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EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS ON ACADEMIC MOBILITY DEVELOPMENT IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN PROCESS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION*

The goal of the article is to present and analyze experimental results of the three stage experimental study aimed to substantiate effectiveness of the introduced modified project technology targeting development of academic mobility in university students in the process of professionally oriented foreign language acquisition. Academic mobility of university students is understood as a dynamic, integral personal quality consisting of a number of interrelated and interdependent components. The studied quality is essential in adaptation to a dynamic variety of the changing environment inclusive of educational and professional areas. Academic mobility is developed in the process of mastering professionally oriented foreign language. A modified project technology is employed to realize the three-tiered goal of the learning process: to develop foreign language competency, to enhance independent study skills, and to establish and strengthen academic mobility as a personal quality. Results of the experiment, presented in the article, validate our hypothesis concerning effectiveness of the project technology and the set of pedagogical conditions necessary and sufficient for academic mobility development in university students.

Key words: academic mobility, integral personal quality, interrelated components, modified project technology, language acquisition

Integration of the Russian higher education system into the single European Higher Education Area has exposed the pivotal need for students' academic mobility development essential for the system's external competitiveness and attractiveness. The category of "academic mobility" is viewed by the reformers of the Russian and European educational systems as a factor and an instrument facilitative in their enhancement and promotion. According to the statements of some representatives of the European educational community, academic mobility is understood as a social phenomenon expressed in free access to recognized centers of knowledge for the purpose of new knowledge acquisition and professional competency development [12].

To become a beneficiary of arising opportunities a person needs to develop particular qualities that would enable him or her to practice academic mobility on all its levels and enjoy the benefits of new academic and professional environment. Therefore, a number of national and foreign researchers approach academic mobility as an integral personal quality essential for comfortable adaptation to a dynamic variety of the changing environment inclusive of academic and professional settings.

One of the characteristic features of the academically mobile person is his ability to communicate and cooperate in a foreign language (predominantly English) in order to solve challenging issues and pressing problems, transfer and produce advanced knowledge. Personal qualities and characteristics develop in the process of active engagement and goal oriented education. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that development of academic mobility as a personal qual-

ity should be incorporated into the process of foreign language teaching targeting enhancement of communicative language competence and become one of the goals of foreign language teaching and learning.

The challenge of bringing up academically mobile individuals was laid upon universities as centers of knowledge and research. In the course of our research aimed at academic mobility development in university students it was found out that: 1) academic mobility development is not considered one of the goals of the foreign language teaching at the university; 2) most of the students have a rather segmented understanding of what academic mobility as a personal quality is; 3) in the process of foreign language teaching the potential of pedagogical technologies is not sufficiently used for enhancement and development of human qualities.

A thorough analysis of scientific, research, pedagogical and methodological literature; existing practices of teaching English helped to reveal a number of contradictions: 1) between objective demand of the society for academically mobile graduates and insufficient research and development of theoretical and methodological foundations necessary for their training; 2) between renewed content of the foreign language education and traditional, subject-oriented language teaching; 3) between significance of the academic mobility development and incomplete elaboration of education environment facilitative in its enhancement; 4) between high potential of pedagogical technologies and their insignificant use in the process of language teaching for the purpose of human qualities' development.

To solve the problem of academic mobility development we had to resolve a number of tasks: substantiate our definition of the studied personal quality; identify and substantiate component structure of academic mobility as an integral personal quality; reveal pedagogical conditions necessary for its establishment.

We understand academic mobility as a personal integral quality developed in educational environment. The quality is presented by a dynamic condition of its interrelated and interdependent components and is instrumental in adaptation to new environment, subsequent inner alteration, and further personal growth of the individual.

Having conducted comparative analysis of different types of mobilities (social, socio-professional, socio-cultural, professional, and pedagogical) [2], [4], [6], [7], [11] and personality structure [9] we identified the following interrelated and interdependent components making up academic mobility as a personal quality: value-based, cognitive, task-oriented, and reflexive-assessment components with corresponding determiners: motivation of affiliation, motivation of success; ability and readiness to use foreign language in professional and social settings; founded on tolerance ability to work in teams; ability and readiness to assess results of personal work critically. We have also defined and described each level (low, middle and high) of every component using existing practices and test materials [1], [3], [5], [8], [10], [13], [14].

We have revealed and substantiated that the following set of pedagogical conditions is facilitative in

the establishment and promotion of academic mobility as a personal integral quality: integration of the competence-based, task-oriented and student-centered approaches; orientation on a complex development of key and professional competences targeted in the process of professionally-oriented language teaching; establishment of the context environment in the process of professionally-oriented foreign language teaching; provision of differential and advanced teaching when dealing with professionally significant topics and problems; use of interactive methods of teaching.

Realization of the set of the above-mentioned pedagogical conditions for the purpose of academic mobility development is achieved by the employment of the modified project technology, which is grounded on the principles of the competence, student-centered, and context based approaches by this achieving evolvement of personal qualities necessary for academic mobility establishment.

The suggested modified project technology consists of five consecutive steps aimed at the enhancement and development of each component of the targeted quality and quality as a whole entity. The modified technology is characterized by the three-tiered goal (enhancement of independent study skills instrumental in solving problems of social and professional character, development of the foreign language competence, and academic mobility establishment); use of interactive methods of teaching; regular personal assessments; authentic professionally-oriented situations based on social and professional problems of personal significance.

