Formation of Students’ Creative Personality by Means of Foreign Languages

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Abstract

The research deals with the ways of forming students’ creative personality in classes of foreign languages. The aim of the study: to outline the didactic means of forming students’ creative personality and to prove their efficiency.

Materials and Methods:

In the current research the following methods have been applied: theoretical (analysis, synthesis, generalisations and systematisation of scientific theoretical and methodological literature) – in order to define notions of the research, outline peculiarities of students’ creative personality formation CC formation and specify its structure; empirical – diagnostic (discussions, questionnaire, testing, pedagogical observation, expert questionnaire) to study results of the educational activity and determine the level of students’ formed creative personality; pedagogical experiment (starting, forming, controlling stages) to verify efficiency of the system of corresponding didactic means based on the elaborated methodology.

Results:

A set of didactic means such as role-based activity, step-by-step pedagogical technology and follow-up reflexion activity are applied in the research. It is proved that gradual and personally oriented approach should be applied in the pedagogical process. Such techniques as “Merry-Go-Round”, “First Impression”, “Double Interpretation” and others are revealed in the article.

Conclusions:

Efficiency of the proposed methods has been verified by indicators of personal, cognitive and pragmatic criteria. Dynamics of the students’ formed creative personality in experimental and control groups at the starting and final stages of the experiment is analysed.

Keywords:

university student, creative personality, foreign language, professional preparation.

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Introduction

Formation of a creative personality has always been considered an urgent problem at all stages of sciences development. Different aspects of creative personality have been researched by philosophers (Bibler, 1993; Erdheim, 2002; Malakhov, 2006; Khatington, 2003 and others), psychologists (Boesch, 1996; Leont’ev, 1975; Talyizina, 2002; Vygotskiy, 1999 and others), pedagogues (Andreev, 1995; Lerner, 1981; Hryniova, 2001 and others). They have considered interconnections between creative activity, cognition and personality, influence of this activity on development of a person’s creative abilities, psychological structures of creative activity, conditions of successful formation of a creative personality etc. Still, the analysis of scientific literature has proved that methodological bases need further elaboration while practical tasks are to be further developed and updated according to the demands of the modern society. The educational activity of students in a higher educational institution is to be organised in such a way that it promotes harmonious development of a personality. Attaining the level of a personality means mastering various aspects of cultural experience such as cognitive, transformative, estimating and communicative ones. They are the core essence of the personally oriented approach outlined in Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015). Along with covering the mentioned aspects it also presupposes assistance to students in perceiving themselves as a personality, eliciting and revealing their capabilities, forming self-consciousness, reaching personally and society significant goals.

The aim of the study. To outline the didactic means of forming students’ creative personality and to prove their efficiency.

Materials and Methods

In the current research the following methods have been applied: theoretical – analysis, synthesis, generalisations and systematisation of scientific theoretical and methodological literature in order to define notions of the research, outline peculiarities of students’ creative personality formation CC formation and specify its structure; empirical – diagnostic (discussions, questionnaire, testing, pedagogical observation, expert questionnaire) to study results of the educational activity and determine the level of students’ formed creative personality; pedagogical experiment (starting, forming, controlling stages) to verify efficiency of the system of corresponding didactic means based on the elaborated methodology. Formation of a creative personality is firstly guided by a role-based activity as a main condition of successful interaction. As a personality is born and revealed in the process of playing a specific role in a group. Secondly, it should be noted that an individual personality interacts with other people on the base of I-concept, i.e. personal reflexion, which encompasses ideas about the person themselves, their own abilities and significance. Thus, a person’s activity is directed at eliminating the lack of correspondence between the ideal and the real, i.e. between the current knowledge and skills and those which are to be acquired in order to reach the desired result. So, self-reflexion as a follow-up activity is appreciated during educational classes.

