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## INFLUENCE OF SELF-EDUCATION ON THE FORMATION OF STRATEGIC COMPETEN-CES OF STUDENTS OF NON-LINGUISTIC SPECIALTIES IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING ENGLISH

## INFLUENCIA DE LA AUTOEDUCACIÓN EN LA FORMACIÓN DE COMPETENCIAS ESTRATÉGICAS DE ESTUDIANTES DE ESPECIALIDADES NO LINGÜÍSTICAS EN EL PROCESO DE APRENDIZAJE DE INGLÉS

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## ABSTRACT

The article aims to determine the possibilities of self-education in the formation of strategic competences in professional verbal communication in English among students of non-linguistic specialties. To attain this end, the authors use methods of theoretical generalization, structural and logical analysis, and synthesis. As a result, they have determined educational and communication strategies as components of strategic competences that can be used to develop students' skills in professional verbal communication in English, as well as the main forms of extracurricular activities in the formation of strategic competences of students of non-linguistic specialties in the process of learning English. The article concludes that various forms of extracurricular activities (mass, group, individual) create conditions for the formation of strategic competences in professional verbal communication in English among students of non-linguistic specialties in the unity of educational and communicative components.

## Keywords:

English, verbal communication, self-education, strategic competence.

## RESUMEN

El artículo tiene como objetivo determinar las posibilidades de la autoeducación en la formación de competencias estratégicas en comunicación verbal profesional en inglés entre estudiantes de especialidades no lingüísticas. Para lograr este fin, los autores utilizan métodos de generalización teórica, análisis estructural y lógico y

síntesis. Como resultado, se han determinado las estrategias educativas y comunicativas como componentes de las competencias estratégicas que pueden ser utilizadas para desarrollar las habilidades de los estudiantes en la comunicación verbal profesional en inglés, así como las principales formas de actividades extracurriculares en la formación de competencias estratégicas de los estudiantes de Especialidades no lingüísticas en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés. El artículo concluye que diversas formas de actividades extracurriculares (masivas, grupales, individuales) crean las condiciones para la formación de competencias estratégicas en comunicación verbal profesional en inglés entre estudiantes de especialidades no lingüísticas en la unidad de componentes educativos y comunicativos.

Palabras clave:

Inglés, comunicación verbal, autoeducación, competencia estratégica.

## INTRODUCTION

Modern conditions of professional activity make specialists in various industries speak English, which provides access to the latest information and helps to communicate with foreign colleagues, present certain services and products in international markets, discuss important issues, etc. Thus, it is important to achieve adequate English language training for students in higher educational institutions, particularly their mastery of professional verbal communication in English. The analysis of educational programs presented on the websites of Russian universities indicates that a limited number of academic hours are allocated to studying English. Accordingly, a certain contradiction arises between the requirements for the development of professional English language competence in students and the conditions under which such training occurs.

All of the above highlights the need to select the optimal content of training with due regard to the specifics of further professional activity and typical situations of professional verbal English communication in which students will have to participate in the future.

To effectively communicate with foreign colleagues, specialists need to master several competences, including strategic competences. The issue of developing this competence is especially relevant in the context of an insufficient number of academic hours for studying English in Russian universities. This necessitates the need to optimize the learning process, for example, through self-education.

Self-studying a foreign language in non-linguistic universities is initiated by students and carried out according to their own curriculum based on independently selected content, using methods and means that are most appropriate for personal abilities, which involves the widespread use of acquired language knowledge and speech skills. The teacher's activity in the process of self-education is evaluative and stimulating. However, self-education depends on the learning process and complements it, i.e., it is not completely independent.

In pedagogical science, self-education is regarded as a purposeful, independent, cognitive, and practice-oriented activity of students aimed to expand existing knowledge and competences, obtain new knowledge, and form modern experience and life-long self-improvement (Danilova & Kondrateva, 2019), the basis for further self-development and self-realization (Sokolova & Korneva, 2020).

According to Pospelova (2017), students learn to analyze, generalize, and prove facts by independently mastering the educational material. By improving individual mental operations, they improve the culture of mental activity as a whole. Therefore, the main task of self-education is to develop the ability not only to think independently but also to act in non-standard situations.

An increasing number of scholars address the issue of developing strategic competences as an important component of professional foreign language competences. In particular, the issue of developing strategic competences at the initial stage of learning a foreign language has been studied (Tsvetkova, 2012); the issues of using strategic competences in the process of mastering verbal communication have been explored (Borodina et al., 2023); a model for the formation of strategic competences in the process of learning a foreign language at a non-linguistic university has been developed (Grishina et al., 2018).

