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LINGUO-DIDACTIC CONTENT OF DISCURSIVE-STRATEGIC COMPETENCE OF LANGUAGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

At the present stage of the development of the methods of teaching foreign languages, the problem of the formation of free speech communication in students occupies a special place. As the analysis of the development of foreign language teaching methods shows, this aspect has not been focused on for a rather long period. In the learning process, attention was most often paid to teaching all types of speech activity separately, which led to negative results in the context of achieving communicative goals. However, nowadays the situation has radically changed since the skills of free speech communication in a foreign language have become widely demanded primarily because of the social order and the needs of society. The increase in the volume and pace of information exchange and the accelerated development of computer communications have brought interaction in a foreign language to the forefront in the field of official communication and significantly strengthened its role in informal communication. In the article, we consider the process of developing discursive-strategic competence as an integral condition for the preparation of a competitive specialist.

Keywords

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Introduction

The main task of students of linguistic specialties in the field of the studying foreign language is to master the ability to communicate in a foreign language, i.e. the achievement of a certain level of communicative competence in the field of oral and written communication. The concept of "communicative competence" is usually described through the totality of its sub-competences, among which the discursive and strategic ones play a significant role. The importance of these competences for full-fledged intercultural communication is noted by many domestic and foreign scientists[1].

For instance, N.V. Elukhina, H. Boyer, M. Pendanx, M. Canale, M. Swain, S. Moirand and others understand discursive competence as "knowledge of various types of discourses and the rules of their construction as well as the ability to create and understand them taking into account the communication situation"[2].

E.Yu. Stratiychuk defines the linguist's discursive competence "as the ability to use language tools to create and interpret texts in accordance with the functional goals of communication. The discursive competence proficiency is determined by understanding and logical order of individual utterances for the purpose of meaningful communication, which implies mastery of the rules for constructing a meaningful utterance, taking into account the following fundamental principles: coherence, logic and organization"[3].

S.V. Bespalova considers discursive competence "an integral and important component of communicative-pragmatic competence, without which the student will not be able to master the full-fledged ability to understand and build discourse. Discursive competence is understood as knowledge and command of various types of discourses and their organization depending on the parameters of the communicative situation in which they are generated and interpreted"[4].

According to A.P. Rudenko, "discursive competence, which is defined as the ability to perceive and generate speech messages adequately to a pragmatic context, is an important element of the learning process. It reflects the nature of cognitive, informational, communicative, and reflective activity; it also affects the functions of verbal interaction"[5]. Discursive competence includes a set of following skills:

- the choice of linguistic means, depending on the purpose of the statement;

- the choice of the type of discourse corresponding to the communicative goal and situation;

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[1] J. A. Van Ek y L. G. Alewander, Waystage English (Oxford.: Pergamon Press, 1980), 32.

[2] N. V. Elukhina, "The role of discourse in intercultural communication and the methods of the formation of discursive competence", Foreign Languages at School, num 3 (2002): 9.

[3] M. L. Volovikova, The formation of foreign language communicative competence of a linguist-interpreter on the basis of the projects of the Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education of the third generation and European standards for language education. Monograph (Rostov-on-Don: IPO PI SFU, 2010), 54.

[4] S. V. Bespalova, Communicative-pragmatic organization of teaching of foreign languages (Saransk: Cand. Diss, 2003), 51.

[5] A. P. Rudenko, The individual approach to the development of discursive competence of students in teaching a foreign language at a university: Abstract cand. Diss (Veliky Novgorod: 2007), 1.

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- skills in organizing language material into a coherent and holistic text;

- the effective use of connectives (pronouns, conjunctions, adverbs and other grammatical means);

- expressing the relationship between different ideas in context;

- understanding and logical order of individual utterances for the purpose of meaningful communication;

- the ability to perceive a text as a "unit of communication"[6].

Research methods

The methodological basis of the research includes the philosophy of the subject-humanistic approach to education, the philosophy of modern education, the linguo-socio-cultural approach to modern education, the axiological approach, according to which a person is the highest value of society, the provisions of the system approach in education, the basic provisions of the cultural approach to teaching foreign languages; the didactic-methodical provisions on the formation of professional communication. The method of theoretical analysis, a comparative analysis of philosophical, psychological, pedagogical, scientific, and methodological literature on the topic of research, pedagogical modeling, the study and synthesis of traditional and innovative pedagogical experience allowed considering the following research results reliable.

