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Features of Teaching Theoretical Foreign Language Disciplines: The Case of "Stylistics. English Language"

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Abstract

The article examines the problems of teaching theoretical disciplines using the example of "Stylistics" course instruction, analyzing current methodological issues and their correspondence to contemporary realities. Possible solutions to the aforementioned problems are identified, along with methods for improving the teaching process of theoretical disciplines. Achieving the set objectives involves modifying lecture and seminar formats, as well as implementing more diverse pedagogical methodologies. Modernization of educational activity organization forms and knowledge assessment should not compromise the substantive component of the course. Teaching theoretical disciplines within linguistics presents educators with a specific challenge: to convey information in such a way that the course does not remain overshadowed by numerous practice-oriented aspects and disciplines, while simultaneously developing students' sufficient interest and motivation to study a subject of fundamental importance for linguist training.

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Keywords

Teaching methodology, theoretical disciplines, stylistics, student-centered learning, linguistic education, pedagogical methods/

Introduction

It is widely known that optimizing the educational process is largely based on intensifying cognitive activity. Many researchers note a shift or a change in emphasis in teaching - the shift from teaching to learning - and the emergence of the term student-centred learning [Attard et al., www, p.27]. Changes in educational standards, the reduction of hours allocated to theoretical disciplines, the emergence of new digital technologies, and many other factors have a significant impact on both the teacher and the students, forcing them to adapt the educational process to the aforementioned changes and move away from familiar forms and methods of teaching.

Main part

The teaching of theoretical courses is traditionally built on a combination of lectures and seminars, where the initial introduction of the material takes the form of lectures, while the expansion and consolidation of acquired knowledge occurs during seminars. However, a modern lecture is not supposed to be a simple monologue presenting the material; today, the requirements for the lecturer are much higher - the lecture must be interactive, pose problems and propose solutions, and, most importantly, provoke a certain interaction and even a kind of collaboration with the students. In a classroom of cadets studying "Translation and Translation Studies," who are therefore oriented towards a practical approach, it is particularly important and challenging to motivate them to study theoretical disciplines. E.L. Makarova even suggests such lecture formats as a binary lecture (a dialogue between two teachers), a provocative lecture, a conference-style lecture, or a press-conference-style lecture [Makarova, Pugach, 2016, p.96]. Seminar classes also are not limited to classic formats with student questioning and the presentation and discussion of reports. In some cases, it is possible to conduct a discussion-based seminar, following the principle of a round table where everyone in the audience participates. A seminar structured as a game or a competition between two teams can also generate considerable interest. The teacher determines the type and format of the classes based on the characteristics of the specific group.

Many researchers separately emphasize the reliance on active learning, which is contrasted with passive learning. The authors of an article on the prospects of higher education in Russia, V.I. Baidenko and N.A. Seleznyova, explain this postulate as follows: "reliance on active, not passive learning; an emphasis on deep study and understanding; increased responsibility and accountability on the part of students; a developed sense of their independence; interdependence between teachers and students; mutual respect in their relationships; a reflective approach to the educational process on the part of both the teacher and the students" [Ignatev, 2021, p.127].

The use of slide presentations and even the inclusion of video clips is becoming an increasingly popular form of delivering information during lectures. Besides the obvious advantage of engaging different forms of perception (audio, video), it is necessary to note that for young people, who read less and consume more information from screens compared to previous generations, these formats are preferable to more traditional ones. However, this tool also has its pros and cons. Along with the obvious benefits of visualization, some researchers point to a negative aspect: when selecting materials for a presentation and choosing the format and layout for the slides, the lecturer essentially imposes their own logic on the students. The presentation of the material inevitably involves a degree of subjectivity. Furthermore, it reduces the potential volume of independent analytical work by the students, which would be possible if they simply listened to the lecture and subsequently processed the

materials individually. The very act of taking lecture notes provides initial information processing, allowing students to structure the material and highlight the most significant points.

Assessment methods deserve special attention. Traditional oral and written questioning can be conducted in both individual and group formats. Testing is also a quite effective tool, especially following a recently attended lecture. This allows for immediate assessment of how well the information was understood, helps identify difficult points, and primarily directs the students themselves towards the aspects that require more thorough study when preparing for seminar classes.

Teaching stylistics to interpreters has its own unique requirements. The key difference is that these students must not only gain a deep understanding of linguistic styles, speech styles, and individual authors' styles, but also develop the practical skill of composing texts in various formats—such as reports, summaries, presentations, and articles. Furthermore, they need to learn how to translate texts into other languages by selecting appropriate linguistic tools, and, conversely, to account for the fact that the same idea can be expressed differently across languages when translating into Russian.