Thirdly, the way to form a creative personality lies in its step-by-step release from indirect influence of the surrounding environment to its change into an active and creative figure and self-educator instead. The theory of gradual formation of mental acts and notions (started by Galperin (1967) and developed by Talyizina (2002), Kabanova and Galperin (2004), and other scientists) is proved by time and successfully implemented in practice by scholars from different parts of the world for further improvement of the educational activity both at school and higher educational institutions. The value of the mentioned theory is revealed in its wide usage for practical training of specialists of various professions, as it is of paramount importance for them to orientate in difficult conditions of their activity no matter what professional sphere it concerns. According to it, knowledge, skills and habits are acquired gradually, through interiorisation. At the first (motivational) stage students master orientation base of the activity, i.e. understand the aim, plan, means to realise them and perceive the scheme that serves as a system of orientations and indicators in realising various acts. The aim of the next (cognitive) stage is to become familiar with the content of acts and rules of their realisation. At this stage a student realises materialised acts individually with the help of models, schemes, formulas, patterns etc. The next stage (transformational) deals with generalising the learnt patterns and performing individual acts. The creative nature of a person is realised in searching and transforming activity that develops the motivational sphere and furthers the improvement of their activity. The main aim to form a creative personality of students at this stage is to challenge them with problem situations and creative tasks. Finding the optimal ways to solve them promotes development of heuristic capabilities of students as well as trains them to work individually and educate themselves (Kolbina, Dmytrenko, & Yaresko, 2014). At the final stage (reflexive) students estimate the realised acts and assess their own and others’ results. The daily pedagogical practice has proved that thanks to implementation of the pedagogical technology which is based on the mentioned theory, the possibilities to manage the pedagogical process are improved significantly.

Results

The conceptual bases of the system pedagogic research, as for raising a creative personality, are exposed by
Kolbina (2016). The invariable content components of creative personality formation are illustrated by Oleksenko (2018). The new didactic means are implemented in Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics. A foreign language is considered not only as a means of communication, but also as a means of successful collaboration in a cross-cultural business sphere. To achieve this goal, the optional interdisciplinary courses are introduced into the curriculum. They are intended to cover practical classes, seminars and individual research tasks. For example the optional minor course “Cross-Cultural Communication in International Business” consists of such topics as “Cross-Cultural Communication as a Field of Scientific Knowledge”, “Aspect Analysis of Cross-Cultural Communication”, “Stereotypes and Generalisations”, “Basic Typologies of Business Cultures”, “Non-Verbal Communication in Cross-Cultural Context”, “Ethnocentrism and Cross-Cultural Shock”, “Business Etiquette in Cross-Cultural Communication”, “Cross-Cultural Strategies of Managing Organisation” etc, outlined by Oleksenko (2016). As creative personality is a solid ground for professional success in any sphere, it is expedient to form this quality while teaching any course in frames of the curriculum.

At the motivational stage of the mentioned optional course students are proposed to analyse a fragment from Kipling’s poem “We and They” as an epigraph to the topic “Stereotypes and Generalisations”:

All good people agree, / And all good people say, / All nice people, like Us, are We / And every one else is They:

But if you cross over the sea, / Instead of over the way, / You may end by (think of it!) looking on We / As only a sort of They!

Discussing the essence of the extract gives an idea about belonging of each individual to a specific culture which they perceive as a standard or model in comparing it with others. As a follow-up activity at the cognitive stage students are supposed to come up with the definite types of cultures, such as personal, national and organisational as well as to outline and analyse their characteristic features. In the process of comparing cultures to an iceberg students indicate their visible (the top of the iceberg) and invisible aspects (the underwater part). It allows them to arrive at the conclusion of high value of indirect cultural aspects that can be perceived only by close studying of cultures.

On the ground of the gained knowledge future specialists create mind-maps of the basic notions of cross-cultural communication. Working in groups through the example of the mind-map activity, students distinguish among the variety of definite stereotypes and generalisations. Consequently one part of students describes their stereotypes and generalisations of a particular culture while others are to identify the intended nationality and to ground their choice.

The “Collaging” technique is used to bring students’ attention to the specific concept and demonstrate visually the correlation of different notions. In our case it may help to study peculiarities of different cultures concerning the use of colours in international business. A model of a multicoloured flower of a chamomile is used to implement this vivid tool. In the process of discussion students are asked to match their associations of different cultures to the proposed colours of the flower. They are inspired to do this activity using their own personal experience.

Studying various cultures by means of proverbs and sayings is another efficient means on the way to a creative personality formation. It develops the motivational sphere, which is the core aspect in identifying its needs, motives, inclinations etc. Formation of the motivational sphere is determined by acquiring specific moral values as the dominant motives of behaviour. They presuppose democratic relations built on self-respect as a condition of effective interaction of people and reaching certain goals. However to become an active ‘transmitter’ of moral consciousness in the society and implement it in their practical activity, a person needs to acquire experience of moral culture accumulated by other generations and mankind on the whole. Thus, taking into account that awareness in cultural wisdom, proverbs in particular helps to perceive in a deeper sense various aspects of material and spiritual cultures of specific peoples, students are acquired to sort out the proverbs that correspond to the equivalent pictures and compare their meanings in their own and foreign cultures. As a result the conclusion is drawn about the interconnection between the content of proverbs and their national character, as generalising the sense of the specific life situation is considered to be a proverb when it acquires the significance of wisdom for the whole nation. Only in this case the folklore treasures are filled with laconic and emphatic directions that make up the moral pattern of the national culture. E. g. in America the proverb “The first bird catches the worm” emphasises such dominant features as individualism and strive for self-assertiveness. On the contrary in China the proverb “The first bird in the flock is the first to be shot” is popular. It illustrates the dominant feature of the Chinese culture that lies in reactivity, i.e. representatives of the culture prefer listening to other instead of initiating ideas and discussions.