Research results

Having analyzed the opinions of researchers, we came to the conclusion that the discursive component (DC) of the competence under study includes the following aspects: knowledge of various types of discourses, the ability to use language tools to create and interpret texts in accordance with the functional goals of communication, the ability to understand and logically form individual utterances for the purpose of meaningful communication, skills in organizing linguistic material into a coherent and holistic text. We believe that the content of discursive competence should include proficiency in using grammatical (syntactic) synonyms as a way to implement the communicative intentions of the interactants, depending on the type of discourse, a text genre and an addressee factor[7].

The above components of the didactic content of the discursive component can be represented in the following scheme:

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[6] M. L. Volovikova, The formation of foreign language communicative competence of a linguist-interpreter on the basis of the projects of the Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education of the third generation and European standards for language education. Monograph (Rostov-on-Don: IPO PI SFU, 2010), 54.

[7] L. O. Gelivera, The methods of forming discursive-strategic competence of a language student through synonymous language means: the grammatical aspect (Stavropol: Cand. Diss, 2010), 44.

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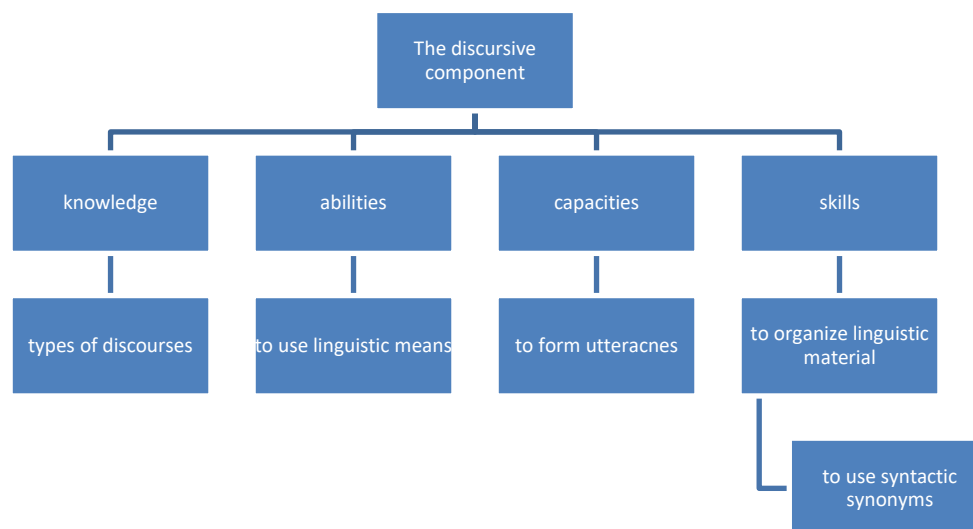
Figure 1
The didactic content of discursive competence

Analysis of the research of the strategic component of the studied competence by modern scientists gives a basis to believe that, according to L.A. Anfimova, its development "creates the prerequisites for the formation of background knowledge, provides interconnected communicative and socio-cultural development of future specialists"[8].

According to C. Faerch and G. Kasper, a strategy is a conscious plan to solve the problem of achieving a specific communicative goal of in case communication is interrupted due to noise, insufficient preparedness of participants, etc. as well as the ability to choose a specific line of speech behaviors to improve communication. The lack of fluency in speech, inability to conduct a conversation or participate in it is the result of poor development of strategic competence[9].

G. Yule believes that the concept of "a strategy" is used in various fields and has a wide range of meanings. However, the concept contains the idea of planning the next action. Based on the fact that all language use is strategic, the recognition of communicative intentions and their realizations requires a joint system of judgments and comments that are active in the form of communicative strategies[10].

Foreign scientists in most cases distinguish two types of strategic competence:

- a message management strategy;

- a strategy for expanding linguistic means.

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[8] M. L. Volovikova, The formation of foreign language communicative competence of a linguist-interpreter on the basis of the projects of the Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education of the third generation and European standards for language education. Monograph (Rostov-on-Don: IPO PI SFU, 2010), 71.

[9] C. Faerch y G. Kasper, Strategies in interlanguage communication. (N.Y.: Longman, 1983),65.

