

DESIGNING THE TECHNOLOGIES OF TEACHING WRITTEN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION IN THE FRENCH LANGUAGE FOR UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

The article considers the peculiarities of technologies for teaching written business communication in French. The projecting of which at the present stage of educational development should consider fundamentally new requirements for the training of specialists who are ready to demonstrate not only a high professional standard. But also, the ability to effectively solve the communicative tasks of professional communication in a foreign language. Strategies for the formation of business communication skills in French envisage stepped-up attention paid to the stage of orienting basis of an action, in which students investigate the sociocultural characteristics of official business communication in French, the goals and subject of business communications, and also analyze the linguistic characteristics of French business correspondence. The conditions for the successful formation of written business communication skills are the presence of standard authentic samples of written business discourse, ensuring the performance of the required number of training exercises focused, in particular, on using lexical and syntactic constructions that are typical of the official business style of communication, as well as speech exercises aimed at solving professional communicative problems. Phasing the proposed technologies in the educational process of higher educational institutions is conducive to the formation of competitive specialists who are ready to interact professionally, efficiently and competently with foreign colleagues and partners.

Keywords: educational technologies, business communication, French, official business communication style, orienting basis of an action.

1.INTRODUCTION

The integration of Russia into the process of globalization, the growth of international cooperation in various fields of economy and culture, the expansion of the global information space determines fundamentally new requirements for the training of modern specialists. It is necessary to design technologies for teaching foreign

languages in such a way that graduates of higher educational institutions demonstrate the ability and willingness to use modern communication technologies, including the ones in foreign languages, for academic and professional interaction. A good level of base of knowledge and skills in the field of a foreign language for professional communication is often insufficient. Learners must master the general culture of formal business communication, the ability to conduct a business conversation in the process of negotiations and during interviews, the rules of handling the formalities for business correspondence, the knowledge of the special criteria for writing a business letter, demonstrate the ability and willingness to business communication, taking the account of its sociocultural characteristics in the countries of studied language (Carette et al., 2012; Rakhimova et al., 2017).

2.METHODS

Teaching the students to business communication in French is an integral part of the formation of foreign language communicative competence and professional training of students (Parpette et al., 2012; Yarmakeev et al., 2017). Foreign languages curricula in university, as a rule, embrace a language course in business communication, which often comes to studying various types of written documentations in the target language, translating them and making up similar texts according to the pattern. The problem of improving the quality of education requires a combination of approaches to the design of teaching technologies (Antonova et al., 2016), the strategy of which involves the creation of an indicative basis for the formed communicative skills, their step-by-step development and improvement. It is an indicative basis for business correspondence that needs to be focused on at the initial stage of language course (Kuzmina et al., 2018).

Starting the process of familiarization with foreign language business communication, it is necessary to consider the lack of skills of most students in working with texts of business letters, even in their native language. Therefore, at the initial stage of training, one should differentiate between the specifics of official communication and the everyday style of communication [Richterich, 2000; Mangiante, 2004; Mourlhon-Dallies, 2006]. Students are explained that the subject of an official style of communication is business, its problems, development and current situations. Modern business has many areas, including the provision of services, production and sale of products, and much more. Business is a set of actions or activities aimed at creating a specific product or a service. Several subjects of communication take part in this process, striving to achieve some general result in the interaction. Business communication differs from private one in that the subject in the first is always important and beneficial for the partner, and the main goal of business communication is a mutually beneficial partnership and the achievement of the desired results for each subject (Dejean et al., 2011).

Thus, business communication is aimed at organizing successful joint activities of people in the best interests of substantive and communicative goals. Business communication is characterized by the implementation of communication in a standard situation of sociocultural interaction and observance of the rules of social behavior. Further, students are explained that the official style of communication has a certain linguistic specificity, its stylistic, lexical, syntactic features that reflect the cultural traditions of the countries of the target language and current sociocultural trends. The study of this specificity should be based on authentic written documents (Subich et al.,

2016), peculiar to business correspondence in French. At this stage, it is proposed to start with studying the simplest letterheads (request, official invitation, request, response to invitation, etc.), which are predictable in the language content and the structure of the text overall.

One of the conditions for the effectiveness of the educational technology under consideration is to provide the students with normatively prepared examples of the studied types of business correspondence. Based on the presented pattern, the features of this form of written statement and its structure, the presentation logic, stable expressions, clichés, etiquette forms typical of this type of writing are analyzed. When studying the structural features of business letter, it is important to draw the attention of students to the fact that its composition includes certain details and their orderly arrangement, which makes the text coherent and understandable to the reader. In business letter, thematic integrity is a very important component, as it determines the structural components of business communication. It should be noted that business etiquette in France is quite conservative and to a large extent requires compliance with various formalities of verbal and non-verbal communication. In modern business French, the basic rules and traditions of writing are preserved. Writing a business letter in French has a clear and structured character. All the needed information should be presented in a certain order: the name and address of the recipient and addressee, place and date of writing, subject of the letter, application form, introduction, basic information, politeness formula and signature.

