THEORETICAL BASIS FOR LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT (PROGRAMS FOR CORPORATE TRAINING IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH LINGUISTIC CENTRE OF MESI'S TVER BRANCH - NILC)

Tatyana Logutenkova, *Doctor of Philology, Prof.*
Alina Sokolova, *Candidate of Philology, Docent*
Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Informatics,
Tver Branch, The Russian Federation

Abstract

Scientific Research Linguistic Centre (NILC) is a department of Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Informatics (MESI), Tver Branch. Being established as a multifunctional linguistic centre NILC focuses on providing various services from teaching languages and developing educational programs to translation.

NILC's practical activity is based on scientific research in the field of effective methods of teaching, learning tools, forms and models.

Despite a number of different interpretations of language management, from the choice of language for a certain communication be a bilingual or multilingual NILC has offered a new understanding of this term which is schematically represented as

Linguistic school →an employee of a linguistic school →an employee of an enterprise → activity of an enterprise

NICL implements its language management on the theoretical basis of its previous research – anthropocentric hierarchical model of teaching a foreign language, visualization of lingual signs, prospective interactivity and various modes of tutor's support.

An important stage in corporate education is developing profiles of competence in a foreign language for various groups of employees. The profile is constructed in compliance with the requirements for the knowledge of a foreign language which are necessary to meet for certain positions in an enterprise or company. Academic plans and learning content of the courses of foreign languages are carried out accordingly.

The keys elements for effective language management are meeting the requirements for the positions within the company which is achieved through extensive preparation work and flexibility in carrying out programs for corporate education.

Keywords: Language management, corporate training, business communication, learning foreign languages, international business

Introduction

Scientific Research Linguistic Centre (NILC) is a department of Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics and Informatics (MESI), Tver Branch. MESI was founded in 1932 and is now one of the leading universities in the Russian Federation both as a traditional higher educational institution and a modern university implementing e-learning. MESI's quality management system was certified according to ISO 9001:2008. In 2012 implementation of e-learning in MESI was qualified for the E-xcellence label and is now an Associate in Quality.4

NILC's activity is based on MESI's expertise in IT, distance, e-learning and language e-learning in particular.

Being established as a multifunctional linguistic centre NILC focuses on

• making research in various fields of linguistics, linguodidactics and language e-learning;

• developing language management projects;

• developing learning materials and tools for language e-learning;

• providing interpretation services;

• teaching English, German, French and Spanish of all levels of competence to various groups of learners;

• teaching Russian to foreign students through face-to-face and distance e-learning technologies;

• testing and training language skills through computer-based technologies.

NILC's practical activity is based on scientific research in the field of effective methods of teaching, learning tools, forms and models. Though NILC was founded in October, 2012, its activity is based on the experience acquired by our team since 1997 in teaching languages to the students of Tver State University and MESI's Tver Branch as well as to the employees of a number of enterprises in Tver Region.

One of the most important fields of NILC's activity is corporate studies, including development of educational programs and their implementation. The term language management is not new, as it is used by linguists, managers, teachers and translators. This term has become popular and widespread and, as a consequence, its meaning turns out to be vague and has many interpretations.

What is Language Management

Any activity becomes successful, if it is implemented on a solid basis of scientific research leading to the deep penetration into the essence of aims, tasks, educational content and methods of learning and teaching. Teaching a foreign language can hardly be an exception. With the very first steps we came to the conclusion that linguodidactics should be connected and based on reliable research in the field of learning Our first attempts to determine the principles and parameters of teaching a foreign language were formulated within the framework of *anthropocentric hierarchical model of teaching foreign languages* to students of non-linguistic departments and specialists with a degree in any science except linguistics[2]. Linguists are excluded because they should be taught differently from those people for whom language is not a major specialization but an essential means for professional growth and promotion.