[10] E. Tarone, G. Yule. Communication Strategies in East-West Interactions. Discourse Across Cultures. Strategies in World Englishes (London: Prentice Hall International, 1987).

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In our study, we consider the student's mastery of the strategic component of the given competence as a way to expand linguistic tools in order to build adequate discourse.

E. Tarone offers a peculiar set of characteristics of a communicative strategy that includes various types of paraphrase, borrowings, word-to-word translation, seeking help, refusing or avoiding the topic with different forms of linguistic ignorance, switching to the native language (verbal strategies), facial expressions and gestures (non-verbal strategies) in the language interaction between native and non-native speakers[11].

C. Roberts adhering to the established definition of strategic competence as the ability to use communicative strategies for a conversation and its correction considers them (types of paraphrase, seeking help) as a way of personality formation[12].

The strategy of regulating a voice message involves bringing the message form in line with the capabilities of the speaker / listener. A foreign language student should be aware that he/she usually says only what he/she can, and not what he/she wants or would like. This strategy involves either a small change or message shortening.

The strategy of expanding linguistic means also requires the speaker to recognize the limitations of his/her language capabilities. However, the speaker is actively trying to continue a conversation and gain understanding of the interlocutor with the subsequent implementation of his/her speech intention. Through active internal "re-planning" of an utterance and the search for the necessary linguistic means, the speaker / writer is able to solve the problem independently. A language expansion strategy involves using a variety of techniques such as the following:

- paraphrases;

- approximate meaning;

- colloquial "fillers";

- word-making;

- paralinguistic means (facial expressions, gestures, imitation, etc.)

All of the above methods of overcoming difficulties in the process of communication in a foreign language are often used by the speaker spontaneously, intuitively, simply under the influence of the communication situation itself.

In the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment" strategies are defined as means that language users implement to mobilize and balance their resources, activate their skills and abilities in order to cope with a specific communication situation and successfully solve a particular communicative problem in the most complete and at the same time in an economical and affordable way in

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[11] E. Tarone y G. Yule, Communication Strategies in East-West Interactions. Discourse Across Cultures. Strategies in World Englishes (London: Prentice Hall International, 1987), 9.
[12] C. A. Roberts, The Art of Circumlocution. Teaching strategic competence. Forum, Vol: 28 num 4 (1990): 75.

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accordance with their purpose. The use of communicative strategies can be considered as the application of metacognitive principles (preliminary planning, execution, monitoring and correction) to various types of communicative activities[13].

Strategies of generating texts and sentences in a foreign language involve mobilizing resources, balancing between different competences. Internal resources can be activated by conscious preparation, taking into account the characteristics of the audience, using reference resources. It is also important to adjust the utterance content using strategies of evasion and achievement[14].

"The concept of strategic competence is very important for teaching foreign languages. The absence or ineffective development of this type of competence can lead to the fact that the communicant is unable to realize the goals of communication"[15].

Having studied the content of the strategic component (SC), we came to the conclusion that its integral factors include the following: the background knowledge that ensures the interconnected communicative and socio-cultural development of future specialists, the ability to gain understanding of the interlocutor with the subsequent implementation of his/her speech intention, the ability to realize communication goals, the ability to choose a specific line of speech behavior to improve communication efficiency, the ability to use communication strategies for conducting a conversation and its correction, he skill of using internal "re-planning" of an utterance and search for the necessary linguistic tools as a way to solve a communicative problem. According to the objectives of our study, we complement the content of strategic competence with the ability to build strategies for generating discourse by means of synonymous (grammatical) linguistic means depending on the parameters of the communicative situation since the successful solution of the communicative problem largely depends on the correct choice of syntactic structures[16].

The elements of the didactic content of the strategic component are schematically represented in the following scheme:

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[13] M. L. Volovikova, The formation of foreign language communicative competence of a linguist-interpreter on the basis of the projects of the Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education of the third generation and European standards for language education. Monograph (Rostov-on-Don: IPO PI SFU, 2010), 73.

[14] H. G. Widdowsonm, Directions in the teaching of discourse. Theoretical Linguistic Models in Applied Linguistics (London: 1973).