One can continue to study the compositional features of French business letter based on the patterns of variants of written business correspondence, such as acknowledgement letter, cover letter, advising letter, notification letter, etc. Such types of business correspondence are called standard or etiquette in connection with the extreme degree of their formality and strict observation of specific standards, as well as because of the protocol functions performed by them. Etiquette correspondence requires more advanced business writing skills.

After a detailed analysis of the structure of the text of a business letter, one should proceed to the analysis of its linguistic characteristics. One of the lexical features of French business letter is the use of unified courtesy formulas. The proper use of courtesy formulas and observance of business etiquette are an integral tool for establishing contact between the sender and the recipient. Students should be introduced to how communicative intent should be realized in the text, which specific introductory words, clichés, and set phrases are used. Unlike Russian, in French the formulas of politeness have many variations, considering the position of the addressee in the professional hierarchy and even gender. Only in order to politely close the letter, there are more than ten variations of traditionally fixed complimentary closing in the French language, and it is quite difficult to choose the equivalent in Russian.

The process of learning the patterns of business correspondence for studying in French should be organized in such a way as to stimulate the cognitive activity of students, leading questions of the teacher are aimed at stimulating operations of analysis and synthesis, generalization of the information being extracted. The results of the analytical work allow for the conclusions that the business letter is used within limited area of society and covers a certain range of concepts, expressing these concepts as clearly and as definitely as possible. The official style encapsulates vocabulary which is formed by terms, cliché phrases and other language means that create a peculiar style of business correspondence. The specific features of a business letter are:

- context extension;
- multi-step sentences;
- periods (in relation to other styles they are longer 3-4 times);
- relevant cliches;
- common professional terms;
- standardized structure of a letter.

The main principles of business communication are information content, quality, relevance, politeness, manner or way of expression.

3.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The orienting basis of an action for the formation of written business communication skills in French contributes to the realization of the principle of consciousness in learning. The awareness of the specifics of the sphere of business communication is a necessary basis for moving to the next step in the implementation of the technology under consideration – the formation of written speech skills for composing the text of a letter of this type. It should be provided with a sufficient number of training and speech exercises. Training exercises are aimed at the consolidation of the skills of formulating the main topic of business correspondence, the correct use of etiquette formulas in French business correspondence, and the ability to structure and compose the studied type of a written text.

Speech exercises include writing a text based on the pattern in accordance with the stated speech task and composing written works with partial support on the pattern. The improvement of the formed speech skills occurs when students independently compose business letters of the types studied according to various speech situations of modern business communication. At the next stage of training, students are introduced to various classifications of business documents in French: genre, function, content and purpose. It is recommended to start with the traditional division of business letters into official, commercial and social.

The subject of an official letter can be various operations, for example, crediting of money from an organization's bank account, request for funds or other necessary things to organize an event, booking a hotel room, letter of explanation about missed classes at the university, and so on. Commercial letters can be identified by the addressee or addresser, usually these persons are trade, manufacturing private or state companies/organizations. The subject of a commercial letter may be purchase or sale, request for price information, provision of a current account, new catalog of goods or services, etc. Concerning social letters, they will be considered as business ones if the addressee or the addresser acts as a representative of institutions or organizations, and not as a private individual. Social letters comprehend the letters expressing feelings, but in official etiquette form, for example, letters of congratulation, letters of gratitude, and others. The learners study the patterns of letters of all these types, carry out training and speech exercises that contribute to the formation of business communication skills.

4.SUMMARY

As a result of methodical implementation of all the actions required by the technology under consideration, as well as the observance of the above conditions, students acquire the ability to efficiently carry out written business communication in

French and effectively perform various communication tasks in the process of professional activities [Fahrutdinova et al., 2016]. This allows for the conclusion that the design of educational technologies and their phased implementation in the educational process contributes to the formation of competitive specialists who are ready to work professionally, efficiently and competently with foreign colleagues and partners.

5.CONCLUSIONS

The process of training highly qualified specialists requires a combination of approaches to the development of educational strategies and technologies. The orientation basis of action is a necessary foundation for the formation of various skills, including communicative ones. The basic abilities to carry out business communication in a foreign language are impossible without the implementation of the principle of consciousness in the process of learning, which involves the creation of imprinted ideas about the specifics of the official style of communication, its subject, goals and ways of solving communicative tasks. The next stages in the formation of communicative competence of a professional foreign language involve the fulfillment of the required number of training and speech exercises, first based on a pattern, and then independently. The design of technologies aimed at the formation of skills of written business communication in French, and their systematic introduction into the educational process of a higher educational institution, makes it possible to achieve predicted learning results. Graduates demonstrate a high level of their communicative competence, enough to carry out professional activities when working with French partners in various areas of communication.

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