The model is called anthropocentric because teaching is focused primarily on a student's personality. Student's interests, preferences and needs dictate the content of any course of a foreign language. The model is hierarchical because in the process of learning a foreign language we distinguish between various communicative spheres to participate in which people usually would like to learn a foreign language. In fact, applying the anthropocentric hierarchical model of teaching foreign languages we in fact try to rationally limit the number of spheres of communication in which a foreign language will be used, as lexis of any language is innumerable and learning a language can be a lifetime. Even in our native language there may be communicative spheres which are beyond our professional and everyday needs and interests. Hence, assessing the number of communicative spheres and trying to limit this number, we primarily find out why our students would like to learn a foreign language.

Our approach looks as simple as it seems to be banal; it is based on the common sense. Unfortunately, the common sense does not always win. Compare, for example, far

from being clear and applicable in practice the descriptions of competence and expertise in foreign language in The Federal State Educational Standards having been introduced since 2010-2011:

• General Cultural Competence 11 – to know one of foreign language as a means of communication within the framework of established special terminology of professional international communication (The Federal State Educational Standard for Higher Professional Education - 081100.62 State and Municipal Management);

• General Cultural Competence 14 – to know one of foreign languages providing effective professional activity (The Federal State Educational Standard for Higher Professional Education - 080200.62 Management);

• General Cultural Competence 14 – to know one of foreign languages on the level no less than colloquial (The Federal State Educational Standard for Higher Professional Education - 080100.62 Economics), etc.

It is worth mentioning that our approach to limiting the spheres of communication differs from The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment1, abbreviated as CEFR, a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe. It was put together by the Council of Europe as the main part of the project "Language Learning for European Citizenship" between 1989 and 1996 and since 2001 CEFR is used for national systems of assessing language competence. The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. Within the CEFR learners' knowledge and skills are divided into three main categories, which in their turn are split into six levels of competence. For each level of competence there are descriptions of what learners should know or is able to do, in terms of reading, speaking, understanding, communicating, writing, etc. Standardization which has become the basis for the CEFR, besides considerable simplification (and by the way not always justified) of lexis of a foreign language to be learnt, has led to underestimation (if not total forgetting) the needs and interests of a learner as a personality, but not an averaged learner without any social background and even without an age differences.

Taking into account the needs, interests and preferences of a learner we have to state there can hardly be any universal textbooks, readymade educational materials suitable for any group of learners. We have come to the conclusion that it is necessary to compile or develop educational content on the basis of learner's needs. Consequently, our learning materials turn out to be a whole library of lesson's elements or parts, each of which is aimed at transporting specific knowledge and developing specific language skills and competences. A vast number of these elements allow us to respond flexibly to the needs of our learners and quickly compile and create textbooks, learning tools and instruments, assignments, etc. Since 2012 we started to use CourseLab 2.4, CourseLab 2.7, providing a high level of *visualization of a lingual sign*[3]. Our achievements in this field based on the research in the means of visualization open perspectives in distance teaching languages which is implemented through the Virtual Campus LMS (Learning Management System) and AdobeConnect.

Another step in the development of our methods of teaching has become MESI's participation in the ELBEP (Elimination of Language Barriers in European Prisons through Distance and E-Learning Technologies) Project in 2008-2009 within the framework of the European Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). This project was initiated and coordinated by Anadolu University (Turkey). All member teams (apart from above mentioned they are EADTU, EDEN, Linguapolis (Belgium), Innowacja Foundation (Poland), Hellenic Open University (Greece), ESTA Bildungswerk E.V.– Training Provider (Germany) and

Consultant: Dr. Wolfram Laaser (Fern University - Germany) have got vast experience in distance and e-learning, creation of e-courses. The project was aimed at producing electronic portals of Turkish, Polish, Greek, Spanish and Russian languages for a specific target group – the prison staff. Knowing at least an elementary course of the language native to a prisoner should help a prison staff member to establish friendly and cooperative relationships with prisoners and hence promote the socialization of the latter afterwards.