[15] M. L. Volovikova, The formation of foreign language communicative competence of a linguist-interpreter on the basis of the projects of the Federal State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education of the third generation and European standards for language education. Monograph (Rostov-on-Don: IPO PI SFU, 2010), 72.

[16] L. O. Gelivera, The methods of forming discursive-strategic competence of a language student through synonymous language means: the grammatical aspect (Stavropol: Cand. Diss, 2010), 44.

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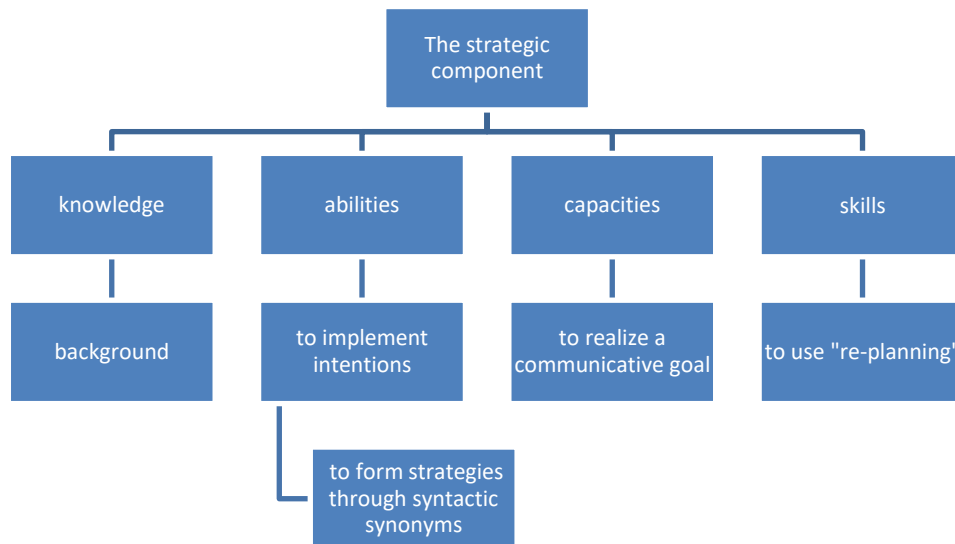
Figure 2
The didactic content of strategic competence

After analyzing the content and structure of discursive and strategic competences, we came to the conclusion that the condition for the formation of strategic competence and its linguistic support imply a certain level of ownership of discursive competence. And, on the contrary, the regulation of discursive activities, due to the communicative needs of the interactants, is impossible without the ability to use communicative strategies.

This authors' attitude allows combining the given competences in the linguo-didactic aspect with the term "discursive-strategic competence", as shown in a generalized form in the diagram below.

Discursive-strategic competence
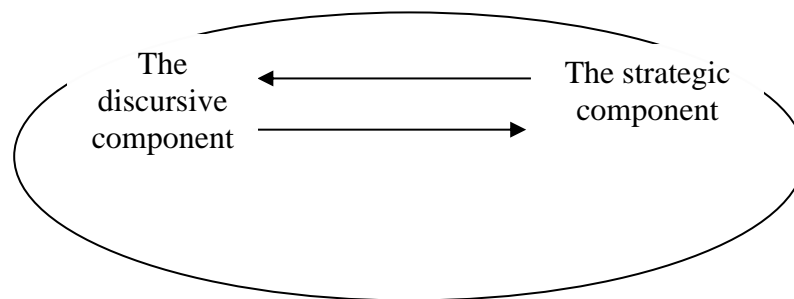
Figure 3
The didactic content field of discursive-strategic competence

We understand discursive-strategic competence as the totality of knowledge, abilities, capacities, and skills that motivate the activity of generating discourse and finding ways to organize it, depending on the parameters of the communicative situation and the specific situational context. Knowing the appropriate situational contexts provides adequate communication behavior.

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Discussion

The state educational standard of higher professional education in a foreign language defines communication as the target dominant in the preparation of a competent specialist. However, there is a gap between the requirements of the new state educational standard and the old approach to teaching foreign languages.

The analysis of existing foreign language programs, including copyright ones, suggests that the issues of developing new methods of teaching foreign languages to implement the requirements of the state educational standard are still relevant, and the number of modern Russian scientists dealing with this problem is steadily growing. However, in the context of a shift in emphasis in teaching foreign languages the practical training of a university graduate, implemented through the traditional educational system, is insufficient. As was already noted, we are talking about training a competitive foreign language specialist.

