Special aspects of teaching Chinese students in the process of acquisition subject "foreign language – English"

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

The impetus for this study has become the existing challenges that Russian teachers and foreign students faced as a result of an increasingly internationalized university audience. The purpose of this article is to examine the essential features of teaching Chinese students in the process of studying the discipline "Foreign Language - English" and present possible didactic methods and tools that help to alleviate the difficulties and problems faced by teachers of Russian universities. The article discusses such didactic methods and tools as the project method, student presentations and group work. Presents the attitude and opinion of students from People's Republic of China (the PRC), studying at the Reshetnev Siberian state University of science and technology, Krasnoyarsk, to the proposed didactic methods and means. As a research hypothesis, we assume that an understanding of the ethnic characteristics of Chinese students, their culture and upbringing contributes to the quality of professional training of foreign students; adjusting the curriculum and teaching methods in accordance with the academic preparedness of students from China.

Introduction

As the experience of Russian higher education shows, the training of foreign students is one of the urgent problems of international education. The relevance of the development of this research area determines one of the main factors - the increased number of universities that consider the training of foreign students as one of the priorities of their activities. The number of Russian students studying abroad has quadrupled over the past twenty years (Al-Ayash A. (2018). In the Russian Federation, there is also an increase in the number of foreign students studying in universities of the country. For example, the number of students from the People's Republic of China (PRC) studying in the Russian Federation increased up to 26,775 in 2017 (Ankov V. (2018).

In the 2017-2018 school year, the number of foreign students who get higher education in the Reshetnev Siberian state university of science and technology was 458. One of the significant achievements of the Reshetnev Siberian state University of science and technology in the field of international cooperation is the implementation of dual diplomas programs with a Bachelor´s degree, as well as implementation of master thesis projects and common research activities in English, whose participants are mainly citizens of China.

In this regard, teachers of the Reshetnev Siberian state university of science and technology face new challenges in teaching activities:

- to identify the essential features of teaching in a language second to the students in the context of parallel mastering of the language of instruction;

- to identify additional pedagogical resources in domestic education, using which one could improve the quality of professional training of foreign students;

- to adjust the programs and teaching methods in accordance with the academic preparedness of the students.

Thus, the purpose of this article is to analyze the essential features of teaching Chinese students, as well as to consider methods for reducing difficulties in the process of their study such disciplineas "Foreign Language - English."

Literature Review

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study includes the works of J. Dewey (1997), as well as his follower V. H. Kilpatrick (1928), A. B. Vorontsov (2002), whose works are devoted to the ideas of the humanistic approach in education and project activities; K.A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya (1991), S.L. Rubinstein (1976), G.A. Zuckerman (1995), who developed the theory of personality as a subject of self-development; B.G. Ananyev (2002), M.M. Bakhtin (2003), I.A. Il'ayeva (1989), I.A. Kolesnikova (199), who conducted research in the field of interactive learning concept; E. Hoffman, who conducted research in the field of social relationships (1984); A.N. Tshchukin (2011), who developed methods of teaching speech communication in a foreign language.

Methods

To achieve the aim of this research, to examine the essential features of teaching Chinese students in the process of studying the discipline "Foreign Language - English" and present possible didactic methods and tools that help to alleviate the difficulties and problems faced by teachers of Russian universities, the following methods and approaches were applied:

- *Theoretical:* systematization, analysis and synthesis of pedagogical experience, concretization and generalization,
- *Empirical:* comparative analysis; methods of collecting information, monitoring, self-esteem.

Results and Discussion

The main results of the study lie in the fact that the features of teaching Chinese students a foreign language - English are analyzed and substantiated and techniques for reducing difficulties in the process of studying the discipline "Foreign Language - English" are implemented.

The process of teaching students from the PRC is one of the most important pedagogical problems of international education for a number of reasons.