Our team of developers has created an e-portal of the Russian language for beginners. The portal development started from a scratch. The key notions forming the theoretical basis for the language portal creation are interactivity and visualization. Starting to develop the e-course of Russian we put forward an approach which we call ***prospective interactivity***[5]. This approach is aimed at creating an e-learning environment offering every possible means to help students in the process of learning Russian in case they will have either questions or problems. To reach this purpose there has been also created an information portal, a Homepage of MESI, containing information data. The essence of the approach is to prepare help and instructions how to solve future problems and questions which we have to foresee taking the point of view of our future students. The pilot application of the project in 2009 (there 49 learners from Germany, Belgium and Greece) has proved our approach to be successful as students turn to the information portal to find answers to quite a number of questions.

The ELBEP Project also allowed us to test various modes of tutor's support – both synchronic and a-synchronic, as well as various combinations of languages for communication between a tutor and learners,[6] among which the most effective turned out to be the communication in two languages, when each participant of communication spoke the language which was foreign for him/her but native for the other participant. As applied to The ELBEP Project this meant that a learner formulated questions and requests in Russian, while a tutor answered in the language which was native for the learner.

The introduction of the notion of ***language management*** for the arrangement of corporate studies is a natural proceeding of NILC's research in the field of effective teaching and learning foreign languages.

As we have already mentioned above language management is treated differently. Thus, for example, Bernard Spolsky[7] applies this term to characterize language policy both of a state as a whole, and of an individual. In fact he deals with the choice of language for a definite sphere of communication. If you know several languages, you manage these languages while choosing this or that language to communicate with under certain circumstances or in a definite situation of communication. This interpretation of the term is closely connected with the notion of multilinguism[8].

Most often we use a non-native or foreign language in the professional sphere of communication. Hence, bilinguism or multilinguism, and language management, as a rule, are connected or refer to the choice of a profession, job or work place.

Translation agencies treat language management as provision of possibilities to translate from one language to another. And they necessarily state, that their activity is effective because of knowledge they have about that sphere of production, business, science, etc., in which the translation is made (for example, Language Management. Inc, a company offering translation services to various clients[8]). Some companies go even further than that providing outsource staff if there it is necessary to know a foreign language for implementing business projects. An example of such an activity is ALM - Asset Language Management Company[9]. Schematically this activity of a linguistic school or a translation agency is described as follows:

Linguistic school →an employee of a linguistic school → activity of an enterprise

In any case the interpretation of language management includes the unity of linguistic and business activities. The consequence of this unity is quite obvious: to be effective and successful a teacher of language should not only know a language and how to teach it to learners, but he/she should also have vast knowledge in a definite sphere of business. This understanding has become the basis for our interpretation of language management. Schematically NILC's activity in the field of corporate education is described as follows:
Linguistic school →an employee of a linguistic school →
an employee of an enterprise → activity of an enterprise

In this scheme the interaction denoted as an employee of a linguistic school → employee of an enterprise shows the revealing of the needs of a learner (a group of learners) and carrying out programs of foreign languages taking into account these needs.

An important stage in developing the programs of corporate education has proved to be profiles of competence in a foreign language for various groups of employees. The profile is constructed in compliance with the requirements for the knowledge of a foreign language which are necessary to meet for certain positions in an enterprise or company. Academic plans and learning content of the courses of foreign languages are carried out accordingly.

The profile of foreign language competences includes a set of skills characterizing the levels of knowledge. They are reading, audition, writing and communication skills. The detailed description of all skills depends of the requirements existed for a certain group of employees. The groups are distinguished by the company itself, depending on its mission, connections with international partners, etc. Sometimes such groups are used as a source of candidates for the upper positions in the company. Thus, for example, there are four groups of employees in Jabil, Ltd. (Russia), they are: Top Managers (the inside abbreviation for it is VIP), Golden Reserve, Reserve and Potentials. These groups are the basis for the promotion plan developed by the Human Resource Department of Jabil, Ltd. (Russia). This company acts as a subsidiary of a US Jabil, Corp., hence the knowledge of English is of great importance for the successful and effective work of its employees. NILC carried out four profiles of English language competence for the employees of Jabil, Ltd.(Russia):

- Profile 0 - Breakthrough or beginner
- Profile1 – Basic user
- Profile 2 - Independent user
- Profile 3 - Proficient User.