Based on the foregoing, we believe it is necessary to consider the linguistic content of discursive-strategic competence of a linguist in order to identify the minimum unit of discourse (as a starting point for learning to produce and interpret discourse) and develop a methodology for the formation of the given competence.

One of the central ways to obtain information about the surrounding world is the process of communication, which is "... a transfer or exchange of concepts in a verbal or non-verbal form"[17]. When generating semantically, structurally, and pragmatically coherent discourse, the conceptualization and representation of linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge interact and adapt to each other. In this case, mental and emotional concepts can be reconstructed, changed, and become the basis for the formation of new concepts. The basic concepts are "wrapped up" in new conceptual layers, increasing and modifying their volume, which leads to a new, unexpected compatibility of their names.

This interpretation of discourse goes back to the triad of F. de Saussure "language-speech-speech activity". It seems that such understanding of speech activity is consistent with the well-established interpretation of discourse as a communicative-cognitive event and allows talking about discursive activity as the speech-cognitive activity of communicants, related to the speaker's cognition and presentation of the world, and interpretation, reconstruction of the linguistic picture of the world of the sender of the speech by the recipient.

Thus, speech (discursive) activity as an object of study is the process of transmitting and perceiving various information using linguistic (and paralinguistic) means in a communicative situation. An idea is the subject of this activity, an utterance is its product, and a speech act is the purposeful means of its realization. "Understanding real discourse is not aimed at deciphering the language signs or even correlating the language signs with reality ... To put it simply, we do not understand speech but a person who turns his/her speech to us"[18].

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[17] N. N. Boldyrev, Cognitive semantics: Lecture course in English philology (Tambov: 2012), 24.
[18] T. . Milevskaya, The grammar of discourse (Rostov-on-Don: Publishing house of Rostov University, 2003), 23.

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According to M.M. Bakhtin, a person in his/her human specificity always expresses himself/herself through speech[19]. Obviously, speech has its own specific features. The study of this phenomenon, in fact, is just starting. According to N.I. Zhinkin, speech is not a simple manifestation of language. It is not the end but the beginning of the goal, the object of study, and not the result of study[20].

Starting to generate discourse, the addressee determines the problem and the subject of speech. The next stage includes the choice of initiating syntactic constructions (type of a speech act). A choice of different models is possible but, as V.G. Gak notes, for each reference situation some syntactic model may be preferable – typical, frequent, most natural. An utterance introduced into speech or singled out in a speech stream (discourse) and fixed as a text (a particular phrase) is the minimum unit, sufficient only in terms of information. This is a speech sign that arises on the basis of a sentence as a language sign at the will of the speaker (writer) in connection with the need to transmit speech to the addressee or receive information about a real situation from him/her[21].

Therefore, speech production begins with the formation and transformation of thoughts in a specific utterance in accordance with communicative goals. Using A. Wierzbicka's well-known interpretive technique to reveal the expression in question, one can build the following formula: 1) telling you something, 2) I want to explain to you why this happened, 3) I believe that you, like many others, misunderstand the current situation, getting confused and complicating all relations, 4) while I can clearly and logically reason, 5) and it seems to me that I should listen carefully, 6) since I have the right to teach other people by the force of my high intelligence, 7) and I'm telling you kindly and with patience, "for that simple reason"[22].

From the standpoint of linguistic material, the lexical and grammatical fabric of the text, one can analyze discourse in terms of completeness, correctness, logic of the utterance that make up the text in question. With such an immanently linguistic approach to the study of discourse, the researcher proceeds from the concept of a "correctly constructed discourse" as an ideal type, on the one hand, and possible deviations from this type, on the other hand, down to such communicative fragments that cannot be linguistically analyzed.

The difference between the attitudes of scientists who share the immanent linguistic approach to discourse is that some researchers believe that a written literary text should be taken into account as a model of a correctly constructed text, and in this case, oral speech with its deviations from a written text is considered as a marked phenomenon, while other researchers give oral and written speech equal status, believing that there are both a text type of oral speech, deviations from this ideal type and the corresponding correlates of writing.

