PROBLEMS OF TEACHING SCIENTIFIC STYLE TO FOREIGN GRADUATES AT THE PRE-UNIVERSITY TRAINING COURSE

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Abstract

The article is devoted to defining the regulatory, organizational and methodological issues emerging in training Master’s degree foreign students and Postgraduates of various fields scientific speech of the Russian language. The model and principles of compiling a teaching aid discussed in the article are likely to help teachers to plan their work with foreign students in a classroom effectively, explaining to them the peculiarities of a scientific functional style of the Russian language.

Keywords: scientific style, postgraduate education, teaching methodology, scientific communication, textbook.

1 INTRODUCTION

May Executive Orders of 2018 which were made public immediately after taking the office by the President Vladimir Putin provide for a large-scale development of the Russian Federation in the area of education through to 2024. To allow the authors of the article to speak about importance and significance of the issue selected for description and research two main points of the Executive Orders should be highlighted.

Firstly, the ensuring of global competitiveness of the Russian education and entering of the Russian Federation into the 10 leading countries in terms of education quality. Necessity to search and master the new solutions in this area becomes especially vital nowadays because global changes in the education system of all countries take place: the objectives of language learning, students demands and learning environment are changing.

Secondly, at least twofold increase of foreign citizens to be trained in higher education institutions and scientific establishments as well as implementation of measures aimed at job placement of the best of them in the Russian Federation. It follows from the aforesaid that the best graduates of higher education institutions and students of scientific establishments must have the knowledge of the Russian language at a professional level for studying and working in Russia.

In this connection the issues of teaching Russian to master's degree students and to highly qualified personnel like postgraduates and on-the-job trainees become especially vital. The main objective for such category of students is getting the professional knowledge in a non-native language. Accordingly, their training goal is learning the language of specialization and mastering of professional speech. In other words, along with a set of special knowledge each specialist doing his master's degree or postgraduate studies must acquire a specific minimum of knowledge, skills and expertise in scientific style and a language of specialization. In respect to a foreign student such skills are specified in special documents: “State educational standard for Russian as a foreign language. Certification level II. General language proficiency” [2]; “State educational standard for Russian as a foreign language for students of science, medical-biological and engineering-technical specialization. Second level of the Russian language proficiency in training and professional field” [3]. However, nowadays a new contingent of students is entering the institutes and universities of Russia – certified specialists desirous to continue their education under master’s degree programme or to take a post-graduate course. Usually their language proficiency is at zero/beginner level. Such foreign students face a difficult task of improving their general command of the Russian language with simultaneous in-depth studying the language of a particular specialization along with the specialization itself. The basis of all philological training aimed at mastering the professional speech and particular languages of specialization is the scientific style [7, p.4].
Thus, the Institute of International Education of Tula State University provides training of foreign students in five areas of pre-university general education programme: economics, science, medical-biological, humanities, engineering and engineering-technological in accordance with the requirements on mastering the additional programmes of general education to provide training of foreign citizens and stateless individuals in mastering professional education programmes in Russian [6]. Usually these students have a complete secondary education and plan to continue training under Bachelor’s programme or specialist programme.

However, every year foreign citizens who graduated from higher education institutions in their countries with Bachelor’s or Master’s degree enter Russian universities to study under additional programmes of general education. In 2017-2018 academic year it was more than 10% of students. Moreover, these foreign citizens already have a profession and frequently have teaching experience. Therefore, the management of Tula State University made a decision on opening special groups to train future foreign master’s degree and postgraduate students at the pre-university stage.

