

Means of Forming the Information Competence of Students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages

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Abstract: The article analyses the problem of the formation of the information competence of students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages. The information competence is based on the integration of the competence, synergetic and lingvoinformational approaches; upon reception of the situative or context-sensitive professional information; on professional knowledge, skills and abilities which are studied by such scientists as I.A. Zimnyaya, O.G. Oberemko, T.S. Serova; on the rising importance of independent and industrial education due to the rate of change of information flow, including professionally-oriented information. A means to create such a competence is "the information seeking strategy", developed for the effective seeking of necessary professional information by students, to help them in planning, self-assessment and the correction of professional development. The formation of the information competence implies that students get the following skills and abilities: the ability to work with electronic dictionaries and other information resources to solve linguistic problems; the ability to work with traditional information resources; getting computer skills to receive, process and manage professionally necessary information.

Key words: Information competence • Lingvoinformational approach • Competence approach • Synergetic approach • Information seeking strategy

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of methodical, lingvo-didactical, psychology-pedagogical literature, observing the process of learning, the needs of professional community revealed the need for the formation of a high level of the information competence of students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, necessary to participate in information-dependent cross-cultural communication and the lack of methods for its formation. The process of formation of the information competence of students of the university will be effective if:

- The essence of the concept of the information competence is defined;
- Methodological features of the synergetic, competence and lingvoinformational approach to its development are revealed;
- The method of formation of the information competence of students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the university is developed,

which:

- Is realized by an effective information seeking strategy;
- Implies gradual use of special resources in educational process.

The reliability and validity of the results are maintained due to the concepts of the formation of linguistic identity of students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the university, the rules of the synergetic, competence and lingvoinformational approaches, by the structure of theoretical and experimental studies.

The phrase "linguistic identity" is based on the concept "Identity - the qualities that make someone or something what they are and different from other people" [1-4].

Under "the information competence" we understand the ability of a graduate of the Faculty of Foreign Languages to independently without any help build his own strategy of work with information in accordance with his speciality and the requirements of his profession.

“If you look at the competence profile of interpreters, there is a high expectation from the interpreter to show knowledge (and how to acquire knowledge is being taught during the course), cognitive skills such as attention and memory (also consistently practiced over the year) and personality traits e.g. stress tolerance - all of which enhance students' employability” [5].

Main Part: The basis for the formation of the information competence of students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the university are the features of the synergetic, competence and lingvoinformational approach; providing each subject of the educational process with the possibility to choose the individual professional information strategy etc.

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines the term “professional” as: “1. a. Of, relating to, engaged in, or suitable for a profession. b. Conforming to the standards of a profession: professional behavior. 2. Engaging in a given activity as a source of livelihood or as a career. 3. Performed by persons receiving pay: professional football. 4. Having or showing great skill; expert: a professional repair job” [6].

The transition to an information society, that has higher requirements for the intellectual potential of employees, has caused the need to change the system of higher education in foreign languages, its technology, teaching methods, to increase their effectiveness for the development of independent thinking.

The Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education lays out that employers' expectations and demands have significantly changed over the last decade, leaving it to higher education institutions to ensure that students develop key skills in communication, IT and information management as well as people and personal skills. [7]

The distribution and combination of professional knowledge and, most importantly, the possibility to use them for practical purposes, have become the main task for every graduate of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the university in his professional activities. In connection with this the synergetic approach is relevant.

V.G. Budanov notes, that synergetics as a science which studies the processes of self-organization of complex evolving systems acquired the status of an interdisciplinary approach to solve various problems of higher education in foreign languages. Based on exact natural science, its methods have penetrated sociology, economics, political science, pedagogics, linguistics, methodology of teaching foreign languages. Synergetic models consist of self-organizing processes reflecting

certain phase transitions in highly nonequilibrium states of systems by material-energy or information parameters. Methods of synergetics have become extremely relevant, since most of today's problems, including education, are global, complex, nonlinear. [8]