The analysis of proverbs helps students to brainstorm and add to the list different issues of the multifaceted nature of proverbs. For example the exclamation “Watch your step” can be rendered both in a literal and metaphorical way in a sense of a directive. In estimating proverbs of different cultures that reflect life directives future specialists play a role of an examiner giving a negative or a positive marks. Besides, some proverbs can be outlined that may provoke further discussion, such as “Company in distress makes trouble less”, “The best way to solve conflicts is to avoid them”. After dividing into groups, students prove to other “colleagues-examiners” the correctness of their mark. In the process of a role play the participants of discussion report on their finding as for the preference of a specific behavioral strategy of each “examiner”: either reaching personal goals or maintaining kind and
firm relations with others. While covering the topic “Basic Typologies of Business Cultures” it is emphasised that there are certain values, relations and modes of behavior that define cultures. The students analyse such cultural dimensions as monochronic / polychronic, high context / low context, individualism / collectivism, hierarchy / equality, high uncertainty avoidance / low uncertainty avoidance, masculinity / femininity, past-oriented / present or future-oriented cultures (Hofstede, 2001). Cultures are compared and contrasted in a group discussion.

The game “Fair Handshake” (Stringer & Cassiday, 2009) illustrates the differences in behavior of representatives from different cultures. At the first stage participants shake hands with each partner, introduce themselves and repeat their partners’ name. At the second stage of the game they take assumed names which should consists of an adjective starting with the first letter of their first name and a noun starting with the last letter of their first name (e.g. Vivid Diamond for Vlad). The task of players is to move around the classroom shaking their left hands only and exchanging their new name (of two words). The idea is to make students aware of the variety of forms of addressing people across cultures. While changing the natural behavior as for example using the left hand instead of the right one, students feel uncomfortable and uneasy. They have to make an effort to memorise how to do it correctly. Still some left-handed students practically for the first time in their lives gain an advantage over others.

The epigraph to the topic “Non-Verbal Communication in Cross-Cultural Context” at the motivational stage may be illustrated by Seaward saying “The way we choose to see the world creates the world we see”. While studying the topic students compare non-verbal behavior in different cultures on the base of video materials. Thus in Western cultures an eye contact is a sign of respect and honesty while in Latin America looking downwards rather is. In the Japanese culture looking at the neck is preferred, while in Muslim countries eye contacts between men and women should be avoided. Scores are allocated for correct answers in this activity which motivates students to think up sentences from scratch as well.

During the game “Merry-Go-Round” at the transformational stage students demonstrate different ways of greetings specific to various cultures. The aim of the game is to involve all students into the pedagogical process simultaneously and to the highest extent. To do this, students form two circles: internal and external ones. Participants of the internal circle stand back to the centre, while participants of the external circle face them. Each person from the internal circle has to greet each person from the external circle moving like in a merry-go-round. Greeting their partners students use nonverbal greetings, both contactless (nodding, waving, making a reverence) and contact ones (clapping or shaking hands, hugging etc.). Forms of greetings can also be specific for various social and ethnic groups such as a pioneer salute, a Japanese bow etc. However each time the greeting should be different. Recipients are to respond the same way they are greeted. As a result of this activity participants of the pedagogical process get acquainted with the effect of greeting forms onto the communicative style of cultures, realise the necessity to learn them in order to be successful in cross-cultural collaboration.

In the role-play “First Impression” participants get different cards with the model of non-verbal behavior. During interaction they share information about their professional activity with their partners, following the proposed model of non-verbal behavior. For example one of the partners has to promote the “smiley-face syndrome” no matter whether they speak or listen. Another one has to avoid eye contact and exaggerate blinking. Looking down or looking around the room are proposed as a model behavior. Another partner is supposed to maintain approximately 40 cm distance while communicating. If his partner backs up, he has to move forward. During debriefing students draw the following conclusions. Firstly, non-verbal communication influences greatly the perception of rendered information. Secondly, non-verbal models of behavior are culturally stipulated. Thirdly, understanding non-verbal communication of business partners improves communication efficiency.

