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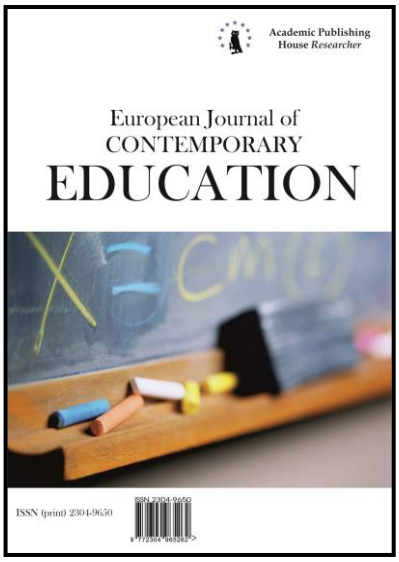

Written Discourse as a Product of a Completed Level of Professionally-Oriented Foreign Language Speech Competence of University Students

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Abstract

Contemporary foreign-language education focuses on the development of multicultural language personality of the university graduate, who has necessary competencies to implement in professional activities. One of such competences is professionally-oriented foreign language communicative competence that is responsible for the capability of a future specialist to take active part in professionally-oriented intercultural oral and written communication.

The article is aimed to determine the purpose of speech competence as a component of professionally-oriented foreign language communicative competence in the implementation of written foreign-language communication through written discourse, and to identify the characteristics of the latter for teaching to make up diverse types of written discourse included in the curriculum of a non-linguistic university. Leading approaches to study this problem are competence-focused, professionally-oriented, person-centered and communicative and cognitive approaches, considering professionally-oriented foreign language speech competence a complex system with written speech activity as one of its components, that serves communication through various types of written discourse. The article presents the composition of professionally-oriented foreign language speech competence and describes typological features of written discourse as a product of a completed level of this competence. The article describes manifestation of these features in the abstract at the strategic, tactical, genre-related and linguo-rhetorical levels, and the results of experimental work on teaching to make up abstract as a type of discourse that identifies its contribution to the formation of professionally-oriented foreign language speech competence.

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The materials of the article are of practical value for those who study professionally-oriented foreign language speech competence and written discourse as a product of a completed level of this competence, as well as for those who teach students to make up diverse types of foreign language written discourse.

Keywords: communication; professionally-oriented foreign language speech competence; written discourse; abstract; non-linguistic university.

1. Introduction

According to the requirements of the Federal State Higher Educational standards (Federal State ...), foreign language communicative competence is the specific purpose of teaching foreign languages in a non-linguistic university. A completed level of this competence provides the graduate with necessary capabilities to work fully with foreign language information sources, to get best access to world achievements, to contact with foreign partners in the field of professional activity.

In this regard, teaching a foreign language in a university acquires a context-focused, i.e. professionally-oriented character (Bezukladnikov et al., 2014), which is based, according to P.I. Obraztsov, on taking into account the needs of students in learning a foreign language, oriented to special features of the future profession. It involves the combination of mastering a professionally-oriented foreign language and the development of students' personal qualities, knowledge of culture of the foreign language speaking country and the acquisition of special skills and competences based on professional and linguistic knowledge (Obraztsov, Ivanova, 2005).

It is obvious that in the course of such training the foreign language communicative competence acquires a professionally-oriented character (Kolesnikov, 2015). Firstly, it allows us identify professionally-oriented foreign language communicative competence (POFLCC) as an integrative personal characteristic of a specialist reflecting his/her readiness and capability to take part in professionally-oriented intercultural and interpersonal foreign language communication based on a combination of subject and linguistic knowledge, skills and competences, as well as the experience of future professional activity that help the graduates to solve professionally important tasks. Secondly, this fact makes it possible to assert that the components of POFLCC also acquire professionally-oriented character.

