

Independent Work of Students as an Essential Component of the Communicative Competence Development in the Context of the Federal State Educational Standards of Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The relevance of the researched problem is driven by the need to use the independent work of students at in-class and out-of-class activities at university to develop their communicative competence in the context of implementing the Federal State Educational Standards of Higher Education of the new generation. The purpose of the article is to make a case for the possible and necessary use of the independent work for the development of the students' communicative competence. The leading method of the research is empirical one that allows to monitor the independent work, to measure indicators using specifically designed assignments, tests, etc. and to compare those indicators, as well as methods of mathematical statistics and graphical representation of results. The assignment complex that is necessary and sufficient for the effective development of students' speech competence has been developed and tested: assignments for in-class and out-of-class activities, game situations on professional topics, various events during extracurricular time, etc. The materials of the article can be used in the practical work of teachers of linguistic disciplines not only in universities, but also in colleges, and are also of interest to all those who are involved in professional and pedagogical activity.

Keywords: independent work, student, communicative competence, development, speech studies

INTRODUCTION

The independent work of student becomes more and more important in modern education besides the existing forms and methods of learning. The teaching practice proves that only independently obtained knowledge makes a university graduate a productively thinking specialist who is able to find creative solutions to professional problems and confidently defends his/her positions. Formed in the university, the internal need for self-education becomes an integral part of modernity and an important condition for the personal fulfillment.

The relevance of the problem of mastering the independent work methods by the students is driven by the fact that "during the period of studies at university, the foundations of future independent professional activity are laid. In this regard, it is especially important for the students to comprehend that independent work is designed to complete the objectives of all other types of academic work as knowledge that did not become an object of their own activity, cannot be considered an authentic asset of the individual" [1].

We would like to draw attention to the fact that in the Federal State Educational Standards for Higher Education (FSSES HE) of the new generation, great attention is paid not only to the professional qualities that a university graduate must possess, but also to the standardization of the educational process itself which is manifested in an increase of the time devoted to the independent work.

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The leading role of the students' out-of-class independent work in the modernization of the educational process at universities is reflected in the document "The Russian Federation Government Executive Order dated May 15, 2013 No. 792-p On the approval of the state program of the Russian Federation "Development of Education" for 2013-2020". For example, paragraph 1.2. "The forecast for the development of education for the period until 2020" states that "by 2020 all the students will have studied according to individual curricula that will include a significant proportion of independent work using information technology. Along with this, two types of networks of organizations that implement educational programs for secondary vocational education and applied qualifications, as well as flexible modular programs for further and advanced training, will develop in the regions."

The role of the students' independent work became more significant after the introduction of the Federal State Educational Standards of Higher Education which involves the need to correct the content of programs, the development of new forms and methods of work, the adoption of modern knowledge transfer technologies. "It should be emphasized that teaching a student is not self-education of the individual according to his/her own plan, but a systematic teacher-managed independent activity that becomes dominant in the system of modern higher education" [2]. The main task of the independent work is the student's recognition of the fact that such work is necessary for their career growth. "The independent work contributes to the development of the student's ability to work with scientific literature and information resources. Preparing students for the life in the information society does not only mean transferring the skills of work with information sources and electronic tools but rather the ability and need to use available information opportunities to increase their own level of competitiveness" [3, 4].

In the modern educational paradigm, the student is not a passive consumer of knowledge but an active subject who possesses a high level of communicative competence and is able to correctly formulate the problem, to analyze possible ways to solve it. In this perspective, the independent work of students becomes not just an important form of the educational process but rather turns into its basis. "To stimulate independent acquisition of knowledge and skills, a student should not be the object of pedagogical pressure (when he is taught, he studies, and it is unlikely that he will be ready to learn himself). Cooperation in educational activities is necessary. The student must become the subject of the learning process. To achieve this goal, the teacher should advocate for genuine cooperation with students" [5, 6]. However, the effectiveness of the independent work will increase if it has "systematic and purposeful nature" [7].

The problem of organizing the students' independent work is not new and has long been a subject of research for university teachers due to the fact that profound knowledge and sustainable skills are acquired by students only as a result of independent work.

The ability of a future specialist to be successful at a level consistent with his/her plans for a well-paid job, career growth and decent social status, largely depends on his/her personal readiness and ability to independently acquire new knowledge, engage in self-education, as well as on the level of communicative competence development. Therefore, the most important goal in the professional training of a specialist is the need to give students basic knowledge that they could independently grow and develop in the right direction according to the chosen profession. Students should clearly understand the usefulness of independent work "for the successful career building and the practical use of the acquired knowledge in future professional activity" [8].