Further you see an example of a 0 Profile.

✓ *Apprehension of speech by listening (audition):*
a)	in everyday communication: understanding of simple questions (what your name is, where you live, about your family, etc.), short statements and announcements.
b)	in business communication: understanding common phrases for office communication (greetings, questions about presence/absence of boss/colleague, etc.)
c)	in professional communication: understanding professional terminology in the flow of speech.

✓ *Speaking (prepared speech):*
a)	in everyday communication: Умеет представиться, рассказать о себе, задать вопросы об имени, месте проживания, профессии собеседника
b)	in business communication: using the simplest phrases of office communication (to greet, to offer coffee/tea, etc.)
c)	in professional communication: using professional terms and non-verbal means of communication (gestures, face language, etc.)

✓ *Speaking (spontaneous speech production):*
a)	in everyday communication: often non-verbal response to the simplest questions
b)	in business communication: no

c)   in professional communication: no
✓   *Writing:*
a)   in everyday communication: ability to write a simple social letter (congratulation with somebody's birthday, with a festival, etc.)
b)   in business communication: no
c)   in professional communication: no
✓   *Reading:*
a)   in everyday communication: reading adapted texts using a dictionary
b)   in business communication: reading with the help of dictionary some business papers for extracting the most general information; reading business papers without a dictionary and understanding the most general information (numbers, dates, proper nouns, etc.)
c)   in professional communication: with the help of a dictionary reading technical (and other professional) documents, without a dictionary extracting information understanding international words.

Language Management and Corporate Training
        Profile of the learner is the key element in the development of educational programs in NILC. The learner can be a private person or an employee of the company which cooperates with NILC. In this case, when developing a curriculum the requirements of the enterprise are taken into account as well.
        A type of these of programs based on the profile of the learner and developed taking into account the needs of the enterprise is a training of business skills. It is most effective when learning a foreign language of business and professional communication.
        Such trainings are designed to develop practical communication skills in a particular situation.
        Currently, there is a demand for such short-term programs. This demand is dictated by the following factors. First, nowadays a lot of foreign companies emerge on the Russian market. They have their affiliates in Russia but the main corporate communication language is English or German. So all employees have to study a foreign language and be able to communicate with foreign colleagues in it.
        Second, because of the relatively recent entry of foreign companies in the Russian market, Russian managers lack the expertise of business communication with international partners. Third, the programs of language teaching in secondary school or higher educational institutions don't include any training of business skills.
        Training programs can be focused on the development of specific business skills - writing a business letter, negotiation, making presentations, conducting telephone and video conferencing, etc.
        For example, NILC developed and successfully tested a training program «Effective presentation in English." Such training is designed for those who want to learn and develop presentation skills in a foreign language. During the training learners
•   get acquainted with the language of presentation (how to present yourself and your information like a professional, to make comments during the presentation, how to conduct Q&A sessions, to make conclusions),
•   find out how to make a perfect presentation,
•   learn to apply the methods of focusing attention of the audience on the important aspects of the presentation
•   prepare their own presentations and get the comments of experienced trainers.
Training is a kind of lecture in a foreign language, accompanied by the presentation in Power Point. Learners are also offered short videos on the subject of the training for viewing and further discussion.

The information obtained is reinforced by specially prepared exercises and role-playing games. For training a trainer develops handouts, which contain key information of the training, exercises and a list of linguistic units used in the given communicative situation.

During the training learners practice all language skills: speaking, listening, writing, reading. However, the main emphasis is placed on the development of the specific skill which is the most essential for the training. Thus, for the training "E-mail writing" this skill is writing, for the training "Conference Call» naturally - listening and speaking.

The business skills mentioned above are common to most businesses and organizations. We can see only some changes in the degree of skill refinement and language units that are used in different fields of communication depending on the nature of business. All these changes are based on the profile of a particular learner and the requirements of an enterprise. The list of the business skills can be extended taking into account the needs of the organization.

