

COMPETITIVE ACTIVITIES AS A TOOL OF THE COMPETENCE BASED APPROACH IN TEACHING STUDENTS OF TRANSLATION FACULTY

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Abstract

The research presents an analysis of competitive activities efficiency when used within the frame of the competence based approach, which allows not only updating interdisciplinary communication, but also contributes to the formation of a special motivation to further professional skills mastering in a higher educational institution. The relevance of the study is due to the insignificant amount of theoretical background of the application of competitive activity in the formation of professional competencies in higher education which, if developed, can provide a tool for building knowledge and facilitating successful learning. The study notes that a professional competition involving the pragmatic and cognitive components of education can serve as a starting mechanism in stimulating interest for further profession mastering. The aim of the study is to explore the professionally-oriented competitive activity educational potential when forming competencies for "Translation and Translation Studies" major. The main research methods included theoretical analysis and synthesis of methodological and pedagogical literature, the study of foreign and domestic practices of training specialists, empirical methods - observation, pedagogical experiment, diagnostics, which confirmed the correctness of the initial positions and the effectiveness of the developed system of competitive tasks; auxiliary research methods - analysis of university documentation and methods of statistical processing of empirical data made it possible to evaluate the results of the experiment, to give a theoretical underpinning to the practical results obtained. Terminological analysis showed that at the moment such concepts as "competitive activity" and "competition" are practically not represented in the pedagogical reference literature. The authors conclude that competitive activity, which is interpreted, above all, as an effective form of game training, is a productive and effective means of teaching students. It is noted that a higher school teacher faces a number of difficulties in implementing the above approach in the framework of in-class interaction. On the basis of the retrospective analysis of the experiments involving translation competitions, it is indicated that such a competitive extracurricular event allows us to set a new vector in the development of general and professional competencies among students of the translation major. Theoretical substantiation of the effectiveness of competitive activity as an auxiliary tool in the training of translation specialists can make a certain contribution to the development of the theory of vocational education. The practical significance of the study is the ability to apply the methodology of the competition, presented as a scenario or a set of individual tasks.

Keywords: competitive activity, competence based approach, competence, translation, motivation, interdisciplinary.

1. INTRODUCTION

Competence based approach has won ground in higher education. Its success is due both to a close relationship with the motivational and professional and practical components, and the importance of interdisciplinary connections. In this article the authors consider competitive activity as an example of the actualization of a competence based approach in extracurricular activities. The hypothesis of the study is based on the idea of the prospects and effectiveness of conducting competitive interdisciplinary professionally oriented events in higher educational institutions.

Translation training is a complex pedagogical process, aimed at forming abilities to cope with professional tasks. Future graduates of foreign languages faculties acquire their professional skills through mastering a number of disciplines. The meta-profile of the subject area of the specialty "Translation and Translation Studies" is based on four key competencies G10, SS8, SS9, SS10. As a result of mastering these competencies, the future specialist must be able to:

- Know and understand the subject and profession;
- Interpret consecutively from the first and second foreign language to the native language and from the native language to the first and second languages;
- translate simultaneously from the first foreign language to the native language and vice versa;
- Be able to translate and localize all the main types of texts, provide the necessary comments and references;
- Have C2 level of written and oral command of the first foreign language and C1 level command of the second foreign language (Zabotkina, Zhukova, Kabakhidze, Kotova, Kruglyakova, 2013, p. 68).

The major curriculum provides for the study of a wide range of applied disciplines such as "Practical course of translation of the first foreign language", "Translation of a literary text", "Interpreting", "Translation ethics and etiquette", etc. However, there are significant difficulties in implementing a systematic interdisciplinary approach in the framework of educational and classroom activities. Practicing teachers of foreign languages point to a reduction in classroom hours and the subject limitation of individual disciplines as factors that do not allow to fully reconstruct a practical communicative situation during a lesson.

Another problem is low students' motivation, which is due to the inability to predict the area of their future professional tasks. The teaching experience and regular student surveys allow us to conclude that students are dominated by pragmatic and cognitive motives; therefore, higher school teachers must set themselves the task of strengthening these motivational aspects (Osikova, Alekseeva, 2017, pp. 199-212).

The factors listed above do not always allow implementing a systematic interdisciplinary competence approach in the framework of classroom activity to the full extent, which causes teachers to turn to various organizational forms of extracurricular activities. The new format of professional competitions stirs interest among students and is seen as an effective and promising way of learning.