The Russian Language Department accepted a challenge of developing a work programme for teaching scientific style of speech to foreign master’s degree and postgraduate students. However, the challenge is aggravated by a number of contradictions caused by the existing situation:

- **at regulatory level**: between availability of the specified requirements to having a command of scientific style and language of specialization for advanced and professional levels of language proficiency and non-availability of the latter in additional programmes of general education that provide for training of foreign citizens and stateless individuals in mastering professional education programmes in the Russian language pertaining to training of future master’s degree and postgraduate students. Due to the aforesaid it is necessary to define more exactly the requirements to mastering the additional programmes of general education to ensure training of foreign citizens and stateless individuals in mastering professional education programmes in Russian pertaining to training of future master’s degree and postgraduate students under the additional programmes of general education. In our opinion these improvements should reflect the knowledge and skills necessary to write a scientific article, a research paper or thesis, to deliver a report, etc.;

- **at organizational level**: between multi-ethnic and multi-specialization student population joining the training and the requirements of a higher education institution towards the number of students in a foreign language training group. Thus, due to objective reasons one training group may contain the students of various nations with their own difficulties in studying Russian as well as of various fields and specialization of training (in 2017-2018 academic year the Institute of International Education of Tula State University carried out a pre-university training of a group of foreign postgraduate students specializing in the following areas: engineering (Vietnam), science (Egypt), medical-biological (Republic of Guinea), humanities (Syria);

- **at methodological level**: between the requirements to scientific communication imposed on future master’s degree and postgraduate students and the requirements imposed on future bachelors. The first are higher by an order. Bachelor students face scientific style of speech when listening to lectures and reading textbooks, and future master’s degree and postgraduate students must independently produce a text, for example, in the course of a research paper development. At this, both the school graduates and higher education institution graduates come to Russia without any command of the Russian language.

For a foreign student taking a postgraduate course it is preferable to have the ability to express his or her opinion, make suggestions, take part in talks and discussions on scientific subjects, discuss abstract, political, academic, social and professional issues. These skills define advanced and professional levels of language proficiency providing the following:

- in speech - discussions on scientific subjects, delivering of reports;
- in listening - listening to/understanding of a lectures, reports;
- in reading - a grasp of all types of reading, in particular analytical reading, enabling to find the required scientific data on the subject of research;
- in writing - writing of abstracts, summaries, articles, points of scientific research.

Thus, the teaching staff of the department face a challenge of methodological intensification of educational process providing for an optimum and efficient training in professional communication. An attempt to cope with such a challenge is the development of a teaching aid in the Russian language.
(scientific style) for future master’s degree students and postgraduates of various fields of specialization that is made by the teaching staff of the Institute of International Education of Tula State University.

2 METHODOLOGY

Theoretical foundation for the research are the methodological postulates of linguodidactics by O.D. Mitrofanova and V.D. Kostomarov, E.I. Motina, communicative approach to teaching by A.A. Akishina, works of L.A. Motina on training in scientific style of speech and language of specialization [1,9,] and a statement: “Text is the basis for teaching”[1] and the doctrines of foreign researchers [10,11].

The said theoretical generalizations are implemented in practice in the materials of a teaching aid in the Russian language (scientific style) for future master’s degree students and postgraduates of various fields of specialization that is presented by the authors of the article.

The objective of the teaching aid is to develop professionally-oriented set of skills related to the development of language habits and expertise in the area of constructing connective monological utterances based on general scientific and special vocabulary.

General scientific vocabulary takes a dominant position because it is expedient to use such vocabulary to introduce one to the language of science and it provides the basis for all special vocabularies. Moreover it allows to consolidate multi-specialization group in a classroom lessons.

Methodological postulate of the teaching aid is the statement: “Text is the basis for teaching”. “Text is an example of how the language functions. That is why in communicative approach it is the initial and the final unit of teaching” [1, p.35]. When delivering training in professional communication it is evident that scientific-educational text is the basis of training. Scientific-educational texts are “the focus of speech, informatory and communicative aspects of training, the base on which communicative skills and speech habits are developed that are necessary to process the perceived information, to create secondary texts of specific genres demanded in the process of training”[4, p.1483].

3 RESULTS

Teaching aid “The Russian Language (Scientific Style) for Master's Degree Students and Postgraduates of the Pre-University Training Course” consists of the units, each unit contains an original adapted general scientific text accompanied with pre-text, in-text and post-text exercises that allow a teacher to efficiently arrange the work in multi-specialization group. The units “What is science?”, “A master’s degree student. A postgraduate. A Scientist”, “Science structure”, “Scientific research methods”, “Scientific style of speech”, “Research paper development”, “Biography”, “Reference” – give the general idea about science, its structure, requirements to thesis. With the help of them the future master’s degree and postgraduate students are getting acquainted with the basics of the Russian scientific style of speech and scientific etiquette. Introduction into modern scientific communication standards is provided in the subunits “How to present a scientific report?” , “How to make a presentation?” where students are invited to develop the points of their own scientific study and to make a presentation basing on the results of training.