We see the communicative competence as "an ability of the learner to perceive any statements and readiness to create their speech in accordance with knowledge, skills, practical experience, accepted language norms, personal qualities, using non-verbal means, as well as the ability to take one's bearings in space, considering the topic, purpose, objectives, communicative and ethical preferences; to achieve results through speech" [9, 10].

According to the competence approach in education, a modern university graduate must possess a communicative competence, in which "the ability to build logically correct, reasonable and clear oral and written speech occupies a prominent place. To master this competence, bachelor students must constantly improve their educational level, show interest to independent acquisition of skills and abilities associated with the rules of oral and written communication [11].

The students' independent work is an effective means of developing the communicative competence, developing and activating creative activity; this is one of the main reserves of improving the quality of specialist training. "The realized need for constant self-development, continuous education of the individual must become fundamental for the university graduates. Therefore, one of the most important aspects of the educational component is the introduction of such a progressive type of educational activity as the students' independent work in the system of Russian higher education. The main criteria for assessing the effectiveness of educational activities are the results achieved: students' knowledge, practical skills, in particular, obtained through self-study, self-education, self-control, self-management" [12].

From our point of view, the students' independent work in the process of developing the communicative competence is the activity in which the direct contact of the teacher with students is reduced, the assignments are done based on their own, previously acquired knowledge or using other sources. Such assignments that are did by

students independently for the development of communicative competence, include tests, abstracts, essays, scientific reports, oral public speeches, etc. The students' independent work can be of two types: in-class, practical studies at university, and out-of-class, at home. The students' in-class independent work is done at practical classes: seminars, workshops with the use of various teaching methods, individual or group assignments, doing which students can develop a communicative competence. The organization of the students' independent work is carried out in three directions: definition of the goal or plan of the assignment; the search of literature on the proposed topic or problem; evaluation of the independent work done.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Research Methods

In the process of research, the following methods were used: theoretical (study and analysis of philosophical, psycho-pedagogical, scientific and methodical literature, materials of international scientific and practical conferences, dissertational works on the research topic, innovative educational technologies, analysis of concepts "independent work", "communicative competence", the definition of directions and components of the students' independent work in the framework of new educational standards, the synthesis of a theoretical scientific approach as well as practical experience, a summary of the main results of the study); empirical (monitoring the process of the students' independent work, measuring indicators using specially designed assignments, tests, etc., comparison of indicators); experimental (teaching experiment); methods of mathematical statistics and graphical representation of results.

Experimental Base of the Research

The Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University was the experimental base of the research.

Stages of Research

The experimental work was carried out in three stages:

At the first, planning stage, the materials of the experimental work – educational subjects – were identified: "Russian language and culture of speech", "Stylistics of the scientific text", "Rhetoric", etc. At this stage, methods of pedagogical planning in the natural conditions of a professional pedagogical university, the analysis of terms and concepts, the overt observation, questionnaires, etc. were used.

At the second, forming stage, various variants of independent works were developed and tested: tests, assignments, exercises, questions, review works, topics for speeches. The main methods of research were the ones of studying and generalizing pedagogical experience, questioning, observation, control and measurement, expert assessments, experimental and search research, introduction of innovations in educational organizations.

At the third, corrective stage, amendments were made to the content of the research, the results obtained were processed, refined and summarized, conclusions were formulated. Methods of interpreting the results obtained, questioning, etc. were used.

RESULTS

Research Methodology

In order to achieve more effective results of the communicative competence development in the context of FSES HE through the use of independent work, we use various methods, including the method of monitoring and recording the results obtained; conversations with students; testing of students; making specially designed assignments, studying the results of students' activities.

The purpose of experimental work is to check the students' level of readiness to do the independent work for the successful development of communicative competence. We came to the conclusion that students must have serious motivation in order to do independent work. We identified four aspects of students' motivation for the development of communicative competence (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Types of motivation of university students for the development of communicative competence through independent work

Type of motivation	Personal fulfillment	Goal achievement	Professional community affiliation	Status acquisition
Motivation features	Striving for learning, for acquisition of new knowledge and skills in communication, interest to a certain area of knowledge and abilities, creative search. Self-awareness (to discover or acquire the abilities to communicate, to choose the sphere of professional activity, etc.). Possibilities of creative self-expression and self-development through speech.	Striving for success, achievement of the set goal through speech. Desire to successfully solve the problem situations that have arisen. Getting satisfaction from studying.	Communication with interesting teachers, scientists in the field of communication, linguistics, pedagogy, etc.	Getting higher professional education. Desire to take a decent position in society, to find a highly paid job, to become a professional in the chosen field of activity.