The speech competence, as an object of this research, is one of the component parts of POFLCC. It is responsible for the ability of students to perform listening, speaking, reading and writing as types of speech activity serving foreign-language communication in the professional sphere. Therefore in order to acquire professionally-oriented foreign language speech competence (POFLSC), in the process of foreign language learning students must be involved into all types of speech activity in situations that imitate real professional communication. At the same time, working practice at the university shows that foreign language written speech activity is not in focus today. Hence appears students' inability to make up diverse types of written discourse (WD) with the help of which they could participate in professional interaction with colleagues foreign language speakers. In this regard, the aim of this study is to present POFLSC and to prove that students' ability to make up diverse types of WD that helps students take active part in professionally-oriented foreign language communication, can be identified as the outcome of its forming.

2. Materials and Methods

In the process of research of POFLSC and WD as a product of its completed level in non-linguistic university the following methods were used: systematization and generalization of concepts and facts, working on model and project, standards analysis, experiment. The aim of the research was to determine the efficiency of POFLSC in the implementation of professionally-oriented written foreign language communication by means of various types of WD and to identify specific features of the latter. It will help the graduates meet the requirements set in Federal national higher educational standards.

To achieve the aim we have used basic theoretical issues of competence-focused, professionally-oriented, person-centered and communicative and cognitive approaches on the basis of the Kirov State Medical University. The research was carried out step by step to meet the challenges proving the following points: a) to consider communication as the target of the process

of POFLCC forming, and to demonstrate the implementation role of diverse types of speech activity; b) to analyze POFLSC and present it as a model, to specify the content of its components corresponding to the non-linguistic university environment; c) to undertake a comparative analysis of the text and discourse to prove that WD with its professionally-oriented foreign language features will act as a completed outcome of POFLSC; d) to identify typological features of WD and show how they function in abstract which is one of targets in learning a foreign language in non-linguistic university; e) to carry out experimental work with first-year students (a total of 25 subjects) to prove by means of G-criterion sign test that WD acts as a completed outcome of POFLSC.

3. Results

The ambiguity of the concept of "communication" makes us find its interpretation at the philosophical level (M.S. Kagan), and applying its content in regard to professionally-oriented written foreign language communication. Thus the latter is considered as a process of "subject – subject interaction" (Kagan, 1988), and presents its first component - interacting subjects, having specific characteristics and being representatives of different cultures with their traditions and values.

One of the subjects performs the function of a writer and aims at initiating, constructing and supervising the process of making up a written composition for the complete and accurate recording of professionally important information, as well as the ideas associated with it, and its transmission to the second subject (recipient) in order to influence him/her and get the desired outcome (Cheremisinova, 2015).

Social and cultural environment where interactions of the subjects take place acts as the second component of communication and reflects the sphere of professional activity of non-linguistic university graduates. In a separate act of communication the environment is represented by a social and cultural situation in the combination of speech-related and non-speech-related conditions organizing subject-subject interaction in the process of professionally-oriented written foreign-language communication.

The teaching means necessary for functioning of communication can be identified as its third component. In this research these means are represented in written types of speech activity (reading and writing), the students' capability to make up these types of speech activity that is provided by a complete level of POFLSC. Analysis of Russian and foreign methodological literature (I.R. Maksimova, R.P. Milrud (2000), V.V. Safonova (1996), A.V. Khutorskoy (2005), A.N. Shchukin (2006); L. Bachman (1987), H. Boyer (1990), J.A. van Ek (1986), M. Canale, M. Swain (1980), etc.) has shown the ambiguity of interpretation of this concept and motivated us to turn to the concept of "educational competence", suggested by A.V. Khutorskoy, who defined it with the reference to professionally-oriented teaching. In his opinion, this competence comprises a set of interrelated personal characteristics (knowledge, skills, competences, methods of activity) assigned to a certain range of subjects and processes, and it manifests itself in the readiness and capability to undertake high-quality productive activities in this sphere (Khutorskoy, 2005). It makes possible to introduce the POFLSC of non-linguistic university students as readiness and capability to undertake all types of speech activity as means of professionally-oriented foreign language communication, based on knowledge of the ways of receiving, comprehending, interpreting and transmitting foreign language information, as well as the ability to use them for participation in written/oral communication, important and valuable for their future professional activity (Dmitrievykh, Kuklina, 2016).

