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Model of complementary linguistic education for economists

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Abstract

This paper presents an attempt to conceptualize and further develop theoretical and practical background for training translators for specific purposes in additional education. The authors consider the notions of continuity and linking emphasizing their binary nature. Generalizing the experience of complementary program “Translation for Professional Communication” in the Institute of Economics and Finance, Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, the authors present the Model of Complementary Linguistic Program that integrates the linguistic and professional components.

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Introduction

Diversification has become one of the democratic achievements in the sphere of education in Russia. Its essence lies in the variety of features and options of education, and it provides the individuals the right to shape educational trajectory independently taking into account person’s interests, inclinations and needs. Diversification of education is manifested in particular in its multilevel structure, flexibility and variability of educational programs.

In this respect, complementary education (also called additional or supplementary one) deserves special attention. Prior to the adoption of the Russian Federation Law “On Education” (1992), the activities of numerous additional educational institutions were regulated mainly by instructions and regulations. Today, according to the Russian legislation the system of education comprises general and professional education as well as complementary one, which provides the possibility of implementing the right to education over a lifetime.

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In this regard, a number of problems related to the coordination of various educational levels arise. In this paper we focus on some issues of philological education within non-linguistic higher educational institution, namely at the Institute of Economics and Finance (IEF), Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University. Speaking about the philological profile, we mean the program of additional qualification “Translation for Professional Communication” for undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate students and professionals working in the sphere of economy, business and finance.

2. Continuity and linking educational programs

2.1. Continuity as pedagogical principle

One of the major objectives of education has always been the task of ensuring the continuity of general and professional educational programs and technologies. Continuity (succession) as a pedagogical principle provides an organic relationship between and within various stages and levels of education; broadens and deepens knowledge acquired at the previous stages of education; converts individual ideas and concepts into a coherent system of students’ knowledge and skills. Educational programs are considered successive if they contribute to the formation of intellectual, personal, behavioral qualities, students’ knowledge and skills, creating potential for further development of the personality (Galishnikova E.M., 2012).

Thus, continuity in its broadest sense is the basis of lifelong education, when each previous level of education is seen as the source for all subsequent ones. Succession in its narrowest sense means the relationship between academic disciplines and training courses (Khusainova A. A., 2012).

2.2. Pairing mechanism of succession of educational programs

We emphasize the binary nature of the categories of continuity and linking, because the latter allows the pairing mechanism of succession of educational programs. For instance, at IEF main professional programs leading to Bachelor’s Degree in Economics provide a short three-term course in foreign language. As practice shows successful transition to additional philological program “Translation for Professional Communication” may be carried out if Intensification Method of Individual and Collective Capabilities is used. While organizing effective short-term foreign language training, aimed at the development of all types of speech activity and orienting students towards additional philological education within non-linguistic higher educational institution this Method enacts the linking mechanism, junction of main professional programs and complementary ones.

Intensification Method based on the concept of intensive learning considers the mastery of foreign language oral and written communication from socio-psychological positions. Communication in the target language permeates the learning process, being the objective of the training, the primary means and the condition of achieving it. Therefore, intensive learning may be defined as specially organized instructional communication in which rapid assimilation of the material (mastery of the subject), and personal development take place (Kitaigorodskaya G.A., 2010).

3. Model representation of the educational program

Believing in the significance and effectiveness of model representation of educational programs, we describe complementary linguistic education for economists in the form of a model, which comprises objective component, principles and specific attributes of additional linguistic program at higher educational institution training economists.

3.1. Objective component

At the stage of linking main professional programs and additional ones, it is no mere important to outline the target component. In terms of mastery foreign language skills, it involves:

- intensification and improvement of speech interaction skills;
- expansion of topics, fields and situations of communication, including business communication;

- expansion of professionally-oriented communicative vocabulary and the use of communicatively significant grammatical constructions;
- deepening country study and socio-cultural knowledge through students' involvement in real live communication;
- creating motivation to further improvement of students' professional communication language skills.

