

THE PROBLEM OF OVERCOMING LANGUAGE BARRIERS BY STUDENTS OF NON-LINGUISTIC SPECIALTIES

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Summary

The article presents studies of barriers to learning a foreign language and possible ways to overcome them. The relevance of the problem is proven by the analysis of modern processes of globalization and their influence on the demands placed on future specialists. An analysis of psychological-pedagogical and scientific-methodical literary sources of domestic and foreign authors, who studied various aspects of the emergence and overcoming of foreign-language barriers in the educational process of modern higher education institutions, was carried out. The purpose of the article is to analyze the barriers that arise when learning a foreign language and to determine ways to overcome them in the conditions of modern institutions of higher education. The content of the concept of psychological barrier in the context of learning a foreign language is specified. Having considered the available definitions of barriers in learning a foreign language, the authors state that the barrier in foreign language communication is an internal obstacle of a psychological nature that prevents the successful implementation of a certain activity. The article is devoted to the problem of overcoming language barriers by students of non-linguistic specialties when learning foreign languages. It is emphasized that the elimination of language barriers is the main condition for optimizing the teaching of foreign languages in a technical university. The main causes of communication failures. Recommendations are given for organizing the educational process in foreign languages taking into account the language barrier factor.

Key words: language barrier; linguistic barrier; psychological barrier; intercultural communication; communication strategy; taking into account individual characteristics; motivation.

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1. Introduction

Improving foreign language training at a technical university is one of the priority areas for the modernization of higher education. Globalization processes in the professional sphere and education, the rapid development of innovative technologies in the international scientific and technological space, the transition to an “information” (communicative) civilization, which requires any specialist to be ready to go beyond the limits of a limited, familiar space, are the

main factors, contributing to the activation of the study of a foreign language by students of non-linguistic specialties. Despite the obvious importance of studying a foreign language at a technical university, most students demonstrate insufficiently high results in this area. As practice shows, future engineers experience difficulties in the production of spontaneous foreign speech. These difficulties are due various reasons: fear of public speaking, internal expectation of criticism, difficulties in a conversation situation with a “stronger” student, lack of vocabulary, etc.

All these facts confirm the existence of the so-called language barrier, which prevents effective foreign language communication between representatives of multilingual specialists.

Consequently, the relevance of research in this area is due to the need to resolve the contradiction between the requirements of modern society for the training of future specialists capable of carry out communicative actions in situations of professional foreign language communication, and the existing system of foreign language training in universities, which would take into account the factor of the language barrier when teaching a foreign language.

2. Analysis of research and publications

The study of foreign languages is the subject of research by both domestic and foreign scientists. The issues of introducing a communicative approach to the study of foreign languages in domestic pedagogical science are studied in detail by A. Karpyuk, L. Morskaya, S. Nikolaeva, N. Sklirenko, A. Tarnopolsky and others. In foreign scientific and methodological literature, the works of K. Black, E. Joiner, J. Richards, D. Himes are devoted to the study of the features of using the communicative method in teaching a foreign language.

In domestic psychological and pedagogical science, the psychological component is most often indicated as the dominant reason for the presence of a language barrier (O. Barvenko, T. Verbitskaya, O. Vysotskaya, I. Grodsky, N. Gubareva, V. Mishak, N. Rudyk, N. Soroka, I. Shcherban). Foreign scientists use slightly different terms to characterize this phenomenon. Thus, they use the word “barrier” for such concepts as poverty, inaccessibility of education, personal and social attitudes towards the need to learn a foreign language, age, motivation, linguistic distance between native and foreign languages. The concepts closest to the “language barrier” in foreign scientific literature are “mental block” and “foreign language anxiety”. The language barrier is considered by scientists (N. Bekleyen, M. Casado, J. Cope, M. Dereshivsky, E. Horwitz, H. Luo, M. Tallon, L. Woodrow) as situation-specific obstacles associated with the topic. that learning a foreign language, especially reproducing speech, is a constant stressful situation, because the likelihood of making mistakes is much higher due to the need to create speech that is not sufficiently mastered.

It should be noted that in the psychological and pedagogical literature there is neither a single interpretation of the term “language barrier” nor a clear classification of language barriers. Domestic scientists are studying the problem language barriers in the context of intercultural interaction (S. G. Ter-Minasova), within the framework of the activity approach (L. S. Vygotsky, S. L. Rubinstein, A. N. Leontyev, etc.), competence approach (I. A. Zimnyaya), contextual approach (A. A. Verbitsky). In foreign studies, this problem is considered within the framework of psychoanalytic theories of personality development (S. Freud, K. Jung, A. Adler, E. Bern, K. Lewin), cognitive psychology (J. Kelly), humanistic psychology (K. Rogers).

Language barriers are generally understood as objective and subjective obstacles that prevent assimilation of information, as well as speech production and, as a consequence, leading to disruption of communication in a foreign language.

A comparative analysis of the literature on the issues under study made it possible to identify the following types of barriers in the field of learning foreign languages: linguistic, psychophysiological, sociocultural, communicative, emotional, personal, volitional, value-semantic, motivational, related to self-regulation, cognitive, intellectual, subject-practical, informational, microsocioal, macrosocioal, technological, etc.

Summarizing the available research on this topic, we can roughly identify the following types of barriers:

- linguistic difficulties;
- psychological difficulties. (*Krashen, 1981*).

Of course, the linguistic barrier is easier to overcome, because it is associated with objective difficulties (lack of vocabulary, lack of knowledge of grammar, difficulties in understanding foreign language speech by ear due to weak listening skills, etc.)