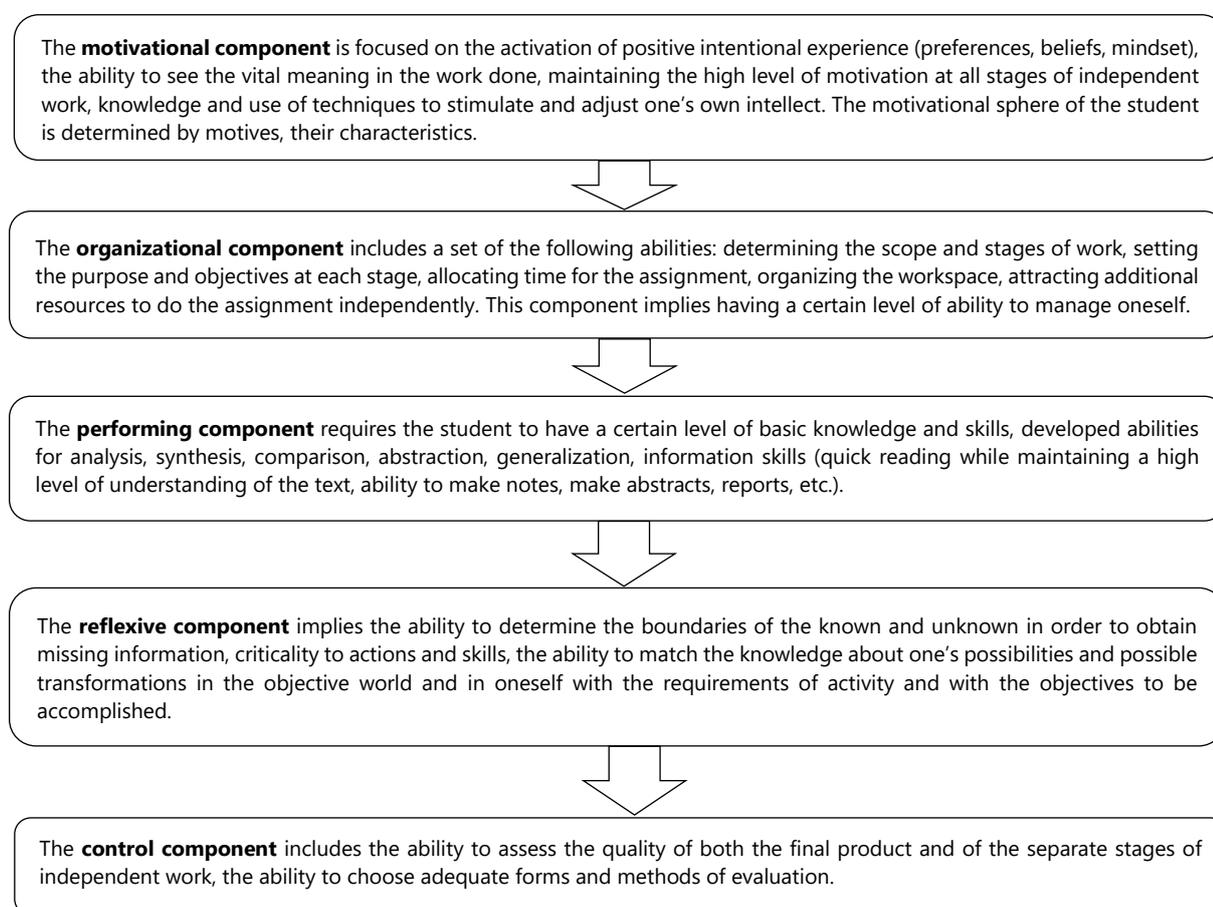


Figure 1. Components of the students' independent work

We see the students' independent work as a system in which we can distinguish the following components: motivational, organizational, reflexive, performing, control, put in a logical sequence. Each of these components implies a certain level of knowledge, skills, abilities and personal qualities of the student (Figure 1). "The above-mentioned division made it possible to identify the necessary psychological and pedagogical conditions for preparing a student for independent work" [13].

