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Information and Communication Technologies in the Teaching of Interpreting

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the features of training oral consecutive interpreting for language students of the Department of Chinese. It is focused on a competence-based approach to education and takes into account the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the Chinese language. This is also the ability to use information and communication technologies in teaching this kind of activity as opportunities to improve knowledge in the field of interpretation, not only in the learning process, but also for future professional activity.

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1. Introduction

Currently, due to the development of relations between Russia and China in all spheres (political, business, economic, etc.), there is a need for professional interpreters, whose knowledge and skills meet the current requirements for high-level professionals. Thus a series of competences are formed, which are required for an interpreter in sphere of oral consecutive interpreting when dealing with Sino-Russian language pair. Thereby there is a need to reorganize the process of teaching this type of activity and to search for new methods and ways of teaching that could not only intensify the training itself, but also allow graduates to develop their skills for future professional activity.

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Due to the new understanding of the place and the role of language education policy of the Russian Federation, scientists and methodologists often emphasize the need to have knowledge of communication theory, a sufficient volume of thesaurus to establish and maintain contacts in various areas of communication and interaction situations, as well as developed skills of speech activity in communication using two languages. However, to achieve this goal it is necessary to solve a number of issues in the methods of teaching language students of the Department of Chinese oral consecutive interpreting:

- Can information and communication technology as an additional learning tool, to ensure the formation and development of skills and competencies that are part of the professional competence of an interpreter in oral consecutive interpreting?
- What are the main difficulties encountered by language students of the Department of Chinese in oral consecutive interpreting at the initial stage of training?

2. Methodology

2.1. The learning environment

Oral consecutive interpreting education for language students of the Department of Chinese with the use of information and communication technologies is based on:

- systematic, activity, personality-centered approaches in foreign language education (Gural, 2012; Zimnyaya, 1991; Milbrood, 2011, and others.);
- conscious and comparative, communicative and cognitive approaches to teaching foreign languages (Gural, 2012; Polyakov, 2008; Serova, 2010; Sysoev, 2010, and others.);
- translation studies and teaching methods in translation (Alikina, 2010; Retsker, 2004; Tikhonova, 2013, etc.);
- innovative technologies in teaching foreign languages and linguistic education (Yevstigneev, 2010; Sysoyev, 2010).

2.2. Research design

In this study the term "oral consecutive interpreting" is seen as auditory, straight, one-sided, outgoing interpretation, which does not require translation equipment and is used in conference interpretation situations; it takes into account temporal, technical, stylistic, content and spatial features of interpretation and involves writing notes during a single perception of the original message and creation of an interpretation based on written notes after the large utterance (Alikina, 2010). Thus, oral consecutive interpreting is one of the most complex activities, for the implementation of which the translator must have the relevant expertise to achieve his goal. We distinguish (Tikhonova & Minakova, 2013) the following competencies that are part of the interpreter’s professional competence in oral consecutive interpreting: language (linguistic) competence (the ability of an interpreter to speak Russian and Chinese languages at a high level, the ability to identify the vocabulary of the normative word-formation models of the Chinese language, to define abridgement words, etc.); text-forming competence (the ability to create and analyze texts of different types and styles of Chinese and Russian languages, taking into account the linguistic content of the genre); communicative competence (the ability to translate the text, taking into account the relevant features of the situation, the national character, stylistic features in combination with extralinguistic factors); technical competence (theoretical knowledge in field of translation studies); operational competence (possession of the key translation classifications with a rely on mental differences in the linguistic world-image of Russian and Chinese communicants); strategic competence (knowledge of the history, culture and traditions of Russia and China, their reflections in the act of intercultural communication for the most complete adequacy of the translated text, as well as the prediction of a situation depending on national circumstances of communicants). It should also be noted that the mechanism of switching between the two languages should be attributed to the core competencies in learning oral consecutive interpreting. This is due to the fact that this type of operation is very
complicated for multi-lingual students and especially in the oral environment, when its functioning should be done quickly and accurately.

The purpose of this study is based on searching and scientific substantiation of effective means of teaching oral consecutive interpreting for students-linguists studying Chinese.

In accordance with the above-mentioned practical purpose of training, in considering the level of formation of competences that are part of the professional competence of an interpreter in oral consecutive interpreting as a result of training, the following tasks were specified: the establishment and development of basic and additional components of professional competence of an interpreter in the sphere of oral consecutive interpreting.

In order to achieve the goal and meet the relevant tasks ICT were chosen, namely educational Internet resources as an additional learning tool which is able to intensify the process of learning for oral consecutive interpreting and develop skills and abilities for professional activity.

Educational Online Resources – "text, audio and visual materials on various topics aimed at creating foreign language communicative competence and the development of communicative and cognitive skills of students to implement search, selection, classification, analysis and synthesis of information" (Sysoev, 2010, p.42). There belong: hotlist, multimedia scrapbook, treasure hunt, subject sampler and web quest.

When teaching language students of the Department of Chinese oral consecutive interpreting as a means of training it is advisable to use multimedia scrapbook, which is a collection of multimedia resources, containing links to text websites, photos, video, audio and graphic information and animated virtual tours. This type of educational Internet resources, according to Sysoev, allows students to develop the following language skills: to find information; to highlight the key words; to determine the subject or the problem; to separate basic information from a minor; to capture the necessary information from the text read; to detail or summarize the content of reading; to summarize the information contained in the text; to recount or epitomize the content listened/seen; to capture the necessary information from Listened/seen (Sysoev, 2010, p. 60).

