Language Mediation Development in Teaching a Foreign Language

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Abstract
The relevance of foreign language proficiency of university graduates led to the design and pilot study of the of non-linguistic students' language mediation development model. This model was implicated at the MGIMO of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, the Odintsovo branch (Moscow Region) in the I-IV courses, Plekhanov University of Economics and the Kuzbass Institute of the Federal Penal Service of Russia (Novokuznetsk, Kemerovo region, in the I-II courses) in 2019-2021. The authors have disclosed the components of the model based on a set of cultural, competence and communicative approaches. Besides, mediation training methods and amendments to the content of language education were presented here.

The working concepts of the study are specified: types of mediation (interactive, non-interactive and hybrid), approaches and methods of developing mediation skills. The principles of selecting the content of language education (development and development of practice-, cultural- and professionally-oriented variable topics; priority of dialogical forms of communication in the language in the field of the studied concept with an emphasis on mediation; conducting negotiations in the language, etc.) based on the results of mediation are substantiated.

The pilot study highlighted that the content of education and teaching methods were the most flexible components of the designed model, that were quite easily transformed into any type of training (standard, mixed, hybrid and/or distance). The analysis of the language teaching methods used (debates, case studies, etc.) proved their compliance with the requirements of the current standard. The presented results of the pilot study, under the implementation of the developed model, including the period during the COVID-19 pandemic, verified by the data of

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control and pilot groups and measurement procedures, proved the effectiveness of the non-linguistic students' language mediation development model.

Keywords: language mediation, language mediation development, foreign language, teaching methods.

1. Introduction

The importance of high language proficiency level of non-linguistic students is out of question, however, the observed current changes in the labour market indicate that a modern graduate should also possess a language mediation.

The framework of the study, carried out in 2019-2021 at MGIMO of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Odintsovo branch (Moscow region), the 1st – 4th year students, Plekhanov University of Economics (Moscow), the 1st – 2nd year students) and Kuzbass Institute of the Federal Penal Service of Russia (Novokuznetsk, Kemerovo region, the 1st – 2nd year students), was led under the requirements of the current Federal State Educational Standard for Higher Education (hereinafter the Standard, FSES for HE) and "Common European Framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment companion volume with new descriptors" (2018, 2020), The Teaching English Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework (2020), The European Profiling Grid (2020) (Morozova, 2020). The state determines the efficiency of language education implementation at non-linguistic universities at a sufficiently high general and professional levels (C1 – C2), including students' language mediation development in the professional sphere, in order to increase their competitiveness in the labour market, that makes the research relevant (The Cambridge English..., 2021; Obshcheevropeiskie kompetentsii..., 2003; Newby et al., 2007).

At the same time, the observed educational realities, verified by the COVID-19 pandemic and shift to distance and/or hybrid learning, demanded from teaching staff to revise approaches, models, methods and ways of teaching language (implemented in online format and by means of LMS systems).

The aim of the research is to design a new model of non-language students' language mediation development, based on a set of cultural, competent, communicative approaches, and on the requirements of the current FSES. The model absorbs the latest international trends in the language education implementation in the conditions of standard, mixed, hybrid and distant types of education.

2. Materials and methods

We applied statistical analysis methods during the pilot study implementation, where a total of 50 teachers and 300 students of 1-4 courses of MGIMO University, Kuzbass Institute of the Federal Penal Service of Russia and Plekhanov University of Economics (Russia) took part in 2019–2021 (the time period the study was held). All participants of the pilot study were divided into 2 groups: control (the studying process was held under regular programs out of the pilot study) and pilot (we applied the designed model here). To verify the pilot results we used the following.

To prove the validity of the results obtained and the effectiveness of the developed model as implied at MGIMO (112 students), we used the non-parametric method Pearson's Criterion χ^2 (significance level 5 %), formula:

$$x^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{m} \frac{(E-T)^2}{T},$$

(1) where E – empirical frequencies; T – theoretical frequencies.

To prove the reliability of the obtained results and discover effectiveness of the created model of language mediation development with the example of Plekhanov University of Economics we used Student's parametric method. 83 first- and second-year students of Plekhanov University of Economics have taken part in this research. We calculated the average arithmetic values of X (X_i is the value of the individual measurement, i.e. scores per test) for each group separately by the following formula:

$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k} X_i}{k}$, (2) where k is the number of measurements in the group (in our case k = 5 tests).

Furthermore, we applied a number of methods, for instance: integrated analysis of the data to disclose the efficiency of the model, the analysis of theoretical sources on the problem, the study of the pedagogical experience, curriculum and others, which were used to highlight the relevance and current state of the problem.