First, due to the specifics of the articulatory apparatus, Chinese students the formation of phonemic hearing and pronunciation skills when learning English is a long and time-consuming process. As experience at the process of teaching Chinese students shows, the most problematic sounds for pronunciation by Chinese students are such as [l], [ð], [θ], [ʒ], [ʤ], [ʧ].

To solve this problem tongue twisters at a foreign language (English) classes were used. At one of the educational sites (Magoosh TOEFL Blog, 2016), we found a selection of tongue twisters that minimize the difficulties of pronunciation of the above sounds for Chinese students. Quite a lot works have been published on the merits of using tongue twisters in a foreign language lesson, but we are focusing on the positive effect of this methodological tool when working with adult students.

Secondly, Chinese students are native speakers of the language that is fundamentally different from other world languages. Ethnic features are reflected in the Chinese methodology of teaching foreign languages that is teaching one type of speech activity - writing and the development of primarily figurative thinking and this is fundamentally different from the European one (Rementsov A.N., Ivanova E.V., 2011). It should be noted that such a feature of

teaching Chinese students as a non-communicative, rational-logical style of mastering English. Chinese students do not experience difficulties in performing various permutation exercises, but due to the specificity of the Chinese mentality, the communication process causes them a psychological barrier (Tan Ya, 2017).

In this regard, it is a big problem for many students to lead a spontaneous discussion in a foreign language on the proposed topic. As practice has shown, for most students it was difficult to start expressing their opinions during classroom second-language acquisition. The Chinese way of thinking can be called practical, alien to unnecessary complexity, they prefer simple intellectual constructions as the most accessible and rational for memorization, life and work, and they very rarely are guided by abstract principles, their logic is highly objectified. It leads to the conclusion that it is important to develop tasks that will be effective for increasing students' self-esteem and motivation to the process of learning a foreign language (Lelanie M. Basco , Sang-Ho Han, 2016).

These assumptions are confirmed by the comments of Chinese students, who were asked to express their attitude to group discussions, role-playing games and the ability to make presentations on various topics. For example, one of the students, S. K., wrote: "Presentation and self presentation are the most important skills I want to learn . . . and these skills [will] make me competitive when I come back to China," and, "The skills will be useful in interviews." Student L. commented: "I think we learn how to make eye contact, how to behave ourselves, the body language, and also how to deliver our ideas more clearly to the group mates, so I think it improves our skills a lot".

Taking into account, among other things, the psychological characteristics of Chinese students, who are generally less communicative and relaxed, attempts were made to introduce into the second foreign language teaching process various communicative games and prepare presentations to overcome the psychological barrier in the communication process and improve public speaking skills.

Some Western and domestic researchers (M.I. Dyachenko, 1976, A.S. Zapesotsky, 2002) characterize the essence of self-presentation as the need for self-improvement, in realizing one's potential, namely: self-esteem, self-organization, self-observation, self-actualization, and so on. Such researchers as L.M. Mitina(2002) and O.A. Tihomandritskaya (2001) consider self-presentation in the social context in which it is realized when, entering into a relationship as a communication partner, a person must create a positive impression of himself/herself in the eyes of the interlocutor.

To develop presentation and self-presentation skills during the process of learning English at the end of each week at classroom second-language acquisition, students assessed their achievements in the form of the game "My English "I". In the course of this assignment, students were asked to write down five qualities that they had, five qualities that they lacked and five qualities that they would like to have. The students were then asked to determine whether the qualities they identified when they spoke English were inherent or non-inherent. Students had to begin their statement with the phrase: "In English, I can ...". Students discussed their ideas in pairs, trying to prove convincingly that they had or did not have the indicated qualities and why they need to develop those qualities that they considered necessary.