Composition of POFLSC is a set of social, subject and procedural components. The social component is determined by the future professional activity of students and reflects social and cultural environment in which this competence should function. It includes spheres, themes and social and cultural situations of foreign language communication, typical for professional activities of future specialist.

The subject component assumes both professional knowledge, reflecting special professional features, as well as subject knowledge about the methods of receiving, comprehending, interpreting and transmitting information. The first group of knowledge can be obtained from professional texts in the framework of spheres, themes and social and cultural situations of professionally-oriented foreign language communication represented in the social component of the competence.

Information on methods to implement speech activity is found in specially prepared instruction notes accompanying these texts.

And, finally, the procedural component appears in the form of a set of speech skills that provide students with the ability to implement all types of speech activity in social and cultural situations of foreign language communication, determined by their future professional activity (Dmitrievykh, Kuklina, 2016). According to A.N. Shchukin teaching of written communication in the professional sphere prevails in non-linguistic universities (Shchukin, 2006), so the procedural component of POFLSC can be presented in the form of skills: a) to read, comprehend and interpret foreign texts using various kinds of reading with a partial reference to the dictionary; and b) to make up abstract to foreign language text.

The research focuses on written speech skills as means of professionally-oriented written foreign-language communication, the effectiveness of which depends on current social and cultural situation and the communicative task, writer's and recipient's individual characteristics and their experience in a foreign language. They determine both the process of functioning of written communication, and WD as its product.

The latter is presented as a written work organized in accordance with the social and cultural situation and communicative task, reflecting the writer's individual characteristics and his/her speaking experience in a foreign language and intended for the imaginary recipient (Kuklina, Cheremisinova, 2016). WD comes to an imaginary subject in the form of text presented either on paper or electronically. In this regard, WD, on the one hand, the signs traditionally inherent in the text, such as integrity, complete character, compositional design, stylistic features, cohesion, etc. (I.R. Galperin (2007), N.P. Golovina (2004), G. Kadyyr (2016), E.S. Ustinova (2016), and others).

The characteristics mentioned above can be combined into the following groups of features: 1) genre-related (stylistic feature); 2) text-related (cohesion, integrity, completeness); and 3) linguo-rhetorical (compositional design). At the same time, comparative analysis of the text and discourse showed that WD also contains specific features, determined by the functioning of professionally-oriented foreign language communication. These features influence the outcome of written communication, i.e. the recipient's response or action expressing his/her attitude to the point.

WD produced in the process of functioning of professionally-oriented foreign language communication can act as a completed outcome of POFLSC only if students take into account not only features classically assigned to a text but also specific ones. Let's characterize the latter more detailed, using Russian and foreign researches (N.D. Arutyunova (1990), N.P. Golovina (2004), S.K. Gural (2014), V.K. Bhatia (2004), G. Cook (2004), T.A. van Dijk (1997), I. Karg (2007), S.K. Kaufmann (1997), X. Roth (2016), H. Trescher (2015), J. Wildt (2016) and others).

The first group of features is associated with the planning of communicative behavior, when the writer with his/her individual characteristics, analyses social and cultural situation of professionally-oriented foreign language communication, known characteristics of the recipient, possible relationship in the process of communication, and defines his/her communicative task. In other words, it outlines a strategy for producing WD that allows us, after N.P. Golovina, to call them strategical features.

The second group suggests selecting means of professionally-oriented foreign language communication in writing. They should be adequate to enable the student fulfil the task set within a certain social and cultural situation. They should also take into account the individual's characteristics and his/her communication experience in a foreign language. This group will be determined in this article as a tactical feature realizing the strategy of choice (Golovina, 2004).

