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Sociolinguistic aspects of effective communication of a foreign specialist at a production department

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Abstract. The problem of integrating migrants into the host society is particularly relevant in relation to the production team since it occurs within the framework of a professional productive activity. A non-native speaker of the official state language faces various difficulties which can largely affect the results of his/her work and the effectiveness of production communication in general. The aim of the study was to establish sociolinguistic parameters, ensuring the efficient communication of a foreign specialist at a production department. The main methods used were surveys and interviews organized at the same time. The "qualitative method" of an in-depth interview was used as one of the approaches practiced within the framework of the so-called "grounded theory". The authors suggest that effective communication can be provided for the foreign people by creating (on the basis of single universities in the region) linguoeconomic schools for migrants (non-natives), linking their future with the region, organization of specialized training. These workshops are proposed to include different types of classes, taking into account the future specialty and a field of study, for example, business meeting is operational, organizational, planning, controlling, and it is recommended to use a variety of educational technologies. Thus, the efficiency of migrants' adaptation (non-natives) in the host society and the production team is largely dependent on joint systematic sequential activities of the state regional agencies, relevant professionals, and media.

1. Introduction

The beginning of the twenty-first century was marked by forming a new worldview in the minds of people, which reflected major changes in all spheres of human life, including the process of globalization, accompanied by population migration, largely a labor one. Since the beginning of 2000-ies various regions of Russia began to take on more and more migration burden. Thus, according to sociological studies, the main influx of migrants was recorded in Central and North-Western Federal districts, a slightly smaller flow of migrants was observed in the Volga Federal district, and "the constituent entities of the Russian Federation which are a part of the Southern Federal district accounted for up to 15% of the all-Russian migration growth in recent years. In particular, the Volgograd region is the one experiencing active migration pressure" [1].

In connection with this global problem, the leading European States, including Russia, are carrying out consistent work to adapt migrants to the host society.

The analysis of foreign and domestic experience proves that successful adaptation of migrants requires the development of the so-called adaptation infrastructure, that is, a network of educational institutions implementing language and socio-cultural adaptation programs.

To maintain security and stability of the situation within the host country, including production, today we need a solid, purposeful, comprehensive, linguistic, and ethno-cultural policy concerning ethnic and national issues, which should be built both at the state and regional level to take into account both the fundamental issues of national security and local specifics [2].



Today it becomes obvious that the implementation of the proposed Concept of the state migration policy of Russia for the period up to 2025 requires not only the organization of language courses and testing centers, but also the creation of migrant schools. Work in these schools should be carried out under special programs, including the modular system [3]. The programs may contain, for example, a language module that includes Russian language courses by level of proficiency, and a special course on the basics of business Russian language; a legal module that provides studying the basics of legal behavior and the status of foreigners in the Russian Federation, the basics of labor and social legislation, as well as a module of pedagogical support and psychological assistance [4]. Fairness requires us to note that there are training programs for migrants and migrant children, developed by the UNESCO chair at the Moscow Institute of open education. However, these programs are designed for Moscow and the Moscow region and are not focused on the specifics of a particular region [5]. The problem of integrating migrants into the host society is particularly relevant in relation to the production team since it occurs within the framework of a professional productive activity. A non-native speaker of the official state language (here Russian) faces various difficulties which can largely affect the results of his/her work and the effectiveness of production communication in general.

2. Methodology.

To identify obstacles faced by non-native Russian language speakers when implementing production communication, we have carried out a series of interviews with graduate migrants (non-natives) at separate Volgograd universities: Volgograd State University, Volgograd State Medical University, Volgograd State Technical University. In total, 100 people graduated in 2010 – 2017 were interviewed.