One of the problems is the segmentation of the speech flow into units corresponding to "individual speech acts". If we consider a sentence as such a unit (the vast majority of

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[19] M. M. Bakhtin, The ethics of verbal creativity (Moscú: Iskusstvo, 1986), 266.
[20] T. V. Milevskaya, The grammar of discourse (Rostov-on-Don: Publishing house of Rostov University, 2003), 20.
[21] T. V. Milevskaya, The grammar of discourse (Rostov-on-Don: Publishing house of Rostov University, 2003).
[22] V. I. Karasik, The language circle: personality, concepts, discourse (Volgograd: Peremena, 2002), 24.

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examples in the works on the theory of speech acts are textbook sentences), we have to admit that this contradicts the facts of speech: speech acts are often carried out through either a group of sentences or a part of a sentence. The theory of speech acts is not concerned with utterances but with their types[23], not with real inferential processes of thought-producing activity but with elements of knowledge that are only supposedly introduced into speech.

There are doubts about the necessity to correlate each utterance with the type of a speech act from a fixed and narrow repertoire since many utterances are multifunctional in the social and communicative reality of speech. The multifunctionality of speech acts plays a large role in the organization of discourse: if there is more than one function, it is possible to continue the conversation in more than one way.

The next problem is the arbitrariness of the categorization of discourse fragments: there is no single set of criteria that would allow all speech researchers to equally identify and characterize segments, to give the same formal units the same functions. Due to the arbitrariness of the definition of functions there are doubts about the universality of taxonomy, leaving them at the level of individual competence[24].

We also agree that the point of view of the theory of speech acts on language communication is static; the speech act approach ignores the internal logic of the development of communication and interaction of participants as well as the dispute of strategies for regulation and forecasting. Thus, speech acts are singled out and identified in a rigid coordinate system but not from a constantly moving point of view of the participants in communication in the process of smooth deployment of communicative structures.

What is the smallest holistic unit of verbal interaction? According to M.M. Bakhtin, this is an utterance. As a social event, it presupposes, firstly, the active interaction of the speaker and the listener (the activity of the speaker implies the activity of the listener). As M.M. Bakhtin wrote, "Building my utterance, I try to actively identify it (a possible answer of the interlocutor); on the other hand, I try to anticipate it, and this anticipated answer, in turn, has an active influence on my utterance (I counter the objections that I foresee, resort to all kinds of responses, etc.). Speaking, I always take into account the apperceptive background of perception of my speech by the addressee: how knowledgeable he/she is in the situation... his/her views and beliefs, prejudices (from our point of view), his/her sympathy and antipathy – all this will determine active reciprocal understanding of my statement by him/her. These aspects will determine the choice of the utterance genre, the choice of compositional techniques, and, finally, the choice of linguistic means, that is, the style of an utterance"[25].

An utterance as a unit of verbal communication has a number of other characteristics. Each utterance belongs to a specific subject; its boundaries are determined by the "change of speech subjects, that is, the change of speakers"[26]. An utterance has a specific "completeness": it is characterized by meaningful usefulness, which provides the opportunity to answer it, that is, to take a response position relating to it. An utterance has not only "a

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[23] M.M. Bakhtin, The ethics of verbal creativity (Moscú: Iskusstvo, 1986).
[24] H. G. Widdowsonm, Directions in the teaching of discourse. Theoretical Linguistic Models in Applied Linguistics (London: 1973).
[25] M.M. Bakhtin, The ethics of verbal creativity… 23.
[26] M.M. Bakhtin, The ethics of verbal creativity… 249.

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direct relation to other people's utterances" but also direct contact with reality (with an non-verbal situation)[27].

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, it is possible to conclude that the minimum unit of discourse is an utterance. The process of forming discursive-strategic competence of a linguist must begin with training in the construction of utterances as minimal units of discourse.

Moreover, "it is necessary to pay special attention to the selection of socially significant, culturally specific elements, mastering which the student will master the relevant linguo-cognitive characteristics of a representative of another ethno-cultural community, and will be able to adequately interpret his textual activity".

Thus, the analysis of the content and structure of discursive-strategic competence leads to the conclusion that students should develop such abilities, capacities, and skills that ensure the competent construction of utterances and further generation of discourse by coordinating their communicative actions in terms of speech norms in another culture due to the correct choice of discursively adequate linguistic means.

Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that the data do not contain any conflict of interest.

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