Despite such a massive use in practice, the conceptual research into the terms "competition" and "competitive activity" in modern scientific knowledge continues, because there is a lack of a fully developed theoretical substantiation of these phenomena. Etymological analysis refers to the Latin *concursum*, borrowed from the Polish language with the original meaning of "meeting to consider cases." The first explanation of how "the competition of several persons for receiving any award, place or distinction" was recorded in the "Dictionary of the Church Slavonic and Russian languages" in 1847 (Kravetsky, 2007, pp. 67-70). Modern explanatory and encyclopedic dictionaries offer a similar definition, interpreting the competition as "contesting, competitive method of selection" and offer their classification of competitive activities, according to the scope of use.

Within the framework of pedagogical science, the interpretation of competitive activity is quite loose. The glossary of modern education defines a competition as a whole, the purpose of which is to identify the best participants and distinguishes four basic values depending on the field of use. From the point of view of the organization of educational activities, it should be mentioned that the competition (of different nature and type) used in academic disciplines, employing artistic and technical creativity is treated as an effective form of extracurricular educational work that contributes to the identification and development of students' interests. In this case, a noteworthy reference is made only to general education schools and to secondary specialized educational institutions (Glossary of modern education, 2007, p. 183). Thus, the competitive activity, which is an effective tool for the development of a number of professional competencies, has not received a deep understanding in the context of its application in the conditions of higher education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Both, foreign and domestic researchers contributed greatly the development of a competence-based approach to learning. In general, they share the view that the fundamental goal of higher education is to provide a graduate with certain set of competencies. The primary task of a teacher is the formation of the competencies determined by real life practice (Kraevsky, Khutorskoy, 2003, pp. 3-10).

R. Barnett is sure that if used correctly in combination with proper upbringing, the competence-based approach allows achieving significant results (Barnett, 1994, p. 207).

Terminological understanding of the concept of "competence" continues its development. A. V. Khutorskoy treats competence as "personality traits, knowledge, skills, abilities, and the ability to work making use of their combination" (Khutorskoy, A. V. 2002).

The authors of this work following A. A. Verbitsky interpret the concept of competence quite broadly as an integral competence, which is implemented primarily in activity, as a personal characteristic manifested in situations of professional activity that determines success and responsibility for its results (Verbitsky, 1991, p. 72).

According to W. Westera, the term "competence" is understood as "skill" and it does not quite accurately reflect the essence of the method, which is seen in "teaching effective thinking and intelligent action" (Westera, 2001, pp. 75-88).

On the basis of different approaches to the definition of what competence is, their different quantity is distinguished. W. Hutmacher, referring to the report of the Council of Europe, puts forward five main competences related to various spheres of life and phenomena of modern society, such as: education, socialization, communication, information system development, and intercultural communication (Hutmacher, 1997, p. 73). I. A. Zimnaya, revealing the main stages of the formation of the competence approach in education and analyzing its essence, points to ten competencies that can be distinguished from the point of view of the activity approach (Zimnyaya, 2004, p. 41). The fact that there is no consensus on the number of basic competencies, it can be explained in terms of the lack of a generally accepted interpretation of the competence concept.

Competitive activity is also an object of study of foreign and domestic researchers. Recently, there has been a tendency to consider professional competitions from the point of view of a competence-oriented approach, thereby expanding its application.

T. Verhoeff notes the special significance of various competitions in learning, since the competitive spirit is implicitly or clearly present in any child (Verhoeff, 1997, pp. 2-5). Academic competition, implemented in higher education institutions, takes a variety of forms.

Foreign teachers are unanimous in their opinion that going beyond the usual classroom activities with a strict assessment system and critical remarks of the teacher contributes to the effective learning of a foreign language (Bidabadi, Isfahani, Rouhollahi, Khalili, 2016, pp. 170-178). The analysis showed that the approach to teaching English as a discipline, and not as mastering a new language, does not significantly improve the students' language competence. The main result of the training is not the passing of a test or examination in a foreign language, but its productive learning. Such development is not possible without personal interest. Competitive format activates speech activity and serves to increase student motivation.

D. Sharma considers one of the reasons for failures in learning a foreign language to be the lack of challenging teaching methods and techniques aimed at developing conversational skills. Based on the analysis of the results of students' activities within the framework of the "Tell Your Story" competition, it was concluded that such a language competition improves the main aspects of speech, such as phonetic, grammatical and lexical (Sharma, 2018, p. 97).

The positive effect of the use of training, which is closely connected with practical and project competitive activities, is also noted in the work of F. Henard and D. Roseveare (Hénard, Roseveare, 2012).

Interesting is the point of view of S. Walan and M. Ewen, according to which not only students involved, but also teachers benefit from competitive activities. The competition serves as a source of new pedagogical choices, and also makes it possible to trace the connection with the curriculum (Walan, Ewen, 2018, p. 391).