“Scientific style of speech” unit may be specially noted. In this unit the students with the help of an adapted text are getting generally acquainted with the variant of the Russian literary language servicing the realm of science. This topic represents a specific and necessary “exposure” of teaching technology. In our opinion the certified specialists (future master’s degree and postgraduate students) must have an idea of what they are being taught, what they have to master as the language tools for successful scientific communication and what skills they have to develop. Adult students are also able to compare facts and patterns of Russian and native scientific communication. The following text comes from the teaching aid:

The scientific style of speech is a type of the Russian language, which is used in the scientific sphere of communication. This style of speech is used in scientific papers to convey research results. The purpose of the scientific style of speech is provision of information, explanation of scientific results. That is why scientific speech features accuracy, logicality, generalization and abstractness.

The following genres are typical of the scientific style of speech: a scientific article, talking points, a scientific paper, monograph, thesis, review, abstract, manual, lecture, etc.
The following linguistic means are used in the scientific style of speech: terms, abstract vocabulary, present tense verbs, composite sentences. Words expressing feelings and emotions, exclamatory sentences are very rare in this style.

Texts of the scientific style require references to sources and quotations.

The texts of the discussed teaching aid are arranged according to the increasing difficulty principle. E.g. the above text “Scientific Style of Speech” with a complex of exercises is proposed for studying in the 8th-10th week of the training, whereas one of the first texts is “What Is Science?” with a complex of exercises for the 3rd-4th week of the training:

**What Is Science?**

Science is a sphere of human activity. Science generates knowledge of the world. Science can be theoretical and applied. The purpose of theoretical science is to create a theory. The purpose of applied science is to solve practical problems.

Types of science:

- social and humanitarian sciences (sociology, political science, economics, pedagogy, psychology, etc.);
- technical sciences (physics, mechanics, robotics, etc.);
- natural sciences (biology, zoology, ecology, chemistry, etc.).

Each type of science generates knowledge in its own way. Humanitarian sciences generate knowledge of society and man.

It can be easily noticed that the grammar aspect of the text is based on subject qualification constructions, transitive verbs, nominative and accusative cases, which were learnt when studying the neutral style at the beginning of the training.

The pre-text exercises in the training aid are based on the “from the word (lexical meaning) to the sentence” principle and are aimed at studying terms and grammar constructions of the scientific style of speech, which are found in the corresponding texts. For example, students are asked to guess the meaning of the words, which are highlighted in bold, without a dictionary:

The word *method* originates from the word ‘methodos’ – ‘way’. A scientific method is a way of solving a scientific problem.

What is a method?

The next exercise aims at comparing the lexical features of the neural style with those of the scientific. Students are supposed to listen, repeat and read the following phrases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>neutral style</th>
<th>scientific style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verb (infinitive) + 4th case</td>
<td>noun + 2nd case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to study nature</td>
<td>study of nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to explain facts</td>
<td>explanation of facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to describe facts</td>
<td>description of facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to prove a hypothesis</td>
<td>proof of a hypothesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students can be also asked to make up word combinations according to the model of the scientific style, using the reference words:

*Model:* to assert – assertion (of truth, of a fact).

To suppose, to research, to explain, to describe, to prognosticate, to prove.

Reference words: truth, fact, event, property, nature, hypothesis.

In-text exercises consist in work with text fragments, analysis of words and forms directly in the text, analysis (or translation) of difficult points. Especially significant are the exercises of this type aimed at developing the skills of asking questions. Training is carried out on a step-by-step basis: initially with the help of props (a word to which it is necessary to ask a question is highlighted in bold in the sentence):

Ask questions to the words highlighted in bold.
Model: **Science** is a sphere of human activity.