3.2. Principles

The system of psycho-pedagogical principles developed by Russian scientist Kitaigorodskaya G.A. serves as the theoretical foundation of Intensification Method. If one takes into account the economic profile of HEI, then the principles of complementary linguistic education for economists embrace:

- personally oriented communication strengthened by professionally oriented communication in the sphere of economy, business and finance;
- collective (group) interaction;
- game based learning material;
- concentrated learning material and learning process;
- polyfunctionality of exercises.

Being the backbone of the intensive technology of teaching a foreign language, the principle of personally oriented communication ties together the content of the subject and the learning process, it determines and permeates the content and organization of every part of the system of training and upbringing the students. Other principles detail personally and professionally oriented communication principle.

3.3. Specific attributes

Three-year program "Translation for Professional Communication" represents an extensive course of additional education at non-linguistic HEI. As an integrated linguistic program, it is professionally oriented and serves the needs of those studying Economics and those working in the sphere of economy, business and finance. Mastering the program is aimed at the formation of translation competence. It is defined as the ability to extract information from the text in one language and transmit it by creating a text in another language. The basic prerequisite of translation competence development is sufficient level of knowledge of a foreign language. Afterwards bilingual competence (i.e. high proficiency in native and foreign languages) and professional competence become the cornerstones of translation mastery (Mardanshina R.M., 2010; Zhuravleva E.E., 2010).

The philological profile of complementary program at HEI training economists is determined by the interplay of the following factors.

Firstly, it is quantitative and qualitative growth of foreign language knowledge. It becomes possible due to an increase in the number of study hours and the modification of core content of Practical Course of English. According to the program curriculum, about a third of the total number of study hours is devoted to English, which is taught during the course of study. It envisages the improvement of phonetic, grammatical and lexical skills, and the formation of cross-cultural and communicative competences. The content of the discipline reflects both general topics of business communication and professionally significant topics relevant to students' specialties (Financial Management, Marketing, Accounting, Banking etc.). English Speaking Country Study equips students with specific knowledge, skills and attitudes that strengthen students' cross-cultural competence.

Secondly, this program enables to acquire scientific knowledge and form skills and attitudes related to the field of philology as a special sphere of human activity. The first training stage includes the study of such philological disciplines as Fundamentals of Linguistics, Theoretical Grammar, English Lexicology, English Stylistics, Russian Stylistics and Culture of Speech. Theory and practice of translation activity for general and professional communication constitute the content of the next training phase.

Thus, the profile learning a foreign language in the process of training translators for specific purposes involves a profound study of the language system through the acquisition of theoretical linguistic knowledge, both general and particular one.

Finally, the versatility of the program under consideration lies in the fact that its philological profile can be focused on different economic specialties by way of modifying the subject content, selection of specialized texts and lexico-grammatical material, expansion of the practical component etc. Active involvement of professionally oriented material creates a kind of superstructure over content invariant of all disciplines taught. An example is Translation for Specific Purposes. On the one hand, it represents the quintessence of previously acquired knowledge in the field of philology. We have in mind grammatical, lexical and stylistic knowledge transformed into translation techniques to be used to re-create the source text in a context of different language and culture. On the other hand, the discipline content covers purely economic texts. Introduction of elective courses (e.g. Advertising, Business Correspondence) also modifies the philological specialization of translators integrating students' professional areas.

4. Conclusion

Diversification of education is reflected in the development of complementary programs in the national system of education. In order to provide an organic relationship between various stages and levels of education the notions of continuity and linking should be taken into account. The binary nature of these categories means that linking enacts the pairing mechanism of succession of educational programs. Model representation of complementary education is based upon the theoretical background and experiences drawn from translation teaching practice at the Institute of Economics and Finance, KFU. It includes target component, principles and specific attributes of the program. The latter component reveals the interdisciplinary, integrative character of additional linguistic education in the economic institute.

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