3. Discussion

The methodological foundation of the study is based on the researches of N.M. Belenkova, N.D. Galskova, N.I. Geza, T.A. Kostyukova, M.B. Kazachkova, N.V. Kuzmina, A.K. Markova, A.L. Morozova, M.M. Stepanova, E.I. Passova, N.V. Parshina, I.A. Pushkareva and others. We share the opinion of our colleagues and believe that the goal of language education is to improve the foreign-language communicative competence of students in terms of language proficiency development at both professional and general levels (Stepanova et al., 2014; Pushkareva, 2017; Gal'skova et al., 2006).

The issues of mediation skills developing of non-linguistic students are partly presented in the studies of M.K. Denisov, A.A. Kolesnikov, O.M. Litvishko, A.L. Morozova, T.A. Kostyukova, A.A. Kolesnikov, Yu. A. Chernousova, etc. (Litvishko et al., 2016; Obdalova et al., 2012, Kolesnikov et al., 2012) as this is rather new area of language didactics. An analysis of the foreign educational researchers' experience on this issue (R. Gardner, G. Zarate, H. Timperley, A. Wilson, I. Hawkins and others) proved the priority of mediation skills developing, especially while studying English for specific (Zarate, 2004; Gardner, 2002; Hawkins, 2007).

The fundamental provisions of the students' mediation skills study are as follows:

- culturological approach (N.D. Galskova, N.I. Gez, S.I. Grigoriev, L.G. Guslyakova, S.K. Gural, A.S. Zapesotsky, T.A. Kostyukova, M.I. Solnyshkina M.B. Kazachkova) focused on professional culture studying during the creation and improvement of the culturological environment that is undeniable significant while mediation skills development (Solnyshkina et al., 2020; Galaguzov, 2010; Shaposhnikova et al., 2019). It should stated that E.N. Bogdanov, E.V. Berezhnova, E.V. Yermolovich, V.V. Krayevsky, S. Kramch, J. Cook, V.M. Onishchik, E.G. Silyaeva, A.N. Hodusov, D.S. Yakovleva, U. Hatmacher, etc. designed some models of the culturological environment creation in the field of higher education with parallel studying private questions of humanitarian, professional and communicative cultures and issues (Kramsch, 1993; Cook, 2010);

- competent approach (V.I. Baidenko, N.I. Gez, Yu.G. Tatur, V.A. Khutorskaya, etc.) designed at obtaining the desired result;

- a communicative approach (I.A. Winter, S.I. Korolev, E.I. Passov, S.G. Ter-Minasova, R.P. Milrud, etc.) aimed at developing oral speech skills and conducting complex negotiations within the mediation framework (Cook, 2010).

Here we applied such complementary theoretical methods as: analysis and generalization with subsequent synthesis and abstraction, the design of the educational process model in the discipline "Foreign Language". To prove the authenticity of the obtained results and the effectiveness of the developed model, the nonparametric method of Pearson's Criterion χ^2 and Student's parametric method were used.

4. Results

Following the developers of Common-European competencies, we treat language mediation as a language activity that exist separately from production, reception and interaction (Morozova et al., 2020; Newby et al., 2007). Solution of applied, practical-oriented issues of multilevel multicultural language education is recognized as the goal of the mediation. Furthermore, the mediator acts as an agent whose task is to solve successfully the case entrusted to him during the negotiations on behalf of the principal. This requires from mediator (as an agent) possession of professional culture, ethics, etiquette and communication skills as well as negotiation.

Analysis of the works of M.K. Denisov, A.A. Kolesnikov, O.M. Litvishko, Yu.A. Chernousova, etc., made it possible to distinguish the following types of mediation: interactive (focused on transmitting information from communicator to recipient and vice versa); non-interactive (aimed

at transmission information from communicator to recipient, feedback is not assumed) and hybrid one. A number of mediation forms are recorded: mediation during negotiations, conversation, translation, summarizing, review, writing letters, correspondence, retelling, etc. (Galaguzov, 2010).