The main methods used were surveys and interviews organized at the same time. The "qualitative method" of an in-depth interview was used as one of the approaches practiced within the framework of the so-called "grounded theory". The peculiarity of the methodological approach within a "grounded theory" is that in the study of certain phenomena of social life it is impossible to apply measuring procedures that would fit the framework of traditional variables. This is due to the complexity and individualization of social life, sociological methodology resulted in more attention to the so-called "soft" categories (in the terminology by *Piotr Sztompka*) [6], such as values, friendship, love, trust, etc. This "soft" categories, of course, can also include language and its use in different situations. Qualitative research can be called interpretative, it allows you to get information about the motives of behavior, attitudes of people.

So, we used the method of deep unstructured (unformalized focused) qualitative interview.

Interview, as you know, is a kind of conversation conducted according to a certain plan, involving direct contact between the interviewer and the respondent, and the answers of the latter are either recorded by the interviewer (the assistant), or mechanically (through the recording device).

For interviews we purposively identified informants for whom Russian is not their native language (the people from the national republics of the Russian Federation, other non-natives). In sociology, as a rule, it is considered that questions in the framework of qualitative in-depth interview should be formulated based on the following requirements: they should be monosyllabic, be clear to the informant, not contain a hidden enforcement of the answer.

The interview guide was developed on the basis of aspect dichotomies formulated taking into account the objectives of the study:

1. In the aspect of production communication special interest is given to establish the relationship of " efficiency of production communication :: language quality" in relation to how the use of the language affects communication in the production process.

2. In the aspect of institutional communication the interest is given to establish the relationship of "personal speech settings :: speech expectations about the partner" in relation to the institutional status of the respondent.

In the aspect of tolerance, and hence the efficiency of production communication, it is of interest to establish the relationship "willingness to forgive mistakes in the speech of the communication

partner/elements of language hybridization :: the desire to condescend to one's mistakes in speech" in relation to the interlocutor's nationality [7].

2.1. Production communication. Interview. Step one.

Let's focus on the first block of the interview. The questions, asked within the framework of this block, and the answers to them will allow in the future to identify possible options for the use of the language in different situations of production communication, to operationalize concepts and to create a questionnaire for a wider quantitative survey. The first block included the following questions: 1) How often do you use your native language in the process of production communication? 2) In what situations is it necessary to use Russian correctly?

Since the situations of production communication are considered, the status of the speaker is of an official nature (doctor-colleague, head of the Department, University teacher, etc.), therefore, the requirements for the language quality increases. Here is a fragment of the interview.

Informant A: «Interviewer: When your work colleagues make mistakes, for example, in speech, despite they are native Russian speakers or representatives of other nationalities, do you notice these errors?

Informant: Yes.

Interviewer: How do you treat that?

Informant: Not good. It's terrible.

Interviewer: And why it is in one case...

Informant: The emphasis *звонит-звонит* makes me crazy! Just want to correct. Well, that's if the Russians say that. But, if the non-Russians, it is forgivable.

Interviewer: It turns out that you are condescending to errors in the speech of non-native speakers of the Russian language, and not condescending if they are native speakers. Explain to me why.

Informant: Well, because they are Russians, they are at work and must speak their language competently.

The following fragment shows the great role of the purposes of production interaction. So, if we are talking about informal communication in the process of production communication, the requirements for the language quality are reduced:

«Interviewer: Well, in what conditions do you think a person can be wrong?

Respondent: ... Do you mean when communicating at work?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: Well, how to say, if you communicate on some not quite work-related topics and with colleagues close to you, then you can be wrong. Why not? And if with someone unfamiliar, it may be better not to be mistaken".

2.2. Production communication. Interview. Step two.

The second block included the following questions: Does the use of the language depend on the status of the interlocutor and how?

In different institutional conditions of production communication, respondents usually have different attitudes-expectations regarding the partner's speech. The interviews have clearly demonstrated the dependence of language use on moral norms realized when communicating with elders or people with a higher status at a production department. In particular, this is found in the following extracts from the interview:

«Interviewer: Does the use of the language depend on the status of the interlocutor and how? On the age of the interlocutor? Do you change the language and then the style of speech?

Informant: It happens. With fellow Azeris in Azerbaijan, we sometimes start speaking Azerbaijani at first, attract a couple of claims, a couple of arguments and then change to Russian.