To develop the ability to interact the exercises aimed at working in pairs and groups, as well as playing exercises were also used by teachers at English language classes:

 - "Me is not me". The goal of this task is to form the skills and abilities of making speech statements in the process of real or imagined communicative interaction;

 - "Self-governed interview". The goal is to develop the skills and abilities of speech planning and speech interaction with a partner;

- "More names". The goal of this exercise is to activate the skills and abilities of dialogic speech, question-answer interaction using statements such as assumptions, clarifications, inquiries and verification of information.

The non-communicative style of teaching students from the PRC should be explained by their peculiarity of upbringing and education, which differ significantly from Euro-centered traditions.

According to Roger R. Hok (2010), if for most domestic families, it is typical to focus on the values and achievements of industrial society, to form the importance of the "private self" in a child, manifestation of independence, self-knowledge and maximum of self-realization as an individuality (Roger R. Hawk, 2010).

In context of raising children in the People's Republic of China the main attention of parents is focused on the development of a "collective self" characterized by conformity concerning group norms, submission to elders in a group, stability and consistency of behavior at different times and in different situations. Thus, the main character traits of students from China include diligence, patience, endurance, perseverance, perseverance, composure, calm, endurance, adaptability, dedication and the ability to enjoy life (Krysko V.G., 2004 p. 215).

Looking at it the other way, the "collective self" creates barriers to self-improvement and self-development. Therefore, it is not by accident that in order to develop both the skills of joint activities, including those in the language being studied as well as the desire to develop independently in the foreign language activities Chinese students are mastering, we have chosen the project method.

The basis of the project method is the development of students' cognitive skills, the ability to independently acquire knowledge and navigate the information space, the development of critical and creative thinking. The teacher can direct the thought of students in the right direction for self-search, as a result, students should independently and in joint efforts solve the problem, applying the necessary knowledge, to get real and tangible results. Project activities are always focused on the independent activities of students - individual, steam, group, which they perform for a certain period of time. Joint project activity teaches them to work in a "team", serves as a kind of interaction model. Students learn to analyze the information received, they are free to choose the methods and activities to achieve their goals.

The process of organizing joint project activities involves not only the interaction of the project participants, but also contributes to the independent acquisition of knowledge and experience by students from direct personal communication with real life, developing their independence, autonomy, critical thinking and initiative. E.S. Polat considers that project technology provides not only steady assimilation of educational material, but also the development of independence (Polat E.S., 2010).

Work on the development of students' need for self-education activities was carried out both during class time activities and in extra-curricular time. In view of this, students in the classroom performed various exercises aimed at developing the skills of independent work with the text:

- exercises on highlighting the elements in the text that carry key information. Tasks of this type were carried out by assessing the importance of information in each paragraph sentence; finding key elements in the text, comparing and highlighting generalizing words and statements; identification of conclusions and theses; statement of the text or paragraph subject matter by answering the proposed questions;

- exercises aimed to predict the content of the book to be read. This type of the tasks included reconstructing of the text in random order using the data given and numbered paragraphs; defining the unity and logic of the paragraph data);

- exercises on the defining of the cognitive value of the read. The tasks used involved highlighting the new, previously unknown information; commenting on the part of the text that seemed most interesting; determining how the information given in the text can be used in further work.

At the final stage, students were asked to create a project "Successful marketing". Work on the project required students to independently study the additional literature proposed by the teacher. Working in a group, students together made a questionnaire to study consumer demand, a survey on which each student of the group conducted.

According to the results of the survey, which were discussed by all students of the group, a product was selected, and a program of a marketing company was developed to promote the product, which was presented in the form of a presentation.

All the projects were evaluated according to a plan that was compiled with the students at the preparatory stage:

I. Performance Evaluation Criteria

1) the completeness of the topic disclosure;

2) the disclosure of the project content during the presentation;

3) participation in the performance of each group member;

4) answers to questions.

II. Presentation Evaluation Criteria

- by content:

1) compliance with the stated theme and objectives;

2) logical connection between the phenomena under consideration and indicators;

3) the wording of the conclusion on the results of the work performed.