Business skills can also be connected with the requirements of different divisions in the company. For instance,

- Finance
- Logistics
- Participation in international exhibitions and presentations (for marketing department)

Business skills training can be effectively complemented by language simulators. A Language simulator is an interactive model of the language situation which by its own internal conditions is as close as possible to the real communication.

Language Simulation plays an educational role: participants obtain relevant skills and competencies. Interactivity of simulations provide opportunities to develop learners' skills and competence of the primary communication: building strategies, solving tactical and operational tasks - that is, to learn virtually how to do all the things that can be learned only in practice.

In the language simulation scenario develops in an artificially-created environment and participants are encouraged to make an individual reasoned decision about how to act, and most importantly, how to express their needs verbally in a particular situation.
Language simulations have several advantages:

- Visualization - learners master new lexical and grammatical patterns being aware of their actual use in practice;
- Automatism - the careful and profound training of these lexical and grammatical patterns;
- The ability to perform a variety of communicative roles.

An example of language simulations in NILC is the use of role-playing games during the training "Conference Cal" In one of the versions, the learners receive instruction cards with problems that may arise during the video conference, and learners are invited to respond to a given situation.

A problem role-play card: The video has some problem

Possible answers: "You're (very/ rather) jerky." "I can't see people at the edge of the room." "Your image has frozen." "The image has disappeared." "The image and sound are out of synch."

In the other variant, learners are given cards with possible questions or requests of interlocutors and learners have to select various options of answers or possible reactions to these issues.

A question or request: "Please have a look at the one with the heading in bold."

Suggested answers for students to choose: "There seem to be two in bold. Do you mean the top one?" "Yes, got it. Please go ahead." "Not yet. Just give me a moment." "I'm not sure that's the problem. Can you try turning up the volume?"

Conclusion

Scientific Research Linguistic Centre of MESI's Tver Branch (NILC) implements its language management on the theoretical basis of its previous research and developments – anthropocentric hierarchical model of teaching a foreign language, visualization of lingual signs, prospective interactivity and various modes of tutor's support. The keys elements for effective language management are meeting the requirements for the positions within the company which is achieved through extensive preparation work and flexibility in carrying out programs for corporate education.

References:

Sokolova A.O., Sorokin IO.I. Ob osobenostiah nepreinogo obucenija lodei srednego I strasego vozrasta/Naucno mnenie: Naucni zurnal, Snkt Petersburg Universitetski konsortsium SPb.,- №3. 2011. S.86-89

Logutenkova, T.G, Antropocentriceska herarhiceska model prepodavania inostranih iezikov, Sbornik naucno-metodiceskih trudov po metodike prepodavania inostranih I Russkogo iezikov., M., 2007, MESI, S. 88-95

Logutenkova T. Visualization in the multimedia course of Russian (MESI participating in ELBEP project) // ПРАКТIКА PROCEEDINGS. ICODL 2009. 5-th International Conference in Open Distance Learning, 27-29 November, 2009. Athens, Greece. Volume D, PART B. P.276-284.

Logutenkova Tatyana. Teaching a foreign language through e-learning technologies (MESI participating in pilot application of ELBEP Project) // The 7-th EDEN Open Classroom Conference - The european school 2.0 - Incubating Creativity and the Capacity for Innovation: Open Content, Social Networking Tools and Creative Learning for All, Porto, 2009. P.328-335.

Logutenkova Tatyana. Teaching a foreign language through e-learning technologies (MESI participating in pilot application of ELBEP Project) // The Seventh Open Classroom Conference. The European School 2.0. Incubating Creativity and Capacity for Innovation^

Open Content, Social Networking Tools and Creative Learning for All. 15-17 October, 2009. Porto, Portugal. P. 328-335.
Spolsky B. Language management, Cambridge University Press, 2009.
Tretiakova I.V., Logutenkova Tatyana. G. Multilingvism kak osnova ustoicivogo razvitio, Belarusia. Minsk. 15-18 ,Maj 2013 g. S. 237-241.
http://www.langmaninc.net
http://www.asset-lm.com