Interviewer: Why does this happen?

Informant: But I can not name the reason as it happens by itself. It happens sometimes that you can not find the right words in Azerbaijanian. And then work starts and, of course, you speak in Russian as the Russians do not like when non-Russian language is used.

Interviewer: But is the style of communication changing there depending on age?

Informant: Yes, certainly. I always try if there is an older person. I communicate respectfully to him even if he's not my boss: "Good day," or "Dear Mr/Ms" is usually used.

Interviewer: I see. Does the use of the language depend on the professional status of the interlocutor?

Informant: Well, it depends. If I talk to my boss, I try to think more so as not to make mistakes. And I try not to use any spoken expressions there.

Furthermore, in relation to the issue of integrating migrants (non-natives) in the host society we had to consider how we can engage representatives of different nationalities in the single production team, i.e. how effective is the communication process. It was necessary to find out the level of tolerance to mistakes made within production communication by the interlocutors and the respondent himself. The range of issues included: 1) Do you allow mistakes in the partner's speech in the process of production communication when communicating with representatives of other nationalities? How do you feel about such errors (if the language is native/national or if the language is not native)? Do you correct the interlocutor? 2) Do you make mistakes in your own speech in a foreign language and do they complicate the process of communication at work?

Conducted interviews show that non-Russian informants as a whole show a high degree of tolerance to interlocutors' errors in the framework of production communication (we speak about Russian language proficiency). Especially high level of tolerance towards those for whom the Russian language is not native (in this case, often no-one often corrects the interlocutor, even with serious errors). Exceptions are cases when the interlocutor himself asks to correct him.

As for the cases when the informants expressed a willingness to correct the interlocutor and consider it important, two obvious approaches to this issue were highlighted in the interviews. The first approach points to the need to correct mainly oral speech, while the second approach focuses mainly on the written language.

"It is necessary to correct (speaking)»:

«Interviewer: And do you think that errors in the speech are permissible? How do you treat that?

Informant: Mistakes, of course, made by non-Russians are permissible, but I still think they need to be corrected. If you are corrected in stress, for example, or other difficult language aspects, I think it is necessary to remember it, or you can look it up in the dictionary if you are in doubt. And you need to fix this error, you should not go on speaking "КАТАЛОГ" or "directOry", otherwise, colleagues will think you don't want to achieve language proficiency.

Interviewer: Well. You said you have an international team in your production department. And how do you feel when your Russian-speaking and non-Russian-speaking interlocutors both make language mistakes?

Informant: Sometimes I notice these mistakes, sometimes I try to correct them more or less delicately. Well, it depends on how closely I communicate with colleagues. If closely, I can try to correct both a non-Russian and Russian speakers. But I actually try to correct only non-Russians.

Interviewer: And how do they respond to these corrections? Is someone irritated or on the contrary, understands?

Informant: Some are actually trying to correct their own mistakes and others just ignore them. Well, Russian, of course, may not like that they are corrected by a foreigner.

"It is necessary to correct (writing)»:

«Interviewer: Is it important for you to speak correct Russian? And why, if so?

Informant: I do not like, for example, when I receive emails and there are many errors. I can immediately understand that a person is non-Russian. And if in writing someone makes a lot of mistakes, you do not want to work with such a person. For me it is a very important indicator. So I try to always check everything in my speech before I send a letter.

Regarding their own mistakes in speech the informants have shown a fairly high level of demands on themselves. It should be noted that this circumstance is probably due to the fact that they all received higher education and seek to prove themselves as specialists in a production team.

2.3. Production communication. Interview. Step three.

And finally, the last block. Within the framework of this block, it was necessary to establish a self-assessment of the respondent's level of language proficiency (his satisfaction with the quality) first, and then to find out whether and how the respondent is ready to work (or is already working) on the quality of his speech to improve the efficiency of production communication. The following range of issues was proposed: 1) How do you work and do you actually work on improving the literacy in a non-native language? 2) Do you think you speak a foreign language well? If so, are you ready to proceed to improve its quality anyway? If not, and it prevents you from effective production communication, how are you going to solve such difficulties?