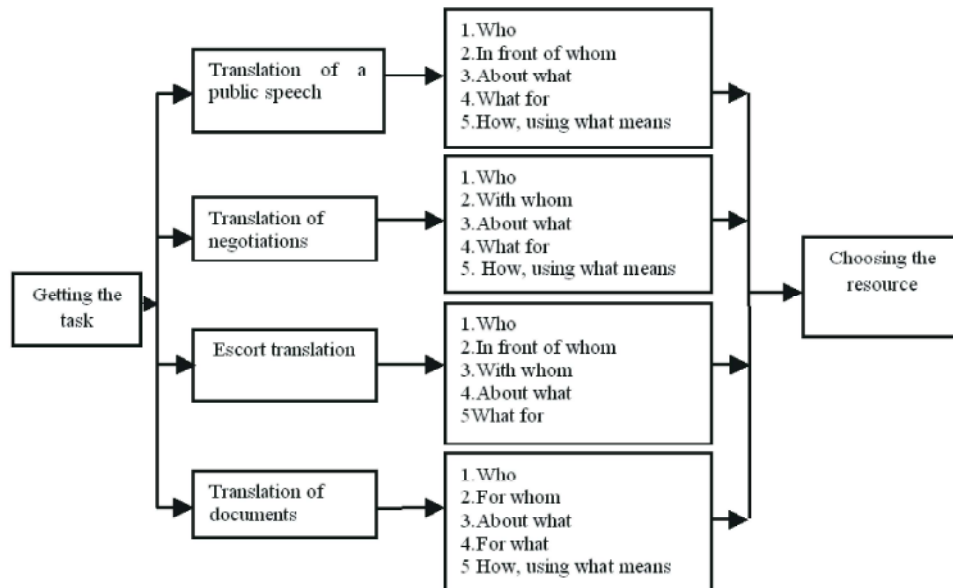
The ideas of synergetics manifest themselves in the following:

- In the process of learning as a method to control educational process;
- In planning discipline content as educational material necessary to form outlook, synergetic knowledge and skills;
- In the modernization of education as a pedagogical tool of personal development and the formation of personal values and synergetic way of thinking.

As the preparation for the professional growth of graduates of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the university, who have the information competence, the lingvoinformational approach, based on receiving situative or context-sensitive professional information, professional knowledge and skills, raising the importance of independent learning and industrial education because of the rate of change of information flow (professionally-oriented as well), is being developed. It is the functioning of a linguistic personality and its professional information environment that the lingvoinformational approach stresses. Due to constantly growing needs in finding information and means of the automatic processing of documents the necessity to effectively access information resources (monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, educational and highly specialized literature, encyclopedias and reference books, consultations of specialists and experts), solving different tasks of information seeking. This aspect of work refers to the recently established lingvoinformational approach, which is one of the areas of applied linguistics. The competence approach, when forming the information competence of students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the university, is expressed in the presence of relevant professional competencies, in obtaining competencies as goals of learning, in obtaining additional skills through self-study of students, in the ability to demonstrate knowledge and skills, necessary for the effective performance of professional activities.

For example the Kolb's model of the experiential learning cycle defines a cyclical pattern starting with the student's concrete experience, followed by a reflection task which would create a second experience. From this results an ability to form abstract concepts that can then be tested in new situations [9].

Table 1: The stage of the translational strategy from getting the task to choosing the resource



The requirements for training students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages (for example, training future translators) determine the use of specific means of forming the information competence. One of the major means is "the information seeking strategy". The work, which begins from the stage of getting a search task, i.e. before the translation. This is done both in translating and interpreting.

"An interpreter's work begins before arriving at the job site. The interpreter must become familiar with the subject matter that the speakers will discuss; a task that may involve research on topic-related words and phrases that may be used from both languages. The interpreter usually travels to the location where his or her services are needed; physical presence is required except for video conferencing or video telephone interpretation. While interpreters may not completely specialize in a particular field or industry, many do focus on one area of expertise such as business, law, medicine or education." [10]

Under a search task we understand obtaining the goal necessary to perform professional activities. Getting a task for future translators has two stages:

- Getting a task to translate;
- Defining the type of translation (a presentation, negotiations, written translation, a conference, a seminar etc.).

Proper planning is necessary for a search procedure. First of all, after defining the type of translation, it is

necessary to find as much information as possible about the addressee and the addresser, the topic and the purpose of this translation situation and the information the addresser wants the addressee to get and vice versa. Getting these key concepts will make the search task easier. Every key concept in its turn is connected with some specifying information. As such specifying information there may be:

- Specifying terms;
- Information connected with the emergence and development of the concept;
- Information about the location connected with the concept;
- Dates.

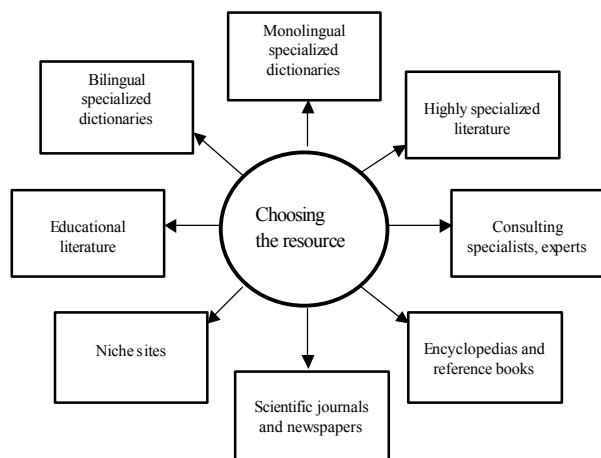
Next, the student should find out what resources he will use to search for the necessary information.