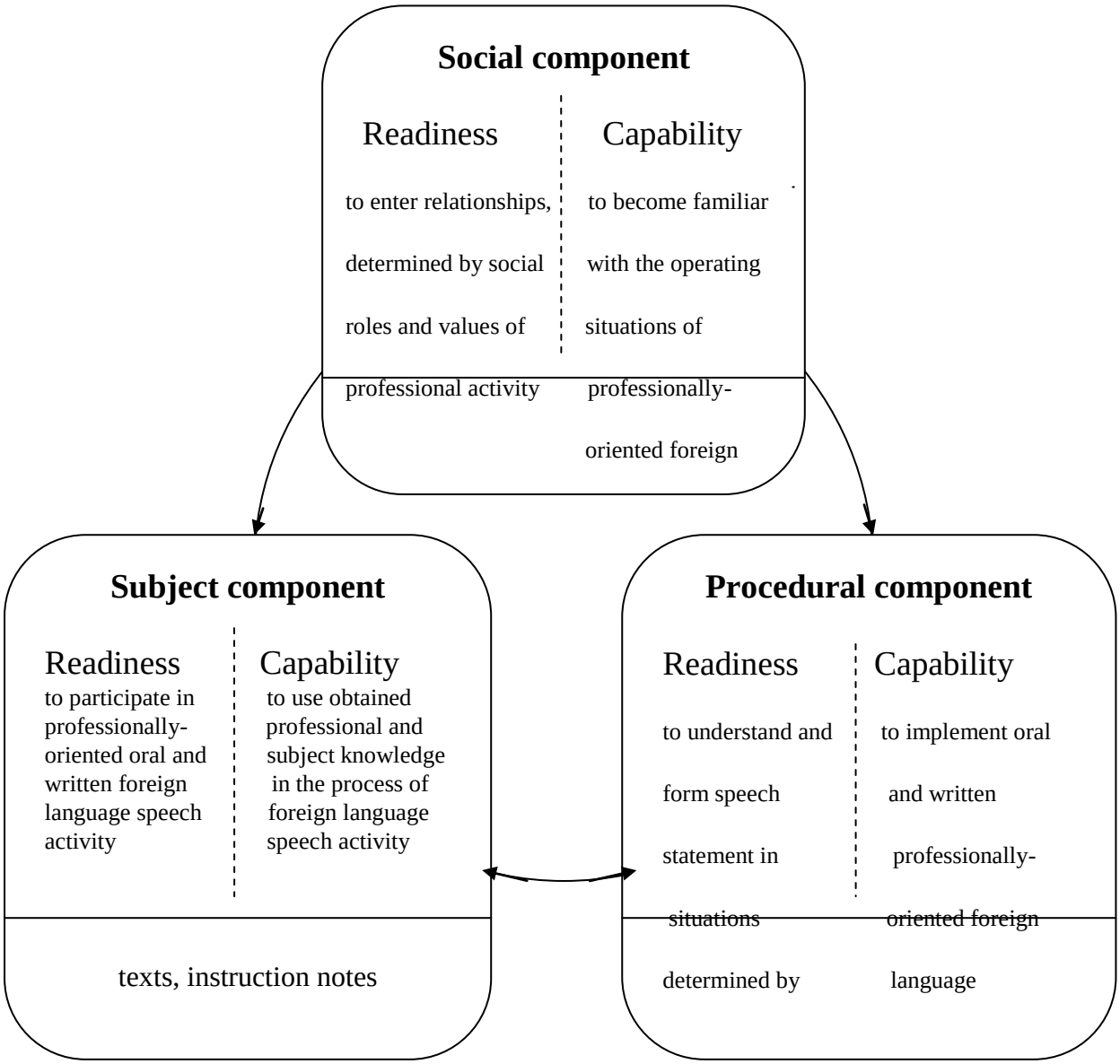

Fig. 1. Model of professionally-oriented foreign language speech competence

Therefore, the written discourse as a product of professionally-oriented foreign language communication can be characterized according to 5 groups of features: 1) strategical which is responsible for planning communicative behavior; 2) tactical which is associated with selecting adequate means of professionally-oriented foreign language communication in writing; 3) genre-related which is responsible for the range of genres in the written speech and the choice of genre-and-style related norms; 4) text-related including cohesion, integrity and complete character of WD; 5) linguo-rhetorical revealing in the composition and a certain linguo-rhitorical structure of WD (Kuklina, Cheremisinova, 2016).