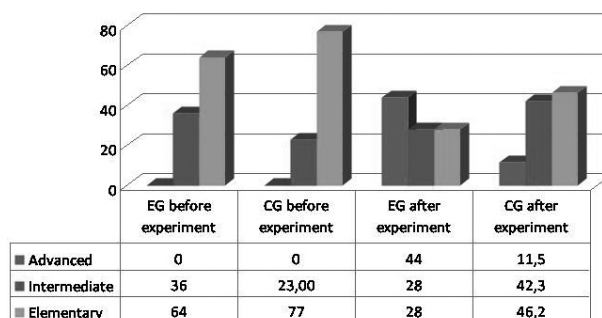
Dynamics of academic mobility components' development

<i>Dynamics of "motivation of success" development</i>								
Levels of development	Number of students		%		Number of students		%	
	before	after	before	after	before	after	before	after
High	7	20	28 %	80 %	4	8	15,3 %	30,75 %
Middle	12	4	48 %	16 %	14	9	53,8 %	34,6 %
Low	6	1	24 %	4 %	8	9	30,75 %	34,6 %
<i>Dynamics of "motivation of affiliation" development</i>								
High	5	13	20 %	52 %	6	7	23 %	26,9 %
Middle	13	11	52 %	44 %	12	13	46,2 %	50 %
Low	7	1	28 %	4 %	8	6	30,75 %	23,1 %
<i>Dynamics of communicative competency development</i>								
High	0	11	0 %	44 %	0	3	0 %	11,6 %
Middle	13	11	52 %	44 %	12	15	46,2 %	57,6 %
Low	12	3	48 %	12 %	14	8	53,8 %	30,75 %
<i>Dynamics of independent study skills' development</i>								
High	4	11	16 %	44 %	3	4	11,6 %	15,5 %
Middle	15	12	60 %	48 %	18	19	69,2 %	73 %
Low	6	2	24 %	8 %	5	3	19,2 %	11,5 %
<i>Dynamics of team work skills' development</i>								
High	4	10	16 %	40 %	3	5	11,6 %	19,2 %
Middle	15	14	60 %	56 %	16	16	61,5 %	61,5 %
Low	6	1	24 %	4 %	7	5	26,9 %	19,2 %
<i>Dynamics of critical and assessment skills' development</i>								
High	2	11	8 %	44 %	1	3	3,8 %	11,6 %
Middle	13	11	52 %	44 %	13	14	50 %	53,8 %
Low	10	3	40 %	12 %	12	9	46,2 %	34,6 %

Establishment and enhancement of academic mobility is a purposeful, task-oriented, endemic, and managed process of gradual and integrated evolution of all components making up academic mobility as a personal quality in unity. Having analyzed the works of the foreign and national researchers pertaining component structure of human qualities (inclusive of different types of mobility) [3], [9], [14] and levels of their development, we have defined three stages of academic mobility development in students: 1) Advanced level – when all components of academic mobility or most of them have high level of development; 2) Intermediate level – when all components or half of them have middle level of development; 3) Elementary level – when one of the components has a low level of development.

To test and verify our hypothesis concerning effective development of academic mobility in university students in the process of professionally-oriented foreign language teaching, which incorporates the use of the suggested modified project-based technology, we conducted an experiment.

The experiment was carried out at Petrozavodsk State University in 2010–2013 among students of Civil Engineering Faculty and consisted of three consecutive steps (background research, hypothesis construction, hypothesis testing and data analysis). The total amount of students involved in the experiment numbers 213 students, including 25 students in the experimental group (EG) and 26 students in the control group (CG). In the process of the experiment, teaching of professionally-oriented foreign language aimed at academic mobility (as a personal quality) development was conducted in CG with the use of traditional methods of teaching, in EG – with the employment of suggested modified project technology. We defined and compared the levels of academic mobility components' development: value based component ("motivation of affiliation" and "motivation of success"); cognitive component (foreign language communicative competence); task-oriented component (independent study skills, team work skills); reflexive-assessment component (critical thinking and assessment skills) in both groups (EG and CG) twice: at the initial and final stages of the experiment. The obtained results on academic mobility components development are presented in table. At the end of the experiment, when analyzing academic mobility components' development, it was revealed that students in both groups (EG and CG) demonstrate positive evolution of cognitive and reflexive-assessment components, though develop-



Dynamics of academic mobility development

ment dynamics of the mentioned components is much higher in student of EG: 44 % against 11,6 % in students of CG, which in turn speaks of a higher level of academic mobility development. The level of "motivation of success" has decreased in some CG students: 30,7 % against 34,6 % (low level) and does not have the same evident dynamics as in EG students. Dynamics of "motivation of affiliation", independent study skills, and team work skills' development has positive evolution in both groups, though students from EG demonstrate higher levels of the mentioned components. Considering the fact that academic mobility development is a purposeful, systemic, and gradual process occurring in conditions of educational environment we interpret this transformation of personal quality as a step by step transition from one level of development to another. It is a process of personal growth in which development of all components is interrelated and interdependent. Having applied our description formula of the levels of academic mobility development we came up with the following data presented on picture.

The data reflected in picture 1 demonstrate that the number of students with advanced level of academic mobility development is much higher in EG: 44 % against 11,5 % in CG. We attribute these results to the effectiveness of the modified project technology used in the course of professionally oriented foreign language teaching. The obtained results testify of the favorable effect created by the set of defined and substantiated pedagogical conditions realized by the employment of the modified project technology.

We find it necessary to stress that the modified project technology can be used for the purpose of essential personal qualities development in the course of teaching other disciplines. Most notably is the fact that existing pedagogical technologies can be modified to meet growing specific needs and requirements of contemporary educational community.

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