Teachers actively share the results of the practical application of competitive activity, proving its effectiveness. Using the example of professional competitive activity analysis, it has been noted that as a result, students' interest in the profession increases and the ability to analyze their own activities develops

(Ilyina, 2014, p.15). Such competitions shape professional interests, for example, the participation of students of a pedagogical university in various competitive events contributes to the formation of a pedagogical skills (Fetter, 2017, p. 225).

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

As part of this study, the authors conduct a retrospective analysis of the integrative competition "Translate this!" which is a translation contest of varying complexity, the implementation of which leads to the consolidation of the competencies required by the disciplines of "Translation and Translation Studies" major academic course working programs.

Among the main methods for estimating efficiency of competitive activities in the competence based approach when teaching students of the translation major we suggest the following:

- Domestic and foreign studies review, as well as analyzing practices in the field of competitive activities implementation when teaching foreign languages;
- active methods of teaching foreign languages and translation;
- Cooperative pedagogical technologies;
- Method of pedagogical observation;
- Interdisciplinary method of learning when developing the translation competence;
- Training through consistent implementation of foreign language communicative approach;
- Method of retrospective analysis of the experimental material.

The experimental part of the study was conducted on the basis of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Moscow State University of Humanities and Economics within the framework of the translation contest "Translate This!". The experiment involved students majoring in "Translation and Translation Studies" from different years of study and was carried out in several stages; during the preparatory – set up stage, the main methods were the study of theoretical sources on the research topic, the analysis of the pilot event for correcting the content aspect of the tasks submitted for the competition, as well as the modeling method, in implementing which particular attention was paid to its organizational and activity component. The second stage of the experiment was carried out directly during the competition itself with the use of the following methods: direct observation with the involvement of partially heuristic technique and problem design, and the method of the pedagogical experiment. The combination of these methods allowed us to identify the dynamics of specific competencies development and motivation for their development. At the last, analytical stage of the experiment, the authors turned to survey methods, in particular, the participants of the competition were interviewed to identify the types of assignments that presented the greatest/least complexity, aroused interest, motivated them to search for non-standard solutions, etc.

An integrated extracurricular event with the 1st-5th year-students of the "Translation and Translation Studies" major as participants has been held at Moscow State University of Humanities and Economics for the second time. The translation contest is conducted in the format of a battle "Translate this!". Its peculiarity is that the developed format of the event foregrounds the competence based approach and takes it beyond the scope of classroom activities. This unique integrative practice incorporates a number of subjects, providing academic interdisciplinary links.

The analysis has shown that the preliminary initial stage is of great importance and contributes to the development of the ability to work in a team. The draw allows you to distribute students of different years of study in teams, change their usual environment.

The interpreting contest consisted in sight translation; the tasks were compiled according to the number of teams, and they were authentic English texts with an average of 900 printed characters. As part of the competition assignment, the students were given texts on the following topics: special economics (keywords: inflation, increase, revenue, consumer needs / demand, slackening of the market, etc.), weather forecast (keywords: fall- out, active weather, northwester, heavy shower, cloud coverage, etc.), a popular science text on ecological issues (keywords: polluted waters, microplastics, contaminated environments, toxic chemicals, ecosystems, etc.) and newspaper-publicistic text containing the latest events in the life of the British royal family (keywords: royals, pregnancy, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, outfit, open memorial, social work, etc.). At the stage of formation of competing teams, one (or more) fifth-year student was sent to each of them, and since the fifth year of study presupposes training the skills of interpretation within the discipline

“Practical Interpreting” and students already have trained professional competencies that allow them to cope with the task in the process of its implementation, they must demonstrate stress and time management skills as well as quick switching from one working language to the other, the ability to evaluate the quality and content of information, highlight the most significant facts and concepts, give them their own assessment and interpretation and the ability to perform oral sequential translation and visual-oral translation in compliance with the norms of lexical equivalence, taking into account the stylistic and temporal characteristics of the source text, compliance with the grammatical, syntactic and stylistic norms of the original text.