The picture shows that a piece of written discourse doesn't only have features classically assigned to a text but also has some specific ones (strategical and tactical) which are determined by the fact of its production for a specific function - professionally-oriented foreign language communication. This fact enables WD to act as a completed outcome of POFLSC. Hence when a text presented either on paper or electronically is addressed to a recipient it has to contain all the range of the typological features mentioned above. Whereas the latter are sure to reveal their peculiarities only on the strategical, tactical, genre-related and linguo-rhetorical levels. The reason is text-related features can be assigned to any type of WD.

Let's characterize how the typological features function in abstract which is one of targets in learning a foreign language in non-linguistic unuversity. Abstract suggests concise, highly

compressed logical rendering of the original text (source) to focus the recipient's attention by offering him/her brief information, its subject, value, purpose. Abstract gives an insight of what the original text is about providing the readers with the main ideas without uncovering them (Ariyan, Shamov, 2017).

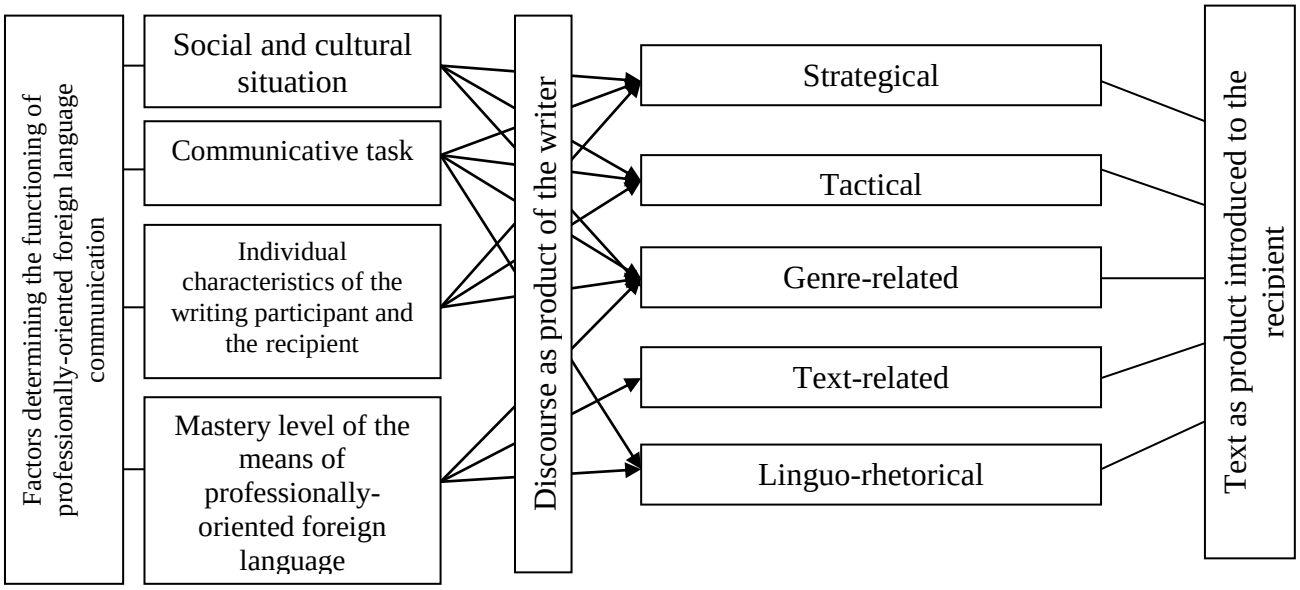

Fig. 2. Typological features of written discourse as a product of professionally-oriented foreign language communication

Characterising this type of WD according to the typological features we should, first and foremost, limit types of relations between participants of professionally-oriented foreign language communication in a certain social and cultural situation. They result as a sort of response from a combination of non-speech-related conditions (purpose of communication, object in focus, etc.) and speech-related conditions (necessary and relevant language and speech material in the experience of both the writing agent and the recipient). These conditions manage the interaction of WD communicants.

