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Questions of Teaching Listening at the Postgraduate Stage of Language Training of Foreign Students

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A B S T R A C T

The article outlines the linguodidactic principles of teaching foreign graduate students to listen to scientific monologue speech, evaluates the role of a special text in the development of skills to understand additively presented scientific information of a special nature.

A R T I C L E I N F O

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With all the variety of forms of organization of the educational process, lectures still occupy a central place in higher education. Educational programs of professional training allocate a significant part of the study time to lecture courses, considering them as an organizational and methodological basis for all other forms of training, including independent ones [12].

If we turn to the curricula of postgraduate training, we will see that in the system of postgraduate education, where the emphasis is significantly shifted towards independent research, graduate students are also invited to attend a number of lecture courses. Up to half of the academic (classroom) load of a graduate student in the structure of the main professional educational program falls on lectures on general scientific (history and philosophy of science), as well as special profile disciplines [8]. Since the standards of professional postgraduate education are the same for Russian and foreign graduate students, foreign graduate students who are preparing for candidate exams, listen to lectures on philosophy and specialty in a common stream with Russian graduate students. Academic lectures, whatever form they take within the framework of modern teaching technologies (lecture-visualization, lecture-conversation, lecture-discussion, etc. [12]), carry, as a rule, information of a fundamental, methodological nature about new facts, ideas, knowledge that is not available in the educational literature. Listening to the material of such lectures with simultaneous accurate and complete understanding (listening) is a rather complex type of educational activity. It undoubtedly becomes even more complicated when it comes to the perception of lectures in a foreign language. Russian as a foreign language, leaving aside the subject component of professional training, although it affects the depth of understanding, let's ask ourselves to what extent foreign language classes (in this case, Russian as a foreign language) can help foreign graduate students cope with the linguistic difficulties of listening to lectures in Russian. It should be noted that when starting postgraduate training programs, foreign students have a solid base of professional scientific knowledge that allows them to continue their studies in the Russian postgraduate program in their chosen specialty. As for language training, they, as a rule, have already accumulated the necessary lexical and grammatical minimum of knowledge in the "language of the specialty", and in the field of listening, not

only general perceptual skills of perception of sounding Russian speech have been formed, but also special listening skills of oral scientific monologue and dialogic speech [7].

At the same time, the actual level of development of these skills, as the students themselves note, does not provide a full understanding of oral scientific speech containing information of a special nature. This is especially true for those graduate students whose language and professional training began not in a bachelor's degree at a Russian university, but in a master's degree, and the experience of teaching and professional activities in Russian turned out to be insufficient for them to feel confident in the role of listeners. The program of language training of foreign graduate students provides work on all types of speech activity. But it so happened that listening has never been among its priority areas, unlike, for example, reading and writing, which are the most popular for this category of students [9, 3]. The research activity of a graduate student is primarily associated, of course, with reading literature in the specialty (scientific monographs articles, reference publications, etc.). The main problem that foreign students face in the process of this activity is the problem of understanding. In some cases, it is caused by the linguistic form of statements, in others by difficulties in identifying logical connections within the macro- or micro-context, or problems arise at the level of conceptual understanding [3].

Reading and listening to professionally significant information are processes that have a lot in common, since they are aimed at perception, semantic processing, preservation and further use of the most valuable (new, significant for the recipient) information [5, 201]. Therefore, we can say that the goals of teaching reading and listening at the postgraduate stage are to a certain extent the same. It is necessary to achieve accuracy, completeness and depth of understanding of detailed scientific reports of a special nature, presented both in writing (the above genres) and in oral (lecture, report, discussion) form. The main material for work at the postgraduate stage in intermediate and advanced level groups is a special scientific text.

Being one of the basic units of professional scientific communication, it serves as the most important means of teaching foreign graduate students both receptive (reading and listening) and productive (speaking and writing) types of speech activity. Based on the text, work is also being done on each of the aspects of the language: the characteristic style-forming features of units of different levels (morphemic, word-formation, lexical, syntactic) that participate in the design of statements expressing different scientific meanings are analyzed. The methods that ensure the coherence of an expanded utterance, characteristic signs indicating its belonging to one or another functional-semantic type, and much more are revealed [9; 10; 5].