Based on the abovementioned data, we designed the model of language mediation development of non-linguistic students (Figure 1).
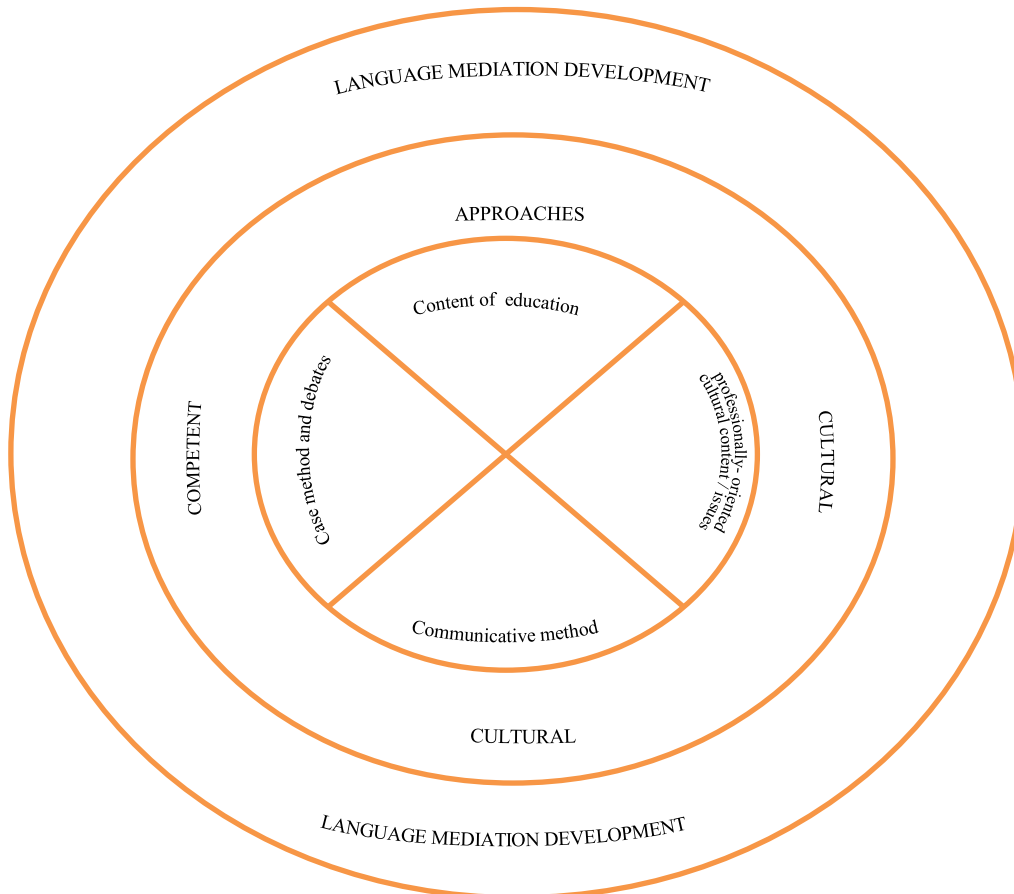

Fig. 1. Model of language mediation development of non-linguistic students

Further, it seems logical to discuss briefly this model. Figure 1 demonstrates that the model rests on key cultural (creation and maintenance of a profession-oriented cultural environment), competent (achievement of desired educational results, in particular, development of language mediation) and communicative (development of oral and written language mediation) approaches, as well as the requirements of the current Standard, which determines the adjustment of the content of linguistic education at a non-language university, the use of adequate teaching methods under the experience of European colleagues (Morozova et al., 2020). A distinctive feature of the developed model was the fact that it should be suitable for standard, mixed, hybrid and/or distant types of learning.

It is crucial to consider the content of language education that should be concept based. Here we share the view of N.V. Volodina, B.A. Zhigalev, O.A. Obdalova, A.A. Kolesnikov, O.M. Litvishko, S.V. Ustinkina (Obdalova et al., 2012). It should be highlighted that the concept-based language education has become the source of creating both practical-oriented foreign-language communication, in the context of specialization, and maintaining the cultural environment, which is ultimately focused on the language mediation development of non-linguistic students.

We made the following amendments to the content of education within the framework of this model (Figure 1), aimed at the language mediation development of the 1st – 4th year students of MGIMO University, Odintsovo branch (Moscow region), REU named after G.V. Plekhanov (Moscow) 1st and 2nd year students) and KI of the FPS of Russia (Novokuznetsk, Kemerovo region,

1st and 2nd year students) taking into account the requirements of cultural, competent and communicative approaches:

1) development of variable practical, cultural and professional-oriented topics;

2) priority of the dialog-based communication in the field of the studied concept with the emphasis on mediation;

3) organization of debates, classic's forums, focus groups, role games as forms of mediation;

4) conducting negotiations in a foreign language (free and based on given cliches);

5) written speech development (writing business letters, letters of advice, Chartres, minutes, reviews, memorandum, referencing, etc.) based on the results of mediation.

Observations have shown that effective communication and negotiation as parts of language mediation are impossible without consideration of the peculiarities of culture, norms, etiquette, and rules (including the professional aspect) of the target- language country and its comparison with the native culture for parallel student's self-identification. Therefore, while designing the model, we relied on the key ideas of a cultural approach.

While designing the model (Figure 1), we came to the conclusion that brining amendments to the educational content, with the parallel creation of a professionally-oriented cultural environment, highlighted review of the teaching methods in accordance with the culture-specific concepts, chosen specialization and indicated approaches, which are pointed on language mediation development.