Thus, during teaching consecutive interpreting of language students of the Department of Chinese we created:

- learning online resource “Training on consecutive interpretation” on the server Vkontakte (http://vk.com/id143852757#/club59351065), in which text- and audio materials are offered, and podcasts aimed at development of understanding the professional activity of an interpreter in the sphere of oral consecutive interpreting on the material of the Chinese language, the main difficulties and interpreter problems are discussed.
- network academic Internet resource “INTERPRETATION” on the server Filamentality(http://www.kn.att.com/wired/fil/pages/huntinterpret.html), which offers a variety of audio and video materials collected from the Sino-Russian news sites needed for teaching language students of the Department of Chinese oral consecutive interpreting.

These training online resources include certain algorithms of work with each of them particularly during extracurricular work; those algorithms provide students with the necessary information to perform a particular exercise, regardless of its location. However, it should be noted that for the reaching the goal of learning oral consecutive interpreting, these educational Internet resources are necessary to introduce on the continuation phase of training for the proper and correct use.

The degree of mastery of program material by the students is reflected in the different levels of formation of speech abilities that make up the competencies included in the professional competence of an interpreter in oral consecutive interpreting, which, in its turn, must comply with the phased requirements and learning objectives.

2.3. Participants

Experimental training was organized at the Department of Chinese at the Faculty of Foreign Languages in National Research Tomsk State University. It was carried out in vivo in the framework of the practical course of the Chinese language "Training on oral consecutive interpreting," and 52 fourth-year students studying Chinese as a major field of study 035,701 "Translation and Translation theory," were involved in it. The sample of subjects was allocated to 1 experimental group (25 students) and 1 control group (27 students).
3. Results

For the most complete analysis of the developed methods of language students of the Department of Chinese teaching oral consecutive interpreting using Internet training resources (as an additional learning tool) 5 types of exercises were taken, contributing to define formedness of certain competencies: writing test for the ability to extract key information from the text listened; writing the text listened with hieroglyphic characters, with an emphasis on the spelling of characters, punctuation, grammatical features; definition of the types of translational transformations used in sentences; sentence translation from Chinese into Russian and vice versa; oral interpreting of a piece of text from Chinese into Russian.

The first and second tasks of control sections are represented by types of exercises to test the level of formation of communicative abilities in a situation with the use of two languages.

Third and fourth tasks of control sections are represented by types of exercises to test the level of formation of the mental lexicon.

The fifth task of control sections is presented by an exercise to test the level of formation of skills to perform properly and correctly oral consecutive interpreting in terms of intercultural communication.

The results of the above listed types of tasks performed by the Chinese department students studying linguistics were analysed. In assessing the tasks performance, both quantitative and qualitative indicators were taken into account:

- qualitative: the accuracy of a message content translation, the accuracy of key information transmission;
- quantitative: the number of test subjects, the time allowed for task completion, the tasks results upon which the conclusions were made.

The results of each task were assessed using a ten-point grading scale, thus the calculation of the results in each task was carried out using the following formula:

\[ K = \frac{x}{n \times a} \times 10, \]

where \( K \) is the accomplishment quotient, \( x \) is the total number of correct answers, \( a \) is the number of students in a group and \( n \) is the total number of tasks.

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<th>Tasks</th>
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When performing tasks at the initial stage of training consecutive interpretation, language students of the Department of Chinese faced a number of difficulties: the inability to single out the key information from the text which sounded orally and, therefore, the impossibility of understanding it before written fixation; inability taking notes of the key information; lack of knowledge of certain terminology, hieroglyphics and precision words, etc.
Thus, the differences between the control and experimental groups at the initial and final stages of training are quite significant, and consequently, the level of formation of professional competence of an interpreter in the sphere of oral consecutive interpreting of language students of experimental groups is significantly higher than that of students-linguists of the control groups.

In addition to the above mentioned and described tasks language students of the Department of Chinese of the experimental and control groups were offered the questionnaire to identify the problems and difficulties that need to be taken into account in the further training for oral consecutive interpreting, and also the questionnaire to determine the importance of training consisting of a system of exercises and tasks as the core teaching technology. Thus, it was revealed that all students face a psychological barrier in the implementation of this type of activity, but students of experimental groups indicated that it is possible to overcome this barrier by performing regularly the tasks focused on the ability to analyze and compile information, to determine the ultimate purpose of translation, to write down the information offered for translation, as well as the ability to carry out training for oral consecutive interpreting, not only in learning, but also in the future, in the implementation of professional activity.

4. Conclusion

According to the results of the research, we can conclude that the level of formation of components of an interpreter’s professional competence in the sphere of oral consecutive interpreting is higher in the groups studying by created program with the use of Internet training resources than in those groups who were trained in the traditional method. This fact indicates the practical value and effectiveness of the proposed methods of teaching oral consecutive interpreting. However, each of the presented educational Internet resources has its own advantages and disadvantages, but their joint application for teaching oral consecutive interpreting as well as classroom teaching achieves the objectives of the study and solution of certain tasks.

References


