. These are non-traditional problematic lectures (lecture-research, lecture-discussion and lecture-interview), role-playing games, theatre-situational creative classes, discussions, heuristic discussions, project method, etc. From the perspective of didactics the active methods are correlated with the communicative approach, aimed at establishing students' foreign language communicative competence that is required for intercultural communication. So, creative organization of educational process mobilizes and motivates students.

It should be noted that the methods of creative teaching have a significant impact on the level of student interests in foreign language learning and their motivation that the quality of education depends on.

We questioned the senior students to determine priorities in the motivational aspect of the study. The main reasons for foreign language learning are the following:

- 1) to acquire profession – 82%;
- 2) access to foreign-language information – 77%;
- 3) career promotion – 75%;
- 4) to meet the needs of self-realization – 47%.

The successful realization of creative teaching depends on the personality of a foreign language teacher, who should have a high level of professional skills, creative thinking, creative potential, methods and technologies for the development of students' creative abilities, sensitivity to pedagogical innovations.

During the experiment, the development of student communicative competence was provided with teaching speaking as one of the productive kinds of speech activity in the process of teaching foreign languages. The dominant organizing form of creative teaching was practical classes, where the study of vital issues of modern French society was focused on. For example: "The problems of the youth", "The position of foreigners and immigration problems", "Leisure time and activities of the French", "The metropolis problems", and etc. The creative teaching was formed on three levels of speech independence development: copying, reproductive-creative and constructive-creative. Constructive-creative level of informative-speech-independence implies the ability to creatively use the developed speech skills and on the basis of their improvement to fulfil the difficult transfer to a new speech problem solution.

All types and forms of teaching were focused on the development of student foreign language communicative competence and creative abilities, their imagination and creative thinking, in accordance with the personality-oriented approach based on subject-subject relations.

The experimental part of our research included three stages: establishing, forming and final.

At the beginning of the experiment the first testing of the students' knowledge and skills was carried out to determine the initial level of communicative competence. In general, the results on the establishing stage of the experiment in the control and experimental groups did not differ significantly and were not high at all, reflecting the average level of communicative competence.

The first testing summary results of students' communicative competence development in the experimental and control groups are shown in Fig. 1.

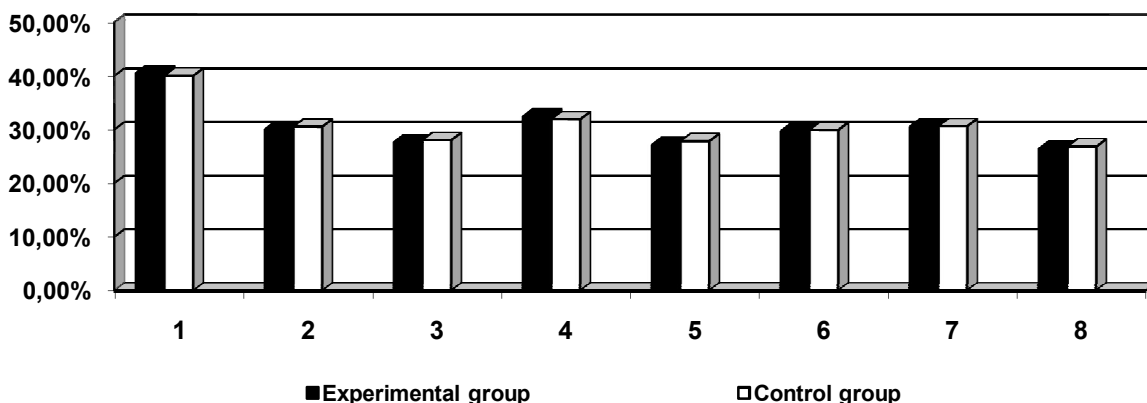


Fig. 1.

The research goal of the second stage was the formation of students' communicative competence and the determination of its development dynamics in the conditions of creative educational process organization.

In the experiment, we were guided by the following principles of foreign language teaching that stimulate students' cognitive activity and their creative perception of learning material, and encourage students' creative development:

- 1) the principle of personal-active approach to learning;
- 2) the interdisciplinary principle of forming foreign language teaching system;
- 3) the principle of activity teaching, which includes speech activity, students activity, and means activity – educational methods;
- 4) the principle of creative methods and educational forms rational use;
- 5) the principle of educational process communicativeness;
- 6) the principle of intercultural interaction.

The final creative tasks for the students were as follows:

- to shoot a video on the theme “Modern ecological problems of big cities” and to voice it;
- to make a report on the events (for example, the report about student scientific conference, or about the scientific circle);
- to take part in the discussion with the elements of the debate;
- to organize and hold a round table or a press conference;
- to interview;
- to conduct a virtual tour.

The level of student communicative competence was determined in accordance with State and European standards (19, 20) and the following developed criteria:

1. The ability to use the linguistic means of the target language.
2. The ability to communicate with the communication partner: to select the subject of conversation, to encourage the interlocutor to communicate.
3. The ability to respond adequately to the communication theme, to use different methods of presentation, to form logically the monologue statement, to generalize, to make conclusions.
4. The ability to conduct a dialogue: to express his/ her thoughts logically and consecutively, to consider the interlocutor interests in the dialogue, to complement the communication partner thought and ask questions, to use the emotional and evaluative words.
5. The ability to behave in accordance with the communicative situation: to change the tactics of his/ her behavior depending on the situation, to accept an alternative viewpoint, to influence the situation.
6. The ability to understand the allegorical meaning of the phrase.
7. The ability to communicate in accordance with the characteristics of the foreign linguo-society: to know the rules of the native speakers’ etiquette, to choose correctly the language register, to be tolerant in communication, to use correctly the national-specific realities in speech.
8. The ability to use non-verbal means of communication.