All interviews are recorded on tape, followed by transcription and further categorial analysis. A categorial analysis is carried out on the principle of 'bottom-up', that is, when categories are derived from the text and are not "superimposed" on it as a matrix. Such a technique in the English sociological literature is also called "discursive analysis" or "qualitative content analysis". In the Russian sociological tradition, where content analysis is considered to be more quantitative, the term "discursive analysis" is more often used. As already mentioned above, "discourse analysis" reveals the meaning of a phenomenon and does not reveal the frequency or nature of its manifestation. This method is closely related to the methodology of "comprehensive sociology" by *Maximilian Weber* [8]. When using this technique, all interviews are "broken" into certain semantic pieces corresponding to the categories derived from the interviews themselves.

This method is not representative in the sense that we cannot transfer its data to the whole entity due to representative generalization. This is not the goal. The task of this method is to form a "map of opinions" and characterize the most typical logic of informants' reasoning, which subsequently will help in completing a detailed questionnaire or formalized (structured) interview. In this sense, generalization is possible at a category level.

It should be noted that almost none of the interviewed informants assesses his speech as ideal and most are ready to work or are already improving it. The interviews clearly revealed two main approaches to work on improving one's speech. The first approach is connected with readiness to change the speech, being guided by competent native Russian-speakers in a production team. The second approach is related to the willingness to work on the quality of speech through the use of books, dictionaries and reference books. As a result, we can say that regardless of the informants' nationality, all of them are ready to solve the difficulties arising in production communication and to improve the quality of the language used.

All informants noted that the level of knowledge of the official language of the production team (in our case – the Russian language) largely affects the effectiveness of professional activities, so the non-natives are ready to improve their knowledge of the Russian language to achieve efficient production activity. Most of the informants also noted that their own efforts were not always enough. When asked by the interviewer how they would like to improve their level of Russian, the majority of informants said that they would like to attend any courses that would focus on their interests related to work in the production team..

3. Results and Discussion

The conducted focused (in-depth) interviews allowed us to trace the specifics of the relationship between the level of language proficiency in the host language society and the effectiveness of production communication (for example, in the Volgograd region).

Interviews illustrate that a language is an essential channel for shaping social practices. This is manifested, in particular, in compliance with certain language requirements that are implemented in communication within the framework of production communication.

As a medium of communication, a language acts, in terms of sociology by *Niklas Luhmann* [8], as a means of creating a generalized (social, group) trust. In particular, errors in oral speech, as the interview showed, can be perceived as marks (symbols, indicators) of intra-group trust. At this level, language (oral speech) can become a tool to facilitate, simplify (in the categories by Luhmann) life in a society or in a separate production team. In this context, at the same time, there is a link between literacy in written language and social status, which is of an institutional nature. In terms by *Talcott Parsons* [9] the Institute is a set of roles and expectations and related status relations that form the context of the corresponding social interaction. Language in this sense, as revealed by in-depth interviews, acts as a medium through which these social roles and expectations are formed. In general, the interviews confirmed the constructivist hypothesis about language as one of the tools for forming the social structure. There appropriate discourses are set through language and manifest themselves, in particular, in authority.

Based on the results obtained in the course of the interviews, the problem of integration of non-Russian migrants (we are talking about foreign students studying in Russian universities) in the host society, in particular in the production team, we offer the following activities:

- conducting specialized workshops on the correction of language behavior in the system of higher education;
- organizing (on the basis of separate universities in the region) linguoeconomic schools for migrants (non-natives).

First trend includes: - '*conducting specialized workshops on the correction of language behavior in the system of higher education*' involves the organization of work with students whose Russian language is not native.