Having studied the details of the first translation contest “Translate This!”, we came to the conclusion that the translation of a literary text should be moved beyond the face-to-face stage of the competition, since with literary translation the time factor is not the key, while the creative component is on par with the skills of literary translation, trained in the course of studying the discipline “Translation of a literary text” in the fourth year which will allow the participant(s) from the teams to submit an adequate literary text to the jury. An excerpt from one of Joel Hill’s four stories “Strange Weather” was presented as a competitive translation task to the teams two weeks ahead of the competition with a certain deadline. The novel was published in English in 2017 and has not yet been translated into Russian. The main difficulty for the transfer in translation, in addition to the stylistic features of the author’s presentation and the absence of the macrocontext, were figurative means and low-colloquial vocabulary, which allowed creating an image of the protagonist. Two weeks before the date of the competition, the text was handed over to the captains of each of the teams, who, in turn, appointed those responsible for the translation and presentation of the results to the Expert Jury Board, consisting of the leading department academics. All translations received an independent assessment, students demonstrated knowledge in the areas of geography, history, political, economic, social and cultural life of the country of the English language, showed:

Their skills of adequate constructing texts in the working languages to achieve their coherence, consistency, integrity based on compositional speech forms,

The ability to use different levels of discourse: formal, informal, neutral,

The ability to recognize the linguistic markers of social relations and appropriately use them (the forms of greeting, farewell, emotional exclamation),

To recognize the characteristics of human speech markers at different levels of language.

Each team’s transfer was rated on a five-point scale, points earned were entered into the teams’ final test assets.

The competition on translating humor from English into Russian offered five humorous sentences that the teams were to translate within five minutes’ time:

- One nice thing about egotists: they don’t talk about other people;
- Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad;
- I said “no” to cigarettes, but they didn’t listen;
- I feel like I’m diagonally parked in a parallel universe;
- Friends come and go but enemies accumulate.

The translation had to be made in accordance with the principles of adequacy and equivalence. The criteria for evaluating team performance were based on:

- the level of adequate application of the rules of constructing texts in working languages in order to achieve their coherence, consistency, integrity based on compositional speech forms;
- The ability to carry out pre-translational analysis of a written text that promotes accurate perception of the original meaning;
- The ability to predict possible cognitive dissonance and inconsistencies in the translation process and ways to overcome them;
- The ability to use translation transformations to achieve the necessary level of equivalence and representativeness when performing translation;
- The ability to perform post-translation editing of the text translated.

The quotation translation contest was presented as an assignment to translate five statements of famous

personalities from English into Russian:

- "Before your dreams can come true, you have to have those dreams." Joyce Brothers, American psychologist, Television and Radio Personality;
- "Bankruptcy is a legal proceeding". Joey Adams, American comedian;
- "It's high enough to dream of it." William Faulkner, American writer;
- "A signature always reveals a man's character - and sometimes even his name." Evan Esar, American humorist;
- "Anyone can become angry - that is easy. It's not easy." Aristotle, Greek philosopher.

Five minutes were given to do this assignment, and in the process of doing it, the students had to demonstrate their ability to work with the corpus of both, the English and the Russian languages. Citations, being a precedent type of text, require a special approach to their translation, since they, one way or another, are fixed in the language system and are tied to a particular historical situation. In addition, in order to adequately render the meaning of a quotation - a precedent utterance - when translating, the contest participants had to take into account the semantic, cognitive and functional aspects of the original utterance (Dzhabrailova, Gaborova, 2017, p. 31). Solving the translation task required students to demonstrate skills in working with various information sources and technologies, searching, storing, processing and analyzing information from various sources and databases, presenting it in the required format using information, computer and network technologies, the ability to apply the knowledge of two foreign languages to solve professional tasks, the ability to apply knowledge in the field of geography, history the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country of the language studied, as well as knowledge of the role of the country of this language in regional and global political processes, the ability to independently search for professional information in print and electronic sources, including electronic databases. The next competition consisted in translating a special type of text - an advertising slogan:

- "We throw in extra parts just to mess with you ", Ikea;
- "You can't beat the feeling", Coca-Cola;
- "A woman is an Island, Fidji is her perfume", Fidji;
- "Does exactly what it says on the tin", Ronseal Decking Oil;
- "Your move, BMW", Audi.

Advertising slogan is a type of text, the translation of which requires rendering the pragmatic potential of the original. On the one hand, when translating a foreign language text (including advertising text), it is necessary to transfer the denotation and strive to perform the translation at the highest level of equivalence, on the other hand, the particularity of an advertising text implies the solution of the extra-translational task - to convince recipients that they should purchase the advertised product, and this, in turn, requires the search for effective translation strategies (Dzhabrailova, Bezukh, 2017, p. 92). Thus, when performing this task, students must, in addition to general expertise, demonstrate skills in analyzing the quality and content of information, identifying the most significant facts and concepts, as well as the ability to give them their own critical evaluation and interpretation, the ability to apply knowledge of two foreign languages for solving professional tasks, the ability to recognize linguistic markers of social relations and to use them adequately (greetings, farewells, emotional exclamation), and the ability to apply the method of oriented information retrieval in reference literature and computer networks.