The reasons for the psychological barrier are much deeper. First of all, it is based on various fears associated with temperamental characteristics, low levels of emotional stability and low self-esteem. Observing students of different groups, courses and ages, we came to the conclusion that the language barrier mainly occurs among more modest and shy students, as well as among those who is prone to the “excellent student syndrome”.

The relationship between the teacher and students can have a great influence on the appearance of barriers. For example, if the combination of teacher and student temperaments is unsuccessful, temperament barrier. Often, the teacher and students fail to establish the necessary contact for communication at the first meeting. In such cases, such a psychophysiological barrier may appear as a first impression barrier.

3. Presentation of the main material

Other reasons for the appearance of a psychological barrier include negative previous experience of learning foreign languages, lack of motivation to learn the language; unpreparedness for independent overcoming language difficulties, expressed in the inability to self-control; lack of imagination; poor organization of the educational process, etc.

Even the external environment can cause unsuccessful communication between teacher and student. For example, distractions, weather conditions, acoustic interference; equipment malfunctions have a strong impact on the quality of information perception by the recipient.

We have noticed that the language barrier in a technical university is the main obstacle to effective communications. It causes emotional breakdowns in students and lack of self-confidence, negatively affects on student performance, reduces motivation to learn the language, promotes misinterpretation behavior of the interlocutor, etc. Moreover, many students come to the conclusion that they are “naturally” are not endowed with any abilities, without which overcoming the language barrier is impossible.

Experts agree that three conditions are necessary to overcome the language barrier:

- 1) recognition of the presence of a barrier and awareness of the reasons for its occurrence;
- 2) the presence of powerful motivation to overcome it;
- 3) conditions and resources to eliminate this obstacle, including professional assistance (*Tarnopolskij, 2006*).

In the process of many years of work at a technical university, we have identified a set of psychological and pedagogical conditions that ensure the removal of both linguistic and psychological barriers when learning a foreign language.

As you know, the main difficulty in mastering a foreign language is grammar. Undoubtedly the grammatical aspect is one of the most important aspects of teaching foreign languages, because full communication cannot take place in the absence of a grammatical basis.

However, modern communication-oriented foreign language programs at a technical university do not provide for thorough grammar teaching. In addition, as practice shows, students often know grammatical rules, do not make mistakes in exercises, but do not know how to apply this knowledge in real communication situations.

In our opinion, when selecting grammatical material in a technical university, emphasis should be placed on to an active productive grammatical minimum, covering such phenomena as the scheme of English sentences, strict word order in a sentence, prepositions, special questions, irregular verbs, passive voice, etc.

Regarding vocabulary, we focus students on learning new words and expressions in the context. The task of a technical university teacher is to teach students the most effective techniques memorizing vocabulary (for example, the method of mnemonic associations, selection of antonyms and synonyms, etc.).

In the course of working with students of non-linguistic specialties, we came to the conclusion that in order to master vocabulary, especially in technical terms, the maximum involvement of all types of memory is very important: visual, auditory, motor, logical.

To develop fluent speech skills from the very first lessons, we provide students with clichéd expressions that help relieve tension in speech and make it more lively. For example, such words as substitutes for pauses in English such as well (well), you know (you know), it is a sort of (it's like), I mean (I mean), I see (it's clear), you see (you see), so (so), actually / in fact (in fact), etc. help to remain confident in a conversation and provide the speaker with time to search for a suitable verbal form of thought.

And finally, the most difficult aspect of learning to communicate in a foreign language is listening comprehension. Listening to songs and authentic audio materials makes it possible to master the sound side of the language being studied, its rhythm, intonation, stress and melody. Of course, in the process of listening, there is mastering the lexical composition of the language and its grammatical structure.

Summarizing the above, we emphasize that in modern conditions, preference is given to a pragmatic approach to teaching a foreign language, including grammar and vocabulary, which involves the use of tasks based on the principles of problematic, unpredictability and aimed at generating ideas.

The main strategies for overcoming linguistic barriers are a competent selection of the lexical and grammatical minimum, gradualism, studying vocabulary and grammar in context, regular monitoring assimilation of new material, its constant use in speech. From our point of view, the main directions for relieving psychological difficulties are as follows:

- formation of a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language;
- creation of situations of success, revision of the attitude to the correction of errors;
- personal interest of students in the results of work;
- active and interactive forms of foreign language learning with a complete refusal of insurance in the form of native language;
- relatively narrow professional orientation of acquired knowledge;
- differentiated approach to trainees, etc.

4. Conclusions

The results of this study allow us to draw the following conclusions:

1. For effective teaching of oral foreign language speech, it is necessary to recognize the existence of a language barrier and establish its causes.
2. The process of overcoming language barriers in a technical university is based on the formation of pragmatic motivation for learning a foreign language.
3. Success in learning a foreign language depends on many factors, most of them are outside linguodidactics.
4. In modern conditions, the most effective way to remove the language barrier is communication an approach to teaching a foreign language that allows you to take into account the personal characteristics of students, to ensure maximum practice of all language skills and speech skills, setting situations close to reality, influencing the emotional world of students, encouraging them to communicate in a foreign language.

So, in modern conditions, the removal of language barriers is the main problem of effective foreign language training and a condition for the formation of the language competence of a future specialist.

Thus, the effective formation of listening skills is possible only in the case of systematic, purposeful work on them, taking into account the psychophysiological mechanisms of listening to foreign speech, taking into account the activity of students, their general level of language proficiency, needs and interests, within the framework of a communicative approach to teaching a language and along with simultaneous development of all language and speech skills and abilities.

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