



A HYBRID PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

This article examines the combination of traditional and modern teaching methods in higher education to prepare students for professional communication. While lectures, seminars, and lab sessions provide essential knowledge, interactive approaches—such as situational exercises, role-playing, case studies, professional training, and project-based tasks—immerse students in realistic professional contexts. Emphasizing the “show – present to simulate” principle, educators must assess students’ readiness and apply preventive pedagogical strategies to support active participation and practical skill development.

Keywords: Higher education, German as a foreign language, professional communication, interactive learning, role-playing, case studies, project-based learning, competence-based education, communicative approach

Introduction

Modern university linguodidactics reflects broader educational trends shaped by globalization, comprehensive modernization, pedagogical innovations, and the adoption of interactive, technology-enhanced teaching methods. Beyond improving traditional classroom instruction, there is a growing need to organize effective extracurricular and independent student learning, emphasizing individualized pedagogical approaches. In this context, teaching “German as a foreign/non-native language” at technically-oriented economic universities requires rethinking goals, content, principles, and methods. The dominant spheres of communicative practice remain educational and professional, regardless of program or field [1, p.152].



Globalization and socio-economic factors continue to drive high demand for quality German language education. Integrating professional content into language instruction enables students to develop both linguistic and specialized skills, preparing them for international professional communication. Professionally-oriented German courses enhance students' career readiness, intercultural competence, and ability to participate in collaborative global projects. Digital learning tools—such as online platforms, virtual classrooms, and multimedia resources—support this approach by creating flexible, interactive, and context-rich environments, allowing students to simulate real-world professional situations and actively apply language skills. Specialization and focused training are essential for preparing foreign students as competent professionals capable of thriving in competitive environments. Optimizing the teaching of German for specific professional purposes, including functional grammar and terminological subsystems, remains highly relevant today [6].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Methodological restructuring in higher education is driven by shifts in the educational paradigm, while relying on classical linguodidactic models studied by researchers such as Mitrofanova, Schukin, and Balykhina. University educators face the challenge of developing effective principles and models for language education that combine traditional methods with optimized pedagogical approaches, adequately organizing classroom and extracurricular work for diverse groups of foreign students, and creating stable motivational frameworks [10, p. 24]. In economic disciplines, professional-oriented education relies on two main principles: communicative orientation of the educational process and a competence-based approach. Communicative orientation is the central trend in modern German-as-a-foreign-language methodology. Passov's principle of communicative learning and corresponding didactic model remain highly relevant, forming the foundation of communicative foreign language education. Zimnaya further emphasized the active nature of learning, highlighting speech activity and consideration of students' individual characteristics [11, p. 22].



ANALISES AND DISCUSSIONS

The communicative approach is an effective pedagogical technology that requires proper linguistic support and careful organization. Communication, as a core didactic concept, involves engaging students in real-life and professional tasks, promoting active use of language through oral and written exchange. Methodologists define communicative tasks as exercises that stimulate students' need for German-language activity, encourage speech thinking, and build intrinsic motivation. Key methodological principles include: practical learning objectives, speech-centered instruction, functional selection of language material, situational-thematic presentation, and syntactic-based vocabulary and morphology study [8]. Learning goals are shaped by student needs and socially relevant communication requirements. Systematic attention to communicative contexts ensures continuity in the learning process, making instruction motivating and relevant. Grammar is taught instrumentally to support professional and educational activities, emphasizing its functional use in authentic communication scenarios. Situational-grammatical organization projects real communication into learning objectives, enabling students to apply skills across educational and professional contexts. Situations with mobilizing effects enhance speech skill development [7, p. 12].

The competence-based approach forms the cornerstone of contemporary higher education regulations, providing a comprehensive framework for curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and assessment methods. Competence is broadly defined as a student's ability to effectively integrate and apply knowledge, practical skills, and problem-solving strategies in diverse theoretical and real-world contexts. Unlike traditional education models that primarily emphasize the accumulation of knowledge, competence-based education prioritizes the development of cognitive, practical, and interpersonal abilities, ensuring that graduates are not only knowledgeable but also capable of functioning effectively in complex professional and societal environments. This paradigm shift transforms the teaching and learning process by emphasizing student-centered education. Students are positioned as independent, proactive, and creative learners, responsible for actively constructing their understanding and developing critical thinking, analytical, and reflective skills. Teachers, in turn, assume the role of tutor-consultants, facilitators, and mentors, guiding the learning process, providing constructive feedback, and fostering an environment conducive to exploration,



innovation, and self-directed learning. Competence-based education is often operationalized through modular curricula, outcome-oriented assessment systems, interdisciplinary learning experiences, and experiential learning opportunities such as internships and project-based work. Such strategies aim to enhance students' employability, adaptability, and capacity for lifelong learning.

Globally, this approach aligns with frameworks such as the Bologna Process in Europe, which emphasizes learning outcomes, qualifications frameworks, and the comparability of higher education standards, as well as UNESCO guidelines advocating for education that meets societal needs and prepares graduates for active citizenship [3, p. 1713]. By bridging academic knowledge and practical application, competence-based education ensures that higher education institutions remain relevant, dynamic, and responsive to the evolving needs of students, employers, and society at large. It fosters a generation of graduates equipped not only with expertise in their respective fields but also with the critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities essential for navigating the challenges of the 21st century [4, p. 658].

CONCLUSION

Traditional teaching methods, including lectures, seminars, and laboratory sessions, are increasingly combined with interactive classroom and extracurricular activities that develop professional communication skills. Techniques such as situational exercises, role-playing, case studies, professional trainings, and project-based learning simulate authentic professional scenarios, fostering active engagement. The “show – present to simulate” principle is particularly effective compared to passive learning [2, p. 611]. Educators teaching German as a foreign language must assess student readiness and implement preventive pedagogical strategies to ensure successful adaptation to professional communication contexts.

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