- on collective work:

1) the equivalence of participation of each group member in the work;

2) the coherence of the group, the level of relationships organization.

After the project work was completed, the students were asked to give their comments on the work done: "Did the project method help you learn how to find the information you need yourself?" These are comments of some students:

LK: "A modern specialist should be able to constantly educate himself/herself, that is, look for new information, replenish his/her so-called "knowledge base" if the specialist wants to be appreciated and listened to his/her opinion. That, in my opinion, is what the project method teaches";

L. M.: "I realized that independent work on searching the necessary information is, as it turned out, a very interesting, fascinating and useful process".

While working on projects development, the students also acquired the ability to model and plan their creative activities, self-presentation skills, when they presented their projects, and self-evaluations, when they wrote a report on the work done. Students had to go through situations of self-choice of their actions, make decisions and take responsibility for their execution before themselves and members of the project group.

Project Performance Report

1. Justify your choice of the problem.

2. What is the estimated value of your product?

3. Designate the goal and formulate the tasks aimed at achieving the goal.

4. Write down in chronological order the steps indicating the elapsed time, depending on the complexity of the work.

5. Indicate your successes and failures, explain their reasons.

6. Assess the effectiveness of group work.

7. Assess the received product in accordance with the evaluation criteria given by the teacher.

8. Indicate the causes of success and failure, ways to overcome them.

9. Name the new knowledge and skills gained in the work on the project. Where else can you apply them?

10. Point out the sources of new information. Which ones did you find yourself?

11. Have you achieved goals? If not, then why?

After completing work on each project, the teacher assessed the level of formation of students' ability to interact and the needs of students in self-education activities according to the plan presented below.

Plan for assessing the level of students' ability to interact development

Interaction		
Level I	Level II	Level III
- accepts and complies with the group discussion rules proposed by the teacher; - offers the group his/her ideas; - expresses his/her attitude to other students' ideas; - performs the assigned part of the work, understanding its value for the overall result.	negotiates the rules of group discussion; - is convinced that his/her idea is correctly understood by other members of the group; - asks questions aimed at understanding the ideas of other group members; - evaluates his/her contribution to the work of the group.	- expresses his/her expectations from the group discussion; - uses an effective group discussion procedure; -gives complete reasons for his/her statements; - subjects to reasoned criticism the ideas of other group members; - uses the ideas of other group members to develop his/her ideas; - evaluates the success of the project group work.

Plan for assessing the level of students' development needs in self-education activities

Self-education		
Level I	Level II	Level III
- follows the technology of working with a specific source of information proposed by the teacher; - structures the information found in the form and on the media proposed by the teacher; - expresses his/her attitude to the obtained information based on experience; - draws conclusions concerning the subject of the project, arguing them on the basis of the information received.	- uses paper and electronic catalogs; - systematizes and structures received information; - expresses its understanding of self-obtained data; - determines the importance of particular information for the project realization; - uses the information obtained to argue the ideas underlying the project.	- justifies his/her choice of sources of information on a particular issue, gives their characteristics; - develops criteria for the choice and primary systematization of information; - suggests and implements ways of testing new or contradictory information; - makes a reasoned conclusion on the basis of information obtained from the entire set of sources.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the following findings can be drawn:

1. Teachers who work with foreign students should pay attention to the students' socialization in another culture;

2. Teachers should have an idea about the socio-cultural characteristics of foreign students and consider these features in the educational process;

3. The choice of teaching methods and techniques will help foreign students to overcome language difficulties and have a positive impact on their adaptation in a foreign language environment, as well as increase their competitiveness in the labor market in their home country.

4. It is confirmed that it is necessary to continue using the above methods and techniques in the process of teaching Chinese students a foreign language (English) to confirm our findings and study best practices in supporting foreign students in other universities in Russia and abroad, as well as developing interaction with universities working under academic mobility programs for students in order to exchange experience and information on advanced methods of working with foreign students.

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