Strategic competences as a component of professional foreign language competences involve students mastering educational and communicative strategies (Gladysheva, 2022).

Scholars define educational strategies as follows (Table 1).

Table 1. Approaches to the interpretation of the concept of educational strategies.

| Source | Definition |
|---|---|
| Koroznikova (2016) | Methods to solve a problem or complete a task, actions to achieve a certain goal, and planned steps to control and use certain information |
| Zaripova et al. (2023) | Operations used by students to master, store, memorize, recall, and use information |

| | |
|---|---|
| Pakhmutova et al. (2017) | Special actions of students aimed to make learning easier, faster, more interesting, more independent, effective, and adaptive to new situations |
| Shubkina (2012) | Complex, dynamic thoughts and actions, consciously chosen by students in certain situations to regulate their own cognitive, emotional, and social aspects for a) performing speech tasks; b) improving language use; c) mastering a language |

These definitions lead to the conclusion that educational strategies combine cognitive, emotional, social, and activity-based aspects and are used flexibly, creatively, and comprehensively with due regard to the individual characteristics of language learners and the context.

Despite various classifications of educational strategies (Kryucheva & Tolstoukhova, 2023), their analysis generally indicates the advisability of distinguishing between two main groups: learning strategies aimed at language acquisition and strategies focused on organizing the learning process.

The first group includes direct strategies: memorization aimed at remembering and storing information in long-term memory; cognitive strategies aimed at the deep processing of educational materials; compensatory strategies aimed at compensating for missing knowledge and skills. The second group comprises indirect strategies (metacognitive, social, and affective ensuring the creation of positive motivation and success) (Kartseva & Tavberidze, 2018). Considering the results of modern research, it is appropriate to include strategies for using a foreign language in the first group. In turn, scholars define communication strategies as follows (Table 2).

Table 2. Approaches to the interpretation of the concept of communication strategies.

| Source | Definition |
|---|---|
| Rimondi (2019) | Means used to express and convey a message to others |
| Timofeeva (2011) | Set of speech acts produced by a communication participant, which determines their speech behavior, models methods to achieve goals, and predicts possible reactions of the recipient |
| Zueva et al. (2022) | Set of stage-by-stage mental-speech actions aimed at modeling one's speech behavior in foreign language communication to achieve communication goals |

These definitions assume a conscious selection of communication strategies. However, as the study results indicate, this choice is not always conscious (Tolmachev et al., 2022).

Considering the above-mentioned interpretation and analysis of modern literature, we believe that communication strategies are a set of mental and speech actions of the communicant, which consciously or subconsciously (with due regard to a communication situation and communication goals, predicting the communication process and its results) aim to model one's speech.

Communication strategies are implemented in communication tactics, interpreted as specific methods of implementing an intentional-strategic communication program subject to the overall communication strategy. To teach students of non-linguistic specialties, it is important to analyze professional discourse, determine typical communication situations, and, accordingly, develop communication strategies and tactics that future specialists will use in verbal communication (Sagitova et al., 2017).

Thus, we regard strategic competences in professional verbal communication in English as the speaker's ability to effectively use educational strategies to master the skills of professional verbal communication in English and further improve them, as well as communication strategies for modeling effective intercultural communication with due regard to the speaker's intentions.

Thus, the article aims to determine the possibilities of self-education in the formation of strategic competences in professional verbal communication in English among students of non-linguistic specialties in the unity of educational and communication components.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Due to the novelty of the phenomenon under study and the exploratory nature of the objective, we opted for a qualitative approach to the study.

At the first stage of the research, we selected scientific sources using the keywords "strategic competence", "foreign language learning", and "self-education" published no more than 15 years ago.

At the second stage, we tried to answer the following research questions based on the analysis of scientific literature:

1. What educational strategies can be used to develop students' professional verbal communication skills in English?

2. What communication strategies can be used to develop students' skills in professional verbal communication in English?

3. What are the main forms of extracurricular self-educational activities in the formation of strategic competences of students of non-linguistic specialties in the process of learning English?

To achieve the objective set in the study, we used the following theoretical methods:

- Theoretical generalization to determine educational and communication strategies as components of strategic competences and the main forms of extracurricular self-educational activities for students of non-linguistic specialties in the process of learning English;

- Structural and logical analysis in establishing the relationship between various forms of self-educational activity and the formation of educational and communication components of strategic competences.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of theoretical generalization show that to develop students' skills in professional verbal communication in English, it is advisable to purposefully train students to use the following educational strategies, including several corresponding tactics (Table 3).