This research focuses on such relations as social status type, role type on the one hand and activity type and moral type on the other hand which are integral to the first two types. Social status type relations are revealed when participants representing diverse occupations interact (a doctor, an economist, an accountant, etc.). Role type relations arise from the roles the participants play within formal/informal professionally-oriented foreign language communication. In any case the participants act motivated by certain moral issues, such as humanism, tolerance, tact, responsibility, etc. (Passov, Kuzovleva, 2010).

Secondly, we take into account that both the writing agent and a recipient have a mastery of macro-operations necessary for the language in question. Moreover, the level of the mastery should be adequate enough to make up WD of a certain type.

This description of abstract as a type of WD has been implemented in the experimental work with first-year students at Kirov State Medical University. The objective was to teach students write abstracts in a foreign language valid for the country of its origin. For this purpose several complexes of exercises have been made up. They comprised introductory analytical exercises, conceptually speech exercises and speech exercises aiming at forming the skills in question concerning abstract as a type of WD. They are accompanied by notes explaining peculiarities of each type of discourse, the instruments how to structure each type, the vocabulary and grammar contents, the assessment criteria. The quality of written works after the implementation of these complexes enabled us to detect their contribution in forming professionally-oriented foreign language speech communication and evaluate its level in non-linguistic students according to the given below criteria and parameters.

Table 1. Description of abstract as a type of written discourse

Feature	Description
Strategical and tactical	A social and cultural situation includes relations between the participants of formal communication representing diverse profession groups. Communicative task: to inform, to report. Individual descriptions of the participants meaningful for communication: social experience, social speech status, social roles, etc.
Genre-related	Written discourse is characterized by highly informative nature, generalisations, compression (500-1500 characters); abstracted topics, absence of subjective judgements, precision, logics, choice of the vocabulary pre-determined by the original text; uses simple language available to a wide range of specialists; standard terms, set-expressions, book terms (impersonal sentences, passive structures, a big quantity of compound nouns).
Linguo-rhetorical	Written discourse has the following structure: а) information on the resourses; б) subject-related column; в) theme; г) the body of the abstract; д) the author's conclusion(s).

Table 2. Criteria and parameters to evaluate the completed level of professionally-oriented foreign language communication

Feature	Level	
	high	Point
Strategical	Communicative tasks have been realized completely, all parameters of a communicative situation have been determined, description of an individual recipient and his foreign language communication experience have been specified ;	5
Tactical	All parameters of a social and cultural situation have been taken into account, учтены все параметры социокультурной ситуации, description of an individual recipient and his foreign language communication experience, life style, maxims, basic values, behavior standards, traditions characteristic of the comminicants' culture have been specified; completely adequate text	5
Genre-related		5
Choice of genre	The genre is fully in accord with the communicative task, social and cultural situation;	5
Genre and style norm	Genre and style norms are completely observed;	5
Text-related		5
paragraphing	The rhetorical structure within a paragraph is complete;	5
Cohesion	Diverse and relevant means of cohesion, 100% cohesion;	5
Integrity	The theme is revealed completely, the given information is relevant, the rendering is subsequent and logical;	5

Language-related	Adequate use of vocabulary and grammar, several gross mistakes;	5
Linguo-rhetorical	Linguo-rhetorical structure is completely observed;	5
Total		45

Within the experimental work the results of before-experiment and after-experiment tests have been compared and showed positive dynamics in forming professionally-oriented foreign language speech communication. The analysis detected 6,2% increase in the level of the desired competence as compared with the original figures.