According to European and Russian State standards foreign language knowledge of students who study a foreign language as a specialty, has to correspond to the level of non-native language fluency (high level of communicative competence). According to the European standard it is level C1.

The analysis of the second stage results (intermediate testing) showed the increase of students’ communicative competence development level in the experimental group as compared to the control group that proved the efficiency of foreign language teaching creative forms and methods use. The level of experimental group students’ cultural awareness increased, they actively participate in educational discussions without any difficulties in their choice of words and expressions, logically and convincingly form their speech. Expanding their vocabulary and understanding of the communicative situation contributed to the fact that a significant part of students increased their level of various non-verbal communication use (gestures, facial expressions and others). The results are presented in Fig.2

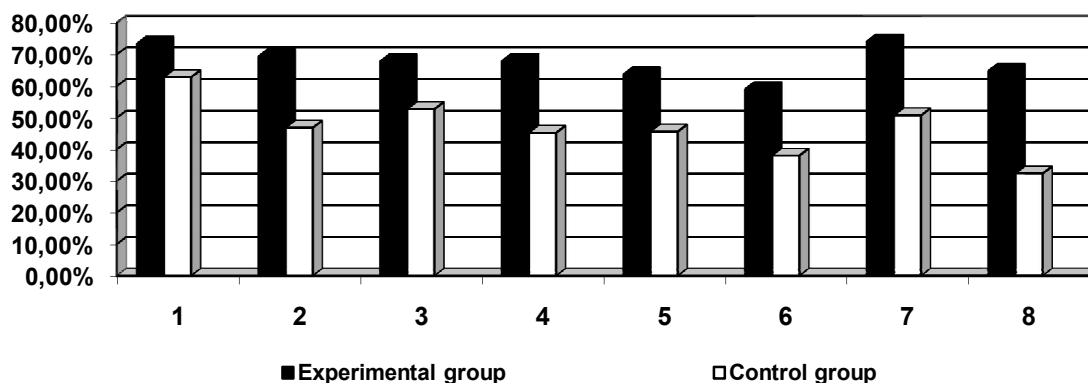


Fig. 2.

Comparing the results at the initial, intermediate and final stages, we were able to evaluate the effectiveness of creative teaching aimed at developing the student communicative competence. The results are presented in figure 3.

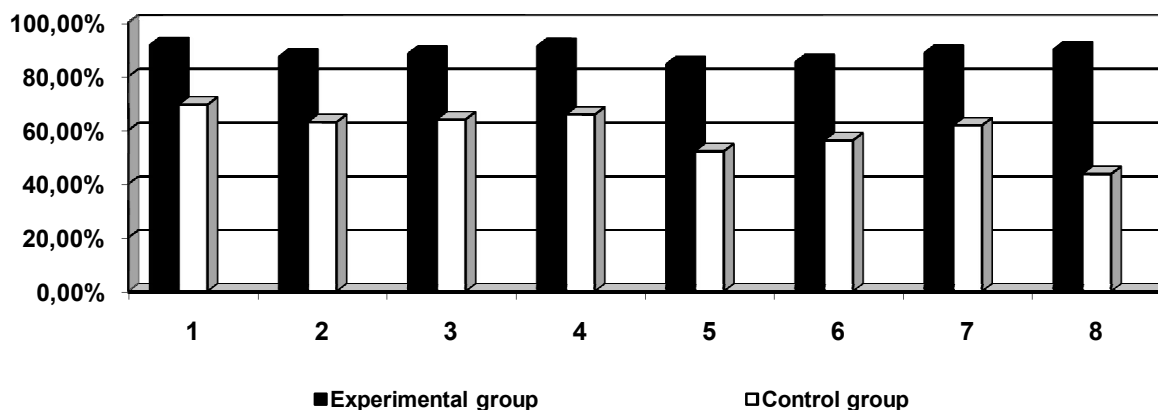


Fig. 3.

The analysis of the experiment results showed that the students in the experimental group increased their language competence level, and in contrast to the students in the control group, they can fluently express their thoughts according to the communication theme and make generalizations and conclusions. By participating in educational discussions, they demonstrate the ability to maintain a dialogue by leading questions; they are more tolerant to different viewpoints and to the representatives of other linguo-societies. Students demonstrate the ability to recognize sociocultural markers and hidden meaning of the statements; they are able to use verbal and non-verbal evaluative means in the process of communication.

The carried experiment has revealed the diversity and scale of the problem studied. The introduction of creative teaching is aimed at revealing and developing creative abilities, creative activity of a person. It is the most important area of higher education. It is the goal of modern educational policy, and it should meet its requirements. Globalization requires the formation of a foreign language communicative competence, the ability and willingness of the individual to cross-cultural communication. The creative paradigm of teaching most effectively assists in the development of language personality; it is a guarantee of successful professional, social and personal self-realization. Summing it up, it should be noted that this subject is so wide and extensional that offers the challenge for its further research.

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