Table 3. Educational strategies for developing students' skills in professional verbal communication in English.

| Strategies | | Tactics |
|---|---|---|
| Strategies for learning a foreign language | Memorization | Activation of the previously studied material, establishing a connection between new and previously studied information, association, rhyming, repetition, visualization, re-writing of a word, use of imagination, semantic maps, grouping, correlating a new term with the corresponding term in the native language |
| | Cognitive strategies | Analysis, generalization, visualization, identification of semantic milestones and keywords, analysis of knowledge, correlation of acquired knowledge with the previous knowledge, activation of speech patterns |
| | Strategies for professional verbal communication in English | Probabilistic prediction of information content and communication context; identification of linguistic and extralinguistic information obtained in the process of communication; forecasting the process of communicative interaction; search for contextual and intralingual supports; activation of internal resources; considering the audience when choosing discourse structures; clarification of communicative intention; activation of meaningful substitutions; use of speech clichés; experimentation with language units; monitoring the success of communication by analyzing gestures, facial expressions, actions of the listener; activation of socio-cultural and linguistic knowledge |
| | Compensatory strategies | Ignoring unfamiliar words in the speech of the interlocutor; simplification; paraphrasing; explanation; use of facial expressions and gestures |
| Training organization strategies | Metacognitive strategies | Planning one's actions, setting goals, taking notes, analyzing, changing teaching strategies (if necessary), looking for independent practice, considering errors |
| | Affective strategies | Choosing strategies in accordance with individual learning style, self-reward for positive results, choosing situations and tasks in accordance with one's interests |
| | Social strategies | Completing tasks, discussing information with others, looking for opportunities to communicate with native speakers |

Using the results of theoretical generalization, we identified the following communication strategies and the corresponding tactics (Table 4).

Table 4. Communication strategies for developing students' skills in professional verbal communication in English.

| Strategies | Tactics |
|---|---|
| Information | Transmitting or receiving the necessary information |
| Evaluative and influential | Influencing the interlocutor, conducting an emotional assessment, creating a certain atmosphere, corresponding associations and comparisons |
| Emotional and influential | Expressing the speaker's emotional state |
| Regulative and incentive | Managing the behavior of partners, persuading and motivating them to action |
| Conventional | Establishing, maintaining, and completing communication, producing a speech utterance |

After analyzing the relevant methodological literature, we determined the main forms of extracurricular self-educational activities of students of non-linguistic specialties in the process of learning English (Table 5).

Table 5. The main forms of extracurricular self-educational activities.

| Forms | Content |
|---|---|
| Mass | Holding conferences, round-table discussions, subject weeks (professional English language weeks), quizzes, competitions (for example, competition for the best presentation during a conference, etc.), debates |
| Group | Subject-related, research clubs, interest clubs, linguistic workshops, projects |
| Individual | Preparing reports, abstracts, reviews, speeches, and projects with the help of online services |

The conducted structural and logical analysis allows us to determine the possibilities of using some form of self-educational activity in the formation of educational and communication components of the strategic competence of students of non-linguistic specialties in the process of learning English (Table 6).

Table 6. Relationship between different forms of self-educational activity and the formation of educational and communication components of strategic competences.

| Forms of self-educational activity | Strategies | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Educational strategies | | Communication strategies |
| | Strategies for learning a foreign language | Training organization strategies | |
| Mass | Strategies for professional verbal communication in English, compensatory strategies | Social | Information, evaluative and influential, emotional and influential, regulative and incentive, conventional |
| Group | | | |
| Individual | Memorization, cognitive | Metacognitive, affective | Information |

On the one hand, extracurricular activities stimulate the activity and cognitive interest of students. On the other hand, they generate interest in self-education. The analysis of the corresponding scientific literature demonstrated that there are different forms of extracurricular activities: mass, group, or individual (Table 5).

Mass extracurricular activities contribute to the development of students' cognitive interest and internal need for self-education and self-development. Mass forms include holding conferences, round-table discussions, subject weeks (professional English language weeks), quizzes, competitions (competition for the best presentation at a conference, etc.), and debates. They allow the participation of an unlimited number of students to develop their skills and abilities to independently acquire knowledge based on the study of professional, reference, and educational literature, as well as the generalization and systematization of knowledge in a professional foreign language. In the process of preparing for mass extra-curricular activities, students are offered topics for independent study and recommended literature (Sokolova & Korneva, 2020).