Search Resources Include:

- The use of highly specialized literature;
- Consulting a specialist and/or an expert;
- The use of niche sites, scientific journals and newspapers, encyclopedias and dictionaries, educational books;
- The use of specialized bilingual dictionaries, monolingual specialized dictionaries;

When selecting a resource it is important for the student to answer the following questions:

Table 2: The stage of the translation strategy for choosing a search resource



- What data can be found with the help of this resource;
- What resources may be interesting for the search task;

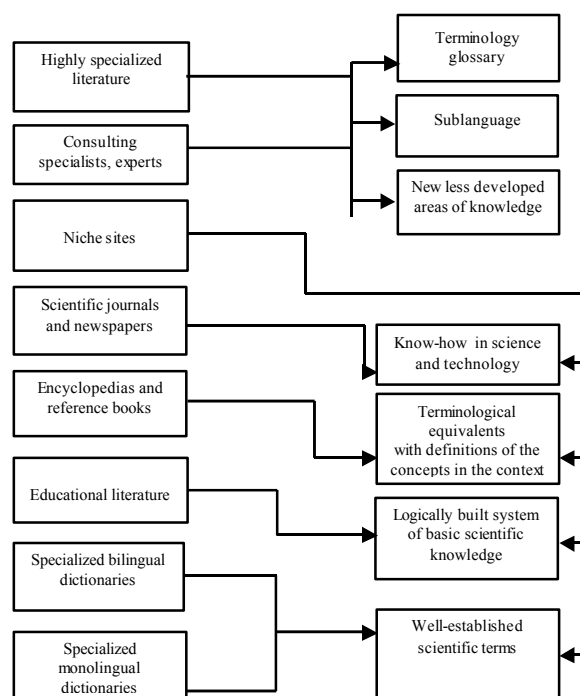
The information seeking strategy of the students using the selected resources is based on several selection criteria:

- Semantic value of the information;
- Frequency;
- Situative thematic relatedness;
- The possibility to correlate between different types of information, the expediency of use etc.

One of the most widespread and accessible information resources for students is educational literature, where it is possible to get a logically built system of basic scientific knowledge. This resource is a part of a multi-component system with a lot of positive and negative feedback, where there is constant movement, the result is transition to not only obtaining basic knowledge, but to building a terminology glossary, sublanguage, getting information about well-established scientific terms as well.

The next sources of information are encyclopedias and reference books, where the information is presented in an organized way, that allows to extract information, moving from general concepts to more particular ones. The search of the necessary information in a reference book or an encyclopedia gives the possibility to find terms and terminological equivalents with definitions of terms and concepts in the text. Encyclopedias and reference books are republished seldom enough, so the information received from these resources is rather limited.

Table 3: The stage of "the information seeking strategy" when choosing a resource depending on the necessary content



Such information resources as scientific journals and newspapers give students the possibility to learn news from some scientific areas. In these resources the latest discoveries in science and technology are presented. More detailed information about less developed areas of science is presented in highly specialized literature, in the articles of scientific journals. This resource enriches thesaurus and personal terminology glossary, where a student can get information about less developed areas of knowledge.

Some of the most widespread among students resources are specialized monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, using which requires caution, because they are published rarely. Their terms may be obsolete.

When the necessity to get additional or more detailed information arises, one may ask for a consultation from specialists and/or experts.

Niche websites as informational resources are most informative nowadays. From the point of view of content the abundance of search tools in the internet makes solving information problems polyvariant.

Having got the necessary information from a specific resource, the students may return to a certain point, from which they may start considering a new possibility of receiving information.

Table 4: Exercises presented for working with information.