The students frequently face the need to do a large amount of assignments but at the same time they often do not understand the importance of this work in acquiring professional competencies and skills. Meanwhile, "active independent work of students is possible only if there is a serious goal, steady motivation. The strongest motivating factor for a student is the preparation for further effective professional activity" [14].

The content of speech studies determines the specifics of independent work, however, the motivation for educational and professional activities, the student's readiness for self-development and self-improvement, the development of basic concepts of the studies, the development of intersubject communications, etc. remain the essential condition. An important role is assigned to the forms and methods of work, "during freshman and sophomore years at universities where labor market competition is still weak, the group work can be a solution. The goal of this group work, in the first place, is: development of communication skills; gaining work experience in team work; development of creative abilities; development of non-standard thinking; development of the ability to "persuade" and "over-persuade". Conducting psychological tests will help find information about the personality of each student as the basic principle is that the group must involve "incompatible" personalities. This can contribute to achieving the goals of group work [15].

Indicators of Students' Motivation for the Development of Communicative Competence through Independent Work

Each teacher forms the students' communicative competence at his/her classes; the students themselves believe that communicative competence plays an important role in the life of each person, is essential not only in their professional career, but also in their personal life. We conducted a survey among the students of a professional pedagogical university in order to find out the motivation of students for the development of communicative competence.

As a basis for diagnostic tools we took four levels of student motivation: high, above average, average, low. The motivation of students for the development of communicative competence was assessed by eight indicators and is shown in percentages.

The results of the survey were as follows (Table 2).

Table 2. Students' motivation for the development of communicative competence (results of the survey)

Question / Level	High (%)	Above average (%)	Average (%)	Low (%)
1. Do you agree that the person's success depends on the command of communicative competence?	75	25	0	0
2. Did you have communicative competence developed at school?	50	33,3	8,4	8,3
3. Can you say that you have perfect command of the communicative competence?	0	50	8,3	41,7
4. Do you think that communicative competence can be developed throughout life?	91,7	8,3	0	0
5. Will your development of communicative competence end with the graduation from university?	0	0	25	75
6. Is it possible to have a senior position without communicative competence?	25	25	38,3	11,7
7. Is it possible to be a good specialist without the good command of communicative competence?	33,3	8,4	58,3	0
8. Is it possible to develop communicative competence in modern conditions without an educational establishment?	16,7	8,4	74,9	0
Total	291,7	158,4	213,2	136,7
Total in %	36,4	19,8	26,7	17,1

We summarized all the indicators according to levels: high, above average, average, low, and then expressed them in percentage. The results of the experimental work were as follows: the number of students with "high" level of motivation is 36.4%, with motivation level "above average" – 19.8%, with "average" level of motivation – 26.7%, with a "low" level of motivation – 17.1%.

After analyzing the students' motivation for the development of communicative competence, we came to the following conclusions: they give utmost significance to this competence. Students realize that communicative competence is important for a professional in any industry. To learn communicative competence at a high professional level is possible only in an educational institution, but the development of communicative competence does not end with the graduation, it continues through a system of self-education, refresher courses, etc.

DISCUSSION

The communicative competence development is ineffective without activating the students' independent work in the development of their cognitive activity. The modern specialist must have a high level of professional training, be able to make independent decisions, be able to choose the information that is necessary to solve the tasks.

Independent work becomes the most important form of organization of the educational process and involves various assignments offered by the teacher in order to develop and activate the creative activity of students. It can be regarded as the main reserve for improving the quality of specialists training; the purpose and result of independent work "is the development of intellectual and logical abilities and the ability to express their thoughts, formalize the results of educational and research work, as well as stimulation of the active use of knowledge obtained at previously studied disciplines, the ability to use this knowledge when the conditions of problems have changed" [16].

The problem of the students' independent work was researched in the works of many scientists, such as T. V. Aslamova [17], D. Y. Zhusupova [18], V. V. Maltseva [19], M. M. Sydykbaeva [20], O. S. Shalopaeva [21], O. S. Shkanova [22], etc. The works recognize the need to activate the independent work of students.