Group classes include subject-related research and interest clubs. In a non-linguistic university, a professionally oriented club or linguistic workshop can become an effective form of extracurricular activity. According to psychological and pedagogical practice, the best number of participants is 10-12 students (Pospelova, 2017). A growing interest in self-education is facilitated by the involvement of students in translating materials for the university website, preparing their own reports and articles in a foreign language, and organizing online seminars or conferences for students of the same specialty from other, including foreign, universities.

Studying a foreign language in a group aims to develop the student's personality, values related to future professional activities, and strategic competences, which will ensure professional interpersonal and intercultural interaction in a foreign language.

Since little time is devoted to communicative exercises in practical classes, students attending special groups have the opportunity to develop language skills both when working with professional texts and when discussing individual topics. To achieve the professional orientation of oral speech, real-life speech situations are modeled. Thematically, oral speech is carried out in various educational situations.

An individual form of self-education involves the preparation of reports, abstracts, reviews, and speeches. This form is of great importance not only for expanding students' knowledge and identifying individual creative abilities, professional orientations, and inclinations but also for developing strategic competences.

An important type of self-educational activity for students is projects, including preparing and defending a report (presentation). The main principle of the project methodology is the use of active spoken language, which requires proficiency in language skills. The project approach helps students apply various communication strategies: develop public language skills, respond to questions, and engage in discussion. Students learn to work with professional literature in a foreign language, search for necessary information on the Internet, and summarize it. The development of projects on professional topics and their presentation allows students to simulate communication in a professional community.

Online services are an effective form of self-education. The advantage of Internet and multimedia technologies is the high motivation of students for self-education in the context of learning a foreign language, individualization of the learning process, purposefulness and wide operating limits, and the formation of motivation for self-education (Sokolova & Korneva, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020).

While organizing extracurricular work with students, teachers should be aware that students want to participate in extracurricular activities. Only a student involved in productive and socially and personally significant work improves their qualities and acquires new knowledge and skills in organizing and carrying out self-educational activities.

To attract students to extracurricular self-educational activities in a foreign language, teachers use psychological persuasion techniques. During personal conversations, teachers should tactfully (without any pressure) offer students, for example, to become a member of a scientific group, provide them with clear and meaningful information about further scientific and educational activities, and help them comprehend the proposal. The mental infection technique is recommended to be used when students are emotional or undecided. The teacher's emotional language and style of behavior can captivate students and encourage them to deepen their knowledge of a professional foreign language. However, only a teacher who enjoys authority and trust can convince a student to engage in extracurricular self-educational activities. It is advisable to use persuasion as a method of influencing a student when the student communicates with the teacher on a regular basis and knows the latter as a professional. It is also possible to attract students to self-education through indirect influence on them, for example, through friends who have already joined a group club (Danilova & Kondrateva, 2019).

Scholars offer to introduce and develop the skills of using educational and communication strategies during self-educational activities of students with due regard to 1) the specifics of further professional activity; 2) typical communication situations; 3) learning goals (Gadzaova et al., 2023). Thus, it is necessary to ensure that students of non-linguistic specialties master educational and communication strategies that will contribute to 1) improving the level of English language proficiency; 2) achieving a communication goal in the process of professional communication (Kryucheva & Tolstoukhova, 2023).

Since a foreign language is studied for two or three years in a non-linguistic university, approximately three years pass between the study of a foreign language and its practical use in professional activities. If during this time students do not independently improve their language skills and do not use it in professional communication, the knowledge acquired in foreign language classes will become passive. Extracurricular classes in a foreign language are a unique opportunity to continue learning the language and improve its professional use after completing the classroom study of the discipline.

## CONCLUSIONS

The self-education of students of non-linguistic specialties in the process of learning English includes the independent study of a foreign language and mastering the skills of using a foreign language for their professional growth. In the context of reduced classroom hours, the self-education of students allows them to increase the effectiveness of extracurricular learning.

Various forms of extracurricular activities (mass, group, or individual) create the conditions for the formation of strategic competences in professional verbal communication in English among students of non-linguistic specialties in the unity of educational and communication components. Accordingly, the study highlights the educational and communication strategies necessary for the development of students' skills in professional verbal communication in the English language.

Thus, the formation of strategic competences in professional verbal communication in English through self-education should include the systematic and purposeful independent mastery of educational and communication strategies depending on a particular communication situation, individual educational style, motivation for learning English, and educational and speech experience of future specialists.

The prospects for further research can be the development and testing of a methodology for self-educational activities aimed at the formation of strategic competences in professional verbal communication in English for future specialists in various fields.

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