	Pre-text stage	Text stage	Post-text stage
Examples of exercises	Define key information in the title.	Define the semantic field of the keywords in the title.	Read the semantic excerpt and write out the words, related to the semantic fields of these keywords.
	Knowing the topic, subtopics, read the title, try to guess what the text is about, the beginning, the development, the end.	Define in the text the introductory part, the main and the final parts.	Add to the list of words word combinations and expressions, contained in the text.
	Read the titles of the texts, try to guess, what facts it may contain.	Look through the text, see the table, make a plan of main contents of the text.	Add to the list proper nouns, relating to this phenomenon.
	Look through newspapers, journals, a number of texts and choose the texts on the topic.....	Read the statement, in which several keywords are missing, try to guess the contents.	Read the expressions, replace each with one word.
	Make a selection of articles about the phenomenon from several sources.	Read separate phrases, express their main meaning in writing in one or two words.	
	Form an opinion about the contents of the text guessing by the title	Find out what problem is discussed in the text.	Rephrase the title, using the synonyms from the excerpt.
	Read the last passage of the text and say what contents may precede this conclusion.	Group the titles according to the topics, use search resources if necessary.	Use search resources and choose texts on the topic of...
	Knowing the topic of the statement, guess possible subtopics, terms.	Explain the meaning of several facts from the text using search resources.	Make a selection of articles on the specified topic from several newspapers.
	Read the statement where several passages are missing, try to guess what the text is about.	Expand the information, obtained from the text, to do this look through corresponding sources.	
	Read the semantic excerpt of the text, guess the aim, causes, conclusions of the whole statement.		
	Express your opinion about what you have read, give known, additional information, give examples, facts, described in the article.	Read the statement, try to guess the author, the recipient, the place and the time of its creation etc.	Define if it's necessary to explore the text in more details to use the received information in future professional activities.
	Enumerate the problems being published in editorial articles and the articles of specialists in this issue of the newspaper/magazine.		
	Group the titles according to the specified topics.	Define the number of informational materials on the topic of the translation from different search resources.	
	Compile a glossary/thesaurus, which will help during the work on this topic again later.	Find synonyms to the highlighted by you in the text words, word combinations.	Where and how you could use the information retrieved from the text.
	Define the topics of the documents necessary for the translation...	Choose the necessary reference material for the translation on the topic...	How you can expand the information received from the text, use search resources.

These resources, given in response to requests for information typed, show the originals, the addresses of the documents, containing requested information and also exact data.

"The information seeking strategy" is carried out according to a certain plan and consists of several stages:

- Defining by the student his information request, for example, by making a list of key concepts of the subject area and defining semantic connections between them.

- Choosing the search area where the search will be conducted by the student.
- Choosing the resource where the search will be conducted.
- Building the request based on the information necessity.
- Conducting the search (typing the request to an information search system; choosing documents or terms).
- Correcting the question.
- The analysis of the received materials.

When combining the above described means, the problems of forming the information competence are solved.

CONCLUSION

The intense development of information technologies caused the necessity to form the professional information competence of students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages.

The starting point of the study was the concept of formation of a competent professional in the paradigm of the synergetic, competence and lingvoinformational approaches.

The formed competence is expressed in readiness and ability to independently build the information strategy in accordance with the requirements of professional community.

The effectiveness of the developed methods is confirmed by the results of experimental work. The main means of forming information competence is "the information seeking strategy".

CONCLUSIONS

The study of the problem of forming the information competence allowed to confirm the fact that under information competence we understand the ability of a graduate of the Faculty of Foreign Languages independently, without any help, construct the strategy of work with information according to the speciality, to the requirements of the speciality. The information competence is based on the integration of competence, synergetic and lingvoinformational approaches.

The competence approach, when forming the information competence, is expressed in the presence of the corresponding lingvoinformational competence; acquiring competences as an educational goal; acquiring additional skills due to the independent work of students; the ability to demonstrate work, knowledge, skills, corresponding to the passport of competencies, necessary for an effective performance in work.

The educational process, stimulating the professional nonlinear development, based on the principles of the synergetic approach, assumes the formation of nonlinear thinking; holistic and multidimensional perception of the changing, unstable and complex world, its readiness for the variability of development; the openness of

self-organizing structures, where the openness provides the possibility of evolutionary change of the exchange processes with external environment and the restructuring of internal structures.

The lingvoinformational approach is based on getting situative or context-sensitive professional information as well as professional knowledge, skills and abilities; on the growing importance of independent and professional education because of the rate of change of information flow including professionally oriented information.

The theoretic analysis of the problem of forming the information competence done in the article allows to bring the theoretic basis to its practical formation.

The information competence as the basis of modern language education is realized by means of the development of information technologies and incorporates in the process of learning "the information seeking strategy", adapting the information to professional activities and developing the ability of self-study, self-education and professionalism of a student. "The information seeking strategy" is developed for the effective strategic search of information by students, help in planning, self-assessment and the correction of professional development. The work with the above mentioned resources is a means to reach goals in educational and professional activities.

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