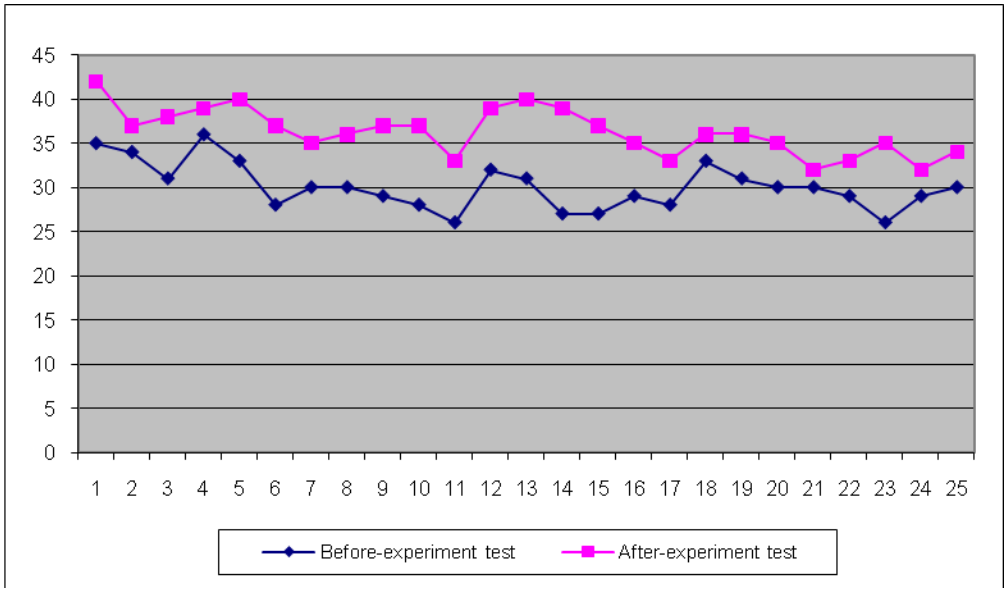

Fig. 3. Comparing the results of before-experiment and after-experiment tests

To prove reliability and validity of the results the data have been processed statistically by means of G-criterion sign test (Ashikhmina et al., 2014) which proved with 95% validity the positive change. The results demonstrate the relevance of the hypothesis: the WD is available at the completed level of professionally-oriented foreign language speech communication in non-linguistic university students.

4. Discussions

In this research we have used:

- concepts on structure and contents of communication in philosophy introduced by M.S. Kagan, who assigns success of communication to, firstly, its participants as unique individuals, secondly, their mastery of the means necessary to achieve the desired results, and, finally, to peculiarity of the social and cultural environment that determines the character, contents and style of communication (Kagan, 1988);

- A.V. Khutorskoy's ideas on competence as a phenomenon and options to build up educational competences on the basis of a range of objects from real life to which they refer, social and pragmatic factor and personal attitude to the competence (Khutorskoy, 2005);

- P.I. Obraztsov's theoretical issues on the specific role of professionally-oriented foreign language learning at university with focus on the learner acquiring professional knowledge, skills and competencies as well as personal characteristics which he needs as a perspective specialist (Obraztsov, 2005);

- basic theoretical issues on text linguistics in I.R. Galperin's works (2007), discourse theory investigated by a group of researchers (N.D. Arutyunova (1990), N.P. Golovina (2004), S.K. Gural (2014), G. Kadyyr (2016), V.K. Bhatia (2004), G. Cook (2004), T.A. van Dijk (1997), I. Karg (2007)). Of great importance is the fact that discourse has features characteristic of the text as well

as some specific features determined by fact it's made to function in foreign language communication;

- R.A. Cheremisinova's works on methods to teach students how to write discourse regarding typological features and their manifestations in diverse types of discourse; they have been proved efficient in the experimental work with university students (Cheremisinova, 2015; 2016).

However, the present-day works on forming professionally-oriented foreign language speech communication in university students are scarce and mainly disputable.

5. Conclusions

The contents of the article prove the need of specific efforts to form professionally-oriented foreign language speech communication in non-linguistic university students to enable them take part in professionally-oriented written communication. A stand-point of the latter is the fact that the students are able to make up diverse types of written discourse with all typological features found. It will help the graduates meet the requirements set in Federal national higher educational standards, i.e. to master the necessary level of professionally-oriented foreign language communicative competence.

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