Currently knowledge becomes obsolete very quickly, so by the graduation some of the knowledge acquired at university will not be actual. Activation of independent work, the purpose of which is to acquire knowledge on your own, is a guarantee of its assimilation, which is reflected in the educational standards of the new generation of FSES HE. Today, education is based more on the creative activity and high independence of students, and several levels of independent activity of students should be taken into account: "reproductive (which can manifest itself in such actions as learning, memorizing, retelling...), reconstructive (making up, annotating ...) and the search. The latter is probably the most desired result in the activity of the teacher. As soon as the student reaches this level, the teacher can proudly say that he/she taught the student to study. Only with the implementation of all of the above listed it will be possible to transfer students from the level of negative or, at least, indifferent attitude to educational activity to the level of positive attitude" [23].

A combination of objective and subjective conditions is necessary for the successful independent work aimed at developing communicative competence. "The objective conditions include: material and technical support, which implies the availability of the necessary number of classrooms, specialized study rooms and reading rooms, multimedia equipment for classrooms; educational and methodological and information support" [24], as well as authentic textbooks based on the competence approach, and if such textbooks are also professionally oriented, this itself creates a strong motivating factor. Active introduction of independent work into the process of the communicative competence development requires the transition from the traditional teaching system, in which the teacher is a leader, to the innovative, interactive one, in which the student leads and acts as a highly motivated subject. "The development of new interactive informational and communicational technologies, means of organizing various pedagogical forms of work with students is relevant" [25].

"In the process of developing the communicative competence of students, interactive teaching methods are especially important. When choosing them, we take into account the forms of the organization of the learning process: targeting, activity of learning, awareness of the learning objectives, feedback, repeatability and stimulation of learning" [26], "such a form of classes, its non-stereotyped, non-standard character also contribute to maintaining interest not only to the subject studied, but also to the chosen profession. "On the one hand, such an approach combines the strict formal methods of teaching, like classroom work and the study of language materials, with informal ones" [27].

The teacher implements and controls the student's learning activities, using personality-oriented and personality-activity approaches that are aimed at the individual, include high individualization and differentiation of learning: alternative assignments, alternative courses, etc. "Choosing the optimal forms of the independent work organization, we strive to provide maximum motivation for learning, to accurately determine the scope of the assignment and to calculate the optimal time for its implementation, taking into account individual potential of each student. The excessive volume of assignments and very high requirements dramatically reduce the effectiveness of learning" [15].

Every student must receive guidance or advice on the independent work. According to the goal aimed at the effectiveness of the communicative competence development, independent work can be organized as out-of-class work, where the main role is assigned to the student (preparing for oral presentations on a scientific or socially significant topic, creating presentations, etc.) or in-class work, where the main role is assigned to the student and the teacher. This can be a synthesis of home preparation for classes and the work itself at the classes (training, debate, business game, etc.) "The accumulated experience shows that students show high interest to the games where the professional situation is modeled because during the game the conditions that promote involuntary assimilation of the studied material, the development of their professional and creative abilities are created. Unusual forms of classes, their non-stereotyped, non-standard character also contribute to maintaining interest not only to the subject studied, but also to the chosen profession" [26].

The students' independent work must be done personally by the student or be an independently done part of the team work; represent a complete development which reveals and analyzes the current problems on a specific topic and its individual aspects; demonstrate sufficient competence of the author in the issues being discussed; have an educational, scientific, practical focus and significance; contain certain elements of novelty (if this is a research

work). Control of the organization and implementation of the students' independent work, the analysis of its results are its most important component and are conducted in accordance with the curriculum [28, 29, 30, 31].

CONCLUSION

As a result of experimental work, it was determined that:

1. The students attach utmost importance to the development of communicative competence and believe that the command of communicative competence is important for a specialist in any industry.
2. The students' independent work is an essential component in the development of the communicative competence.
3. The students' independent work is a preplanned and controlled process based on the relevant performance indicators.
4. A specially developed assignment complex for independent work for the development of communicative competence is necessary and sufficient for the effective study of students.

The creation of a study guide for students' independent work for the development of communicative competence, taking into account the professional orientation within the framework of the Federal State Educational Standards of Higher Education (FSES HE) of the new generation is a promising direction of research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The obtained results allow us to clarify the essence of the concepts "students' independent work", "in-class and out-of-class independent work of students," scientifically substantiate and develop a set of events for the effective development of communicative competence through active introduction of independent work into the educational process.

The materials of the article can be used in the practical work of teachers of linguistic disciplines not only in universities, but also in colleges, and are also of interest to all those who are involved in professional and pedagogical activity.

In the process of research, some problems were discovered that need to be addressed. It is necessary to continue research on the development of the students' communicative competence in a professional university in the context of the Federal State Educational Standards of Higher Education (FSES HE) of the new generation.

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