The significance of verbal aspect of communication is proved by practical application of the method “Double Interpretation” (Werner & Campbell). The essence of the method lies in conveyor interpretation of a specific text. The first participant reads it in Ukrainian, the second one translates it into English, the third translates the English version into German, the fourth renders it into Ukrainian again. As a result the meanings of the original and final texts are far too different. This fact is indicative of high probability of changes in the sense of information in the process of its interpretation or translation.

The role-play “Spears” points out the way message perception of the recipients is influenced by communication peculiarities of different cultures. It also illustrates the importance of learning communicative rules of other cultures, gives the possibility to experience confusion because of inappropriate behavior that does not correspond to their partner’s (when rules are not discussed). All participants get “Rules of Correct Communication” with multicoloured signs. They choose a partner with a sign of a different colour to discuss a certain professional topic. For violating each “personal” rule, partners share toothpicks, or so-called spears (distributed beforehand) that symbolise dissatisfaction of their partners’ behavior. This activity helps to come up with the following conclusions. Studying the rules of a new culture can lessen the culture shock, “communicative rules” in the frame of one culture are perceived without saying. That is why it is necessary to be attentive in case of misunderstanding and state questions to specify the meanings of unclear phrases or situations. Silence can also be a part of a communicative style and improve communication efficiency.
To determine the level of developing students’ creative personality (low, satisfactory, sufficient, high), certain criteria have been verified: personal, cognitive, pragmatic. Indicators of each criterion have been outlined. Thus, the personal criterion have been estimated according to the indicators of motivation to develop oneself as a creative personality; reflexion of one’s own acquired experience and results. Among the indicators of the cognitive criterion is knowledge quality (completeness, efficiency, flexibility) of algorithms to analyse new tasks and reach efficiency in accomplishing them; ways to acquire knowledge. Pragmatic criterion has been characterised by the indicators of divergent and critical thinking in both standard and non-standard situations; ability to produce various solutions to the same problem. Model of the forming students’ creative personality is presented in Figure 1.

The dynamics of the formed students’ creative personality in experimental (EG) and control groups (CG) at the starting and final stages of the experiment are presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 1.** Model of the forming students’ creative personality.

**Figure 2.** Dynamics of students’ formed creative personality in experimental and control groups.
Discussion
According to the results of the experiment the majority of students from EG have reached a sufficient level of the formed creative personality. The positive dynamics of indicators has been revealed in improving the level of the researched quality by all the criteria. The quantity of students from EG with a sufficient level of the formed creative personality has become 15% more, in CG the increase has been of 8%. At the same time the quantity of students from EG with a high level of the formed quality has become 19% bigger, while in CG the quantity of students has become 3% more. The quantity of students form EG has been reduced as for low and satisfactory levels by 12% and 22% correspondingly. In CG the quantity of students who have a satisfactory level has been raised by 8%, and has been lessened by 8% concerning the low level.

Thanks to implementing the revealed didactic means based on the considered methodology, the students of the experimental group have significantly improved knowledge quality as for analysing new tasks and reaching efficiency in accomplishing them; motivation for self-development and reflexion; the level of pragmatic skills listed above.

The outlined tasks during in-class work favour formation of students’ positive professional value orientations and communication skills as well as lead to the final reflexive stage where students are eager to assess their activity as they are totally involved into it. Modelling situations nears the pedagogical process to the real professional cross-cultural environment, provides development of professional qualities and experience in communication. Future specialists acquire skills of correct behavior, become aware of importance to adhere to skills of correct behavior in business contacts, learn demands to the speech culture in the process of communication.

Conclusions
Realisation of the proposed expedient activity provides all-round development of a creative personality. The outlined tasks promote formation of skills necessary for students’ casual and professional activity in conditions of the modern world. They are taught to plan their activity, forecast and estimate its results, acquire knowledge and use it individually, take decisions on their own or in a team and be responsible for them. All this enlarges the range of social relations and fosters subject-to-subject relations based on collaboration and support.

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A Conceptual Grounds of Pedagogical Research of Cross-cultural Communication Experience of University Students

**Мета дослідження:** Окреслити дидактичні засоби формування творчої особистості студентів та довести їх ефективність. **Матеріали і Методи:** У дослідженні використано такі методи: теоретичні (аналіз, синтез, узагальнення та систематизація наукової теоретичної і методичної літератури) та емпіричні (діагностичні, експериментальне, соціальний дослідження та експертне оцінювання) – для вивчення результатів навчальної діяльності та визначення її структури; емпіричні – інші, що висвітлюють такі прийоми: перші враження, подвійна інтерпретація та інші. **Результати:** У дослідженні застосовано такі дидактичні засоби: діяльність на основі різноманітних інновацій, методологічної методології. **Ключові слова:** студент, творча особистість, іноземна мова, професійна підготовка.

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