**What is science?**

1. *Science generates knowledge of the world.*
2. *Each type of science generates knowledge in its own way.*
3. *Humanitarian sciences generate knowledge of society and man.*
4. *The purpose of theoretical science is to create a theory.*
5. *The purpose of applied science is to solve practical problems.*
6. *Sociology, political science, physics and chemistry are types of science.*

At this, building of each question (frequently variants of a question) is obligatory accompanied by the lecturer’s comments.

The ability to ask questions is extremely important and essential for successful written and oral scientific communication. Moreover, it facilitates the development of communicative skills, helps to enter into a dialogue and to keep it.

After pre-text and in-text exercises students are offered to read a text. A text is to be grasped as a whole. It is necessary to teach “to grasp” the general meaning, to catch at least several known words which will help a student to get oriented what the text is about. It develops an ability to forecast and to guess that is required in reading, provides for introduction of a new vocabulary and grammar and demonstrates to students how frequently the words learned by them are used in the language of science.

Further come post-text exercises aimed at text understanding (questions about text content requiring brief answer or an answer in the form of a full monological expression; questions requiring to express agreement/disagreement (clichés are offered to students); questions aimed at development of the skills to find key words, phrases and sentences and to change them for synonymous ones; exercises for development of the skills to make a sentence of scientific style of speech using the words, exercises to make subject headings, argumentation, to write a plan and a summary of the text, to retell this text basing on a plan and a summary.

As an example of such type of exercises, a module of post-text exercises in training of argumentation may be considered. In the end of the unit students are offered to make an argumentative text about currency of their study and present it initially in writing and then orally. Let us consider them.

**Exercise 1. Read an argumentative text and a plan to it.**

*I think it is necessary to learn to make argumentative texts. I’ll prove my opinion with the help of arguments.*

*Firstly, it helps to explain my point of view.*

*Secondly, it helps to find arguments.*

*Thirdly, argumentation helps to take part in a discussion.*

*Fourthly, I’m a postgraduate student and this knowledge will give me a chance to prepare to defend my thesis, to defend point.*

*Thus, I’m sure learning how to make argumentative texts is a useful job.*

Plan of an argumentative text

1. **Talking point. Your opinion.**
   
   *(I think, believe, sure, not sure that…)*

2. **Argument. Your arguments.**
   
   *(Firstly, secondly, thirdly; on the one hand, on the other hand, finally…)*

3. **Conclusion. Your statement.**
   
   *(Thus, so, in conclusion I’d like to say that…)*
Exercise 2. Read an argumentative text about the urgency of environmental issues.

Environmental issues are urgent. I'll prove my point with the help of arguments.
Firstly, the ecological situation in the world is getting worse.
Secondly, modern industry destroys natural resources.
Thirdly, the ozone layer of the Earth is destroying.
Fourthly, species and ecosystems are becoming extinct.
Thus, it is necessary for the mankind to think a lot about environmental issues in the XXI century.

Task 3. Make a discourse text about currency of the subject of your study.
Advanced level students may support their full monological expression about currency with several slides that, in its turn, will be an initial stage of the work on presentation of their own scientific study.
The similar types of activities are provided in the teaching aid “The Russian Language (Scientific Style) for Master’s Degree Students and Postgraduates of the Pre-University Training Course”. First of all, they are related to the main components of the scientific research structure: defining of aims and objectives, describing the methods of research, making the list of references, making the list of own published works. Thus, by parts of the fragments mastered at the lessons in terms of language and speech a simplified model of future scientific research is being assembled in the Russian language (that frequently is already ready in the native language). As a result at the exam in the subject “The Russian Language (Scientific Style)” a student is able to present a brief description of his or her study (future thesis) in writing (points) and orally (report on the subject of the research) with presentation in Russian.

4 CONCLUSION
The presented model and principles of development of the teaching aid to teach the Russian language are sure to help a lecturer to arrange efficiently and methodically competent the process of teaching the scientific style of speech to foreign master’s degree students and postgraduates of various fields of specialization at the pre-university stage.

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