Since translation students often specialize in different fields, they will encounter texts from a wide range of styles: scientific, journalistic, formal/official, and, of course, literary. It is therefore essential for them to master fundamental concepts like "text," "scientific style," "journalistic style," "formal style," and "literary style." It's important to note that texts themselves are not the direct object of linguistic study; rather, they are analyzed by various disciplines depending on their content. While a pure linguist might see a text merely as a structure where language units are organized in a systematic way, for a translation student, the informational content of the text is equally significant.

Consequently, a translator must be equally attentive to both the meaning of a text and the specific language used to convey it.

Within university programs, one of the most challenging areas for translation students is mastering the conventions of formal and business style. They often struggle significantly with applying the correct stylistic norms when translating business correspondence, contracts, and similar documents. A primary reason for this difficulty is the limited amount of class time dedicated to formal style in Russian stylistics courses. Within this brief period, students are expected to internalize the linguistic and structural norms of the style and learn how to produce various text genres appropriate to different communicative situations and objectives.

Shifting the discussion to the context of specific academic disciplines, I would like to focus in more detail on the search for ways to optimize the teaching of theoretical disciplines in the linguistic cycle. The new understanding of learning goals and the roles of cadets and students in the educational process requires a rethinking of issues related to curriculum content, the organization of the educational process, teaching technologies, and forms of assessment and evaluation. The answers to these questions are directly linked to the foundational principles of the specialist training program—its goals and objectives, and the conditions for its implementation.

The goal of studying the discipline "Stylistics. English Language" is to form and develop intercultural, communicative, professional, cognitive, and general competence. Within the framework of the interconnection and interdependence of these competencies, knowledge and skills are sequentially developed.

Teaching this discipline addresses a whole range of tasks: mastering general cultural, professional, and military-professional competencies; understanding the stylistic patterns of the target language in comparison with the Russian language; developing scientific thinking; broadening the students' horizons and providing them with additional knowledge about the linguistic and cultural situation in the countries of the target language; and developing the ability to analytically comprehend and generalize the acquired theoretical knowledge.

The learning conditions are primarily determined by the number of hours allocated for the course. The implementation of the program's goals and objectives is carried out in the 8th semester within the framework of 72 hours. Of these, 48 are classroom hours, and 24 are allocated for independent work. A clear understanding of the learning goals and working conditions determines the emphasis both in terms of content and technology, ensures a correct understanding of the lecture course content, and determines an adequate methodology for organizing this course.

The number of topics to be studied in the stylistics course is quite large, while the number of hours allocated for this course is very limited. In this regard, the solution to the issue of organizing the material and the methodology for presenting it becomes extremely important. In our view, the principles of material organization and presentation can be defined as follows:

- Shifting the emphasis of theoretical courses in favor of the functional component;
- Focusing on the effective elements of the educational process, forming the competencies most significant for professional activities;
- Relying on the independent work of cadets and students.

We must not forget about interdisciplinary connections, taking into account the fact that this course is preceded by a course in Russian stylistics, as well as theoretical grammar and lexicology of the English language.

The modernization of the theoretical course under new conditions, and the assessment of the competencies formed in cadets and students, should aim to achieve the following goals:

1. Stimulating active and systematic work, both in the classroom and independently, throughout the entire semester;
2. Implementing regular monitoring of the quality of learning in the discipline.

Achieving these goals is associated with changing the formats of lecture and seminar classes and using more diverse types of work.

The modernization of work and assessment forms should not come at the expense of the course content. The teacher must first and foremost ensure the completeness of the content of the discipline being taught, while taking into account the shift in educational paradigms from teacher-centered to student-centered and the transition from a teaching model to a learning model.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is worth noting that teaching theoretical disciplines of a foreign language poses a special task for the teacher: to convey the information in such a way that this course does not get "lost" among the vast variety of practical aspects and disciplines, and to instill in the students' sufficient interest and motivation to study a subject that is fundamental for linguists.

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Особенности преподавания теоретических дисциплин иностранного языка на примере преподавания дисциплины «Стилистика. Английский язык»

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Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются проблемы преподавания теоретических дисциплин на примере преподавания дисциплины «Стилистика», анализируются актуальные проблемы методики обучения и их соответствие современным реалиям. Выявляются возможные варианты решения вышеназванных проблем, а также способы усовершенствования процесса обучения теоретическим дисциплинам. Достижение поставленных целей сопряжено с модификацией форматов лекционных и семинарских занятий, а также с внедрением более разнообразных педагогических методик. Модернизация форм организации учебной деятельности и оценки знаний не должна осуществляться в ущерб содержательному компоненту курса. Преподавание теоретических дисциплин в рамках лингвистики ставит перед педагогом особую задачу: донести информацию таким образом, чтобы данный курс не оказался в тени многочисленных практико-ориентированных аспектов и дисциплин, а также сформировать у студентов достаточный уровень интереса и мотивации к изучению предмета, имеющего фундаментальное значение для подготовки лингвистов.

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Ключевые слова

Методика преподавания, теоретические дисциплины, стилистика, студентоцентрированное обучение, лингвистическое образование, педагогические методики.

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