The purpose of such work is to streamline the knowledge already available to graduate students, to bring to the level of automatism some operations on linguistic (meaningful) decoding of the text, thereby facilitating and speeding up the semantic perception of the information contained in the text. For the same reason, the skills related to the grammatical division of the text and its semantic interpretation is consistently practiced in the classroom. We note the most important among them: (a) to find the predicative core of a sentence, determine the general meaning of a complex sentence and establish the types of connection between predicative units in its composition; to make transformational substitutions of ways of expressing typical meanings, simplifying the structural schemes of sentences; (b) to identify stable combinations of words that make up the layer of the so-called general scientific vocabulary, or terminological, subject, base; to predict the following elements in the whole sentence; (c) to determine the information center of the utterance, the role of this utterance in the supra-phrasal unity; (d) thematically divide the text, defining the theme of each of its units; to identify microtome’s and establish a hierarchy of microtome’s; (e) to identify redundant and repetitive information; to establish similarities and differences information in different ways of its expression; (f) to identify objectively new and new information only for a graduate student, to determine the degree of subjectivization of the author's presentation of scientific information; (g) identify significant semantic parts for a scientific text (problem statement, hypothesis, reasoning, evidence system, reference to sources, generalization, conclusion) [1; 8; 9; 10].

The analysis of a special scientific text undertaken in RCT classes "is not an end in itself, it serves as a tool for the targeted extraction of information and its transmission in the form of a synopsis, theses, abstract" [10, 14]. The skills of structural and semantic analysis form an optimal strategy for working

with a written scientific text, providing foreign students with an understanding of language, subject and conceptual information. They are a necessary component of such a complex skill as listening to scientific monologue speech. The process of listening to oral scientific monologue speech is a "multi-level and multi-channel system", which consists of speech mechanisms that interact with each other in a complex way (RAM, equivalent substitutions, probabilistic forecasting, semantic guessing, etc.), aimed at processing and comprehending perceived information [3; 4]. When listening to detailed monologue messages, for example, lectures, not only mechanisms that ensure the process of understanding come into effect, but also memorization, which is accompanied by a semantic grouping of perceived information, involving various kinds of compression (compression, folding), systematization, generalization. Only with a sufficient level of formation of the basic linguistic (linguistic) and psycholinguistic mechanisms of speech activity, the attention of students will be directed to the semantic content of the lecture material. As for the depth of semantic understanding of the lecture material, it depends on a variety of factors: a good knowledge of special terminology by foreign graduate students, the presence of a solid base of professional scientific knowledge, individual logic of thinking, the level of motivation, stability of attention, etc. Accordingly, difficulties arising in the process of understanding may be associated with any of these factors. Speaking about the difficulties of listening to lectures by foreign students, it is impossible not to touch upon the linguodidactic aspect of this problem. As it was already noted above, at the postgraduate stage of training, reliance on a special scientific text is the main condition for the development of the most relevant speech skills for foreign graduate students, and consequently, participation in various fields of professional communication in Russian. Intensive independent reading within a given corpus of special scientific texts undoubtedly accelerates the further process of understanding thematically homogeneous information presented orally.

Particular attention is paid to intonation and such a specific feature of oral speech as the accentuation of individual linguistic units. This knowledge is very important for foreign students, because it helps them to identify additional semantic supports in the sounding text, to understand the speaker's special communicative attitude [11]. An academic lecture is not just an oral realization of the written form of scientific speech, but a special kind of oral scientific speech that requires special training of foreign students for its perception and adequate understanding. Work on the complex ability to understand the sounding speech should be accompanied by the presentation of samples of such speech. Those types of work that teachers are forced to resort to (to present (read out) fragments of special texts, anticipating the performance of some tasks aimed at developing auditory skills), have nothing to do with the situation of natural professional listening, of course, have nothing to do. It is obvious that it is advisable to supplement the corpus of special scientific texts used in classes with foreign graduate students in Russian with audio materials, preferably of an authentic nature. Great opportunities here are provided by the Russian-speaking Internet zone, which opens access to a huge number of resources. So, for example, audio files of lectures by leading employees of these institutes posted on the websites of academic research institutes could be the beginning of a small audio library (of course, provided the sound quality is high). This will undoubtedly bring the learning process closer to the real conditions of listening to professional scientific speech, although it will significantly complicate the tasks of the teacher in the selection and further methodological processing of audio materials.

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