Specialized workshops can be organized at the departments working within the Federal target program "Russian language". These workshops are proposed to include the following types of classes taking into account future specialization and fields of study: 1) preparation and conduct of business and role-playing games (for example, a business meeting demonstrates operational, organizational, planning, controlling functions); preparation and conduct of a linguistic business game "Negotiations"; analysis of specific situations (for example, negotiations have reached an impasse; business letters have to be responded to); 2) conduct of various psychological trainings (for example, competence in "intra-corporate business communication"; "competent contact with a colleague"; "increasing stress resistance in business contacts"), etc.

To achieve the planned results in these specialized workshops it is recommended to use a variety of educational technologies: 1) information-communication and developing technologies aimed at the formation of knowledge systems, memorization and free operation (the use of new information technologies for independent replenishment of knowledge, including the use of technical and electronic means of information); 2) activity- and practice-oriented technologies aimed at forming a system of professional practical skills that provide the ability to perform professional activities (analysis of speech and behavioral errors, role-play games, creation of sample documents, search for optimal solutions to a specific production problem by brainstorming); 3) developing problem-oriented technologies aimed at formation and development of problem thinking, mental activity, an ability to see and formulate problems, choose ways and means to solve them.

The second activity includes the organization (on the basis of individual universities in the region) of linguoeconomic schools for migrants (non-natives) and facilitates the integration of migrants linking their future with the region and the socio-cultural space of the region. Within these schools non-natives working in different production teams in the region can improve their level of Russian language proficiency to achieve more rapid adaptation in a team.

Within the framework of these schools it is advisable:

- to develop a program of migrants' adaptation, which includes modular themes and the programme of activities and training aimed at cultural and linguistic adaptation of migrants in a particular region; educational and methodical complexes for social and cultural-linguistic adaptation of migrants based on inclusion of the course "Russian as a foreign language"; training programmes for

specialists in different fields with the mandatory inclusion of a section "Culture of interethnic communication»;

- to carry out explanatory work on main provisions of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, legislation, "Code of interethnic communication", containing guidelines for forming high-level culture of interethnic communication;
- to expand the network of cultural and information national centers, to conduct reviews and competitions among them for the best staging;
- to establish systematic coverage of the problems and the best examples of interethnic communication, to stimulate the activities of journalists specializing in interethnic relations, to provide them with the necessary information, to hold press conferences, competitions for the best publication about the lives of people of different nationalities, about the experience of interethnic communication;
- to organize permanent exhibitions in museums, palaces of culture, cinemas, cultural centers with a display of history, traditions, cultural achievements of the peoples living in the region.

The work of the proposed linguoecological schools should be systematic, consistent and widely covered in the media of the region. For effective operation of schools it is necessary to:

- develop urban, district and regional programs of integration and cultural and language adaptation of migrants, which reflect the entire system of activities with agreed upon goals, objectives, time, performers, resources, taking into account local characteristics in interethnic relations;
- conduct monitoring of interethnic relations, oral and written surveys, statistical and scientific surveys in order to timely identify problems in interethnic communication and find ways to solve them;
- create regional, city and district coordination councils, designed to ensure joint, coordinated work of all structures in the field of interethnic relations;
- study, generalize and disseminate the most effective models of interethnic interaction;
- hold conferences, "round tables", dialogue platforms, discussions, exchanges of views on the most important and controversial issues of interethnic cooperation and thereby prevent the emergence of ethnic conflicts in the workplace.

4. Conclusion

The interviews showed that the level of knowledge of the official language of the production team (in our case – the Russian language) largely affects the effectiveness of professional activities. The non-natives are ready to improve their knowledge of the Russian language to achieve efficient production activity, but their own efforts often not enough to achieve a positive result. Non-Russian respondents stressed that they would like to attend any courses that would focus on their interests related to work in the production team.

The solution of the mentioned problems is possible with organizing and holding specialized workshops for the correction of linguistic behavior in the system of higher education, establishing linguoeconomic schools for non-Russian migrants on the basis of separate universities in the region.

Thus, the efficiency of migrants' adaptation (non-natives) in the host society and the production team is largely dependent on joint systematic sequential activities of the state regional agencies, relevant professionals, and media.

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