During the final competition the contestants were to solve lexical and grammatical problems of translation. This competition, mainly focused on the translation competences of the first and the second year students, and offered nine sentences and one situation which were to be adequately translated from English into Russian:

- He stopped to smoke;
- She looked at her mirror and didn't like her complexion;
- This is a book;
- We have to go now. This place is 20 miles away from here.
 - So long!;

- Few people dye their hair green;
- I can't wait to see him again;
- She was a woman in her late sixties;
- He was a famous physician with an excellence diploma;
- Inform the driver of any unattended items;
- What makes a good translator?

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

The analysis showed that such lexical items as "competitive activity" and "competition" are practically not represented in the pedagogical-reference literature. This can be explained by the fact that there is a close connection between competitive activity and game training. In the vocabulary of the basic concepts of pedagogy, emotionally tense, upbeat, competitive activity is one of the examples of active teaching methods, which shapes the professional and social environment of a person's life. Treating competitive activity as a form of game learning, we can single out the following characteristics that distinguish it from other educational technologies:

- Positive perception, because the game is a familiar and favorite form of activity at any age;
- An effective means of engaging students in gaming activities, due to the very content nature of the game. It is noted that in such a situation, psychological barriers and all sorts of obstacles are easily overcome;
- The presence of an precisely set goal and the corresponding pedagogical result;
- A special motivational component that triggers the mechanism for the manifestation of creative approach, imagination and perseverance;
- Multifunctionality;
- Consistency;
- A way to transfer knowledge, skills and abilities, through hobbies and indirect educational influence;
- a special collective form of activity, based on a competitive component, providing material or moral encouragement.

A retrospective analysis of the experimental part of the study showed that in the course of the assignments, the students demonstrated the formation of a number of communicative and professional competencies:

- The ability to logically correctly, reasonably and clearly built spoken and written speech in Russian, including that on professional subjects, to publicly present their own and well-known scientific results, to lead discussions;
- The ability to use two foreign languages to solve professional tasks;
- The ability to independently search for professional information in print and electronic sources, including electronic databases;
- The ability to conduct a linguistic analysis of the text / discourse based on the system knowledge of the current stage and the history of the development of the studied languages;
- The ability to adequately apply the rules of constructing texts in the working languages to achieve their coherence, consistency, integrity based on compositional speech forms.

5. CONCLUSION

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An integrative battle contest for students majoring in translation and translation studies can become an additional extracurricular event, in which students develop a number of general cultural, professional and general professional competencies. The study, in particular, argues in favor of the fact that the format of the competition allowed students to display the skills underlying the following competencies:

1) the ability to show psychological stability in difficult and extreme situations, including quickly switching from one working language to another. This skill was necessary under time pressure, when time management was a key factor in solving the task set for the team. When performing as an interpreter, the participant should not be distracted by extraneous noise, as well as when performing the task associated with overcoming the lexical and grammatical difficulties of translation, the student had to make a choice in favor of one or another translation option, taking into account the prompts of the team, but having their own translation solution;

2) the ability to carry out various forms of intercultural and interpersonal interaction in order to ensure cooperation in solving professional tasks, tolerantly perceiving social, ethnic, religious, cultural and other differences. This skill manifested itself at the level of interaction of team members in the process of solving the task assigned to it, which contributed to developing team spirit and creating an atmosphere of mutual support. One of the objectives of the battle, the organizers saw the socialization of students with disabilities, the practice of maintaining a barrier-free environment in an inclusive competition space, bringing together students from different years of study to jointly overcome heuristic difficulties, which later may have the prospect of generating sustainable motivation for extracurricular activities, such as participation in student scientific communities;

3) the ability to self-organization and self-education. This general cultural competence is reflected in how team members distributed the time allotted for translation, in particular, working with the language corps, assigning responsibilities, designing the final translation version, and presenting it to the Board of Jury.

All tasks of the competition are problematic, and the format of the competition created all the conditions necessary for mastering the translation practice with a focus on the formation of the main competencies listed in the major curriculum. The existing labor market and higher education curricula dictate their own terms for the scope and level of competence formation of professionals, conducting competence-oriented professional competitions allows following the latest trends and solving contemporary problems of higher education.

The analyzed experience shows that the above-described format of an integrative extracurricular lesson will allow solving a number of tasks and helping to form a number of competencies that may not be fully formed within the framework of educational class work. The undoubted significance of this competition is seen in the fact that students have the opportunity to see in practice the social importance of their future profession and to develop a high level of motivation to perform their professional activities.

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