Considering our training experience we admit that the case method is one of the most effective teaching methods within the framework of a competent approach. So, within the framework of the developed model (Figure 1), students of MGIMO of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Plekhanov University of Economics and KI of the FPS of Russia solved different professionally oriented cases that involved negotiation between the initially conflicting parties by means of oral mediation development (monologue, dialogue, conversation, discourse, negotiations). The solution of various cases, as the pilot study showed, often turned into debates. Furthermore, the successful solution of cases and conduct of the debates ultimately required (as a result of negotiations) writing a wide range of reports, letters of advice and other types of business correspondence (letter of advice, minutes, note, summary, etc.), which were aimed at developing written mediation in a foreign language.

It should be noted that the use of the above-described methods for the language mediation development was combined with a communicative language teaching method (under communicative approach) in the process of maintaining a vocationally oriented cultural environment. And an active interaction of all participants of mediation allowed to develop its various types and forms.

Further, it seems logical to deliver briefly the main results of the pilot study on the of language mediation development based on the model (Figure 1), which was implemented at MGIMO of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Odintsovo branch (Moscow region) among the 1st – 4th year students, Plekhanov University of Economics (Moscow, among the 1st – 2nd year students) and Kuzbass Institute of the Federal Penal Service of Russia (Novokuznetsk, Kemerovo region, among the 1st – 2nd **year students) in 2019–2021 in various types of training.** The groups were characterized by approximately equal indicators in all features – academic records, average grade point, etc.

The pilot study was carried out in three stages. We will characterize them briefly. At the control study, which took place within the framework of traditional and distant types of education (2019, the period of the Covid–19 pandemic restrictions), we made an attempt to establish the needs of students in learning a foreign language with the aim of professional self-education, as well as to study the initial state of their language mediation development. An analysis of the results obtained during the surveys, conversations and tests showed that about 70 % of students of Plekhanov University of Economics and KI of the FPS of Russia and about 95 % of students of MGIMO are interested in learning a foreign language. However, only 27 % of students are interested in the language mediation development, 52 % of students said they are not familiar with language mediation, but would like to deal with this issue, and 21 % found it difficult to answer. **Data on the students' needs, ob**tained at the control study, updated the problem of the language mediation development. The pilot study (step 1) took place in a distant (remote) type of learning, and the pilot study (step 2) in a hybrid type of learning due to Covid–19 restrictions and was aimed

at disclosing the efficiency of the developed model in different types of learning (traditional, distant, hybrid types of learning).

Then we'll present the main outcome of the model implied at MGIMO of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Russian Federation expressed through differentiation of students by the level of language mediation development (Figures 2, 3).
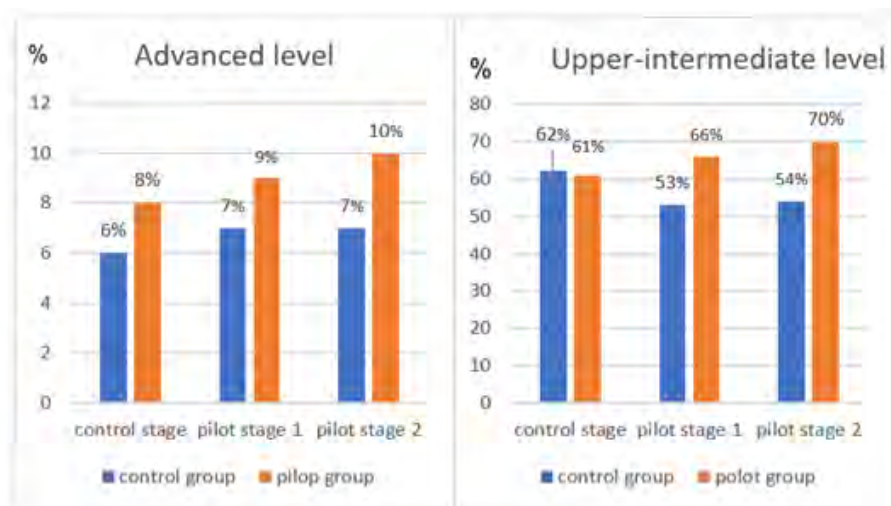

Fig. 2. Dynamics of development of advanced and upper-intermediate levels of language mediation of students at different stages of the pilot study (MGIMO Odintsovo)

Figure 1 reflects the dynamics of advanced and upper-intermediate levels language mediation development of students at different stages of pilot study at MGIMO. We disclosed an increase in the advanced level of language mediation development from 6 % (control study, March 2019) to 10 % (2nd stage of the pilot study, December 2020) with a simultaneous increase in the upper – intermediate level from 61 % to 70 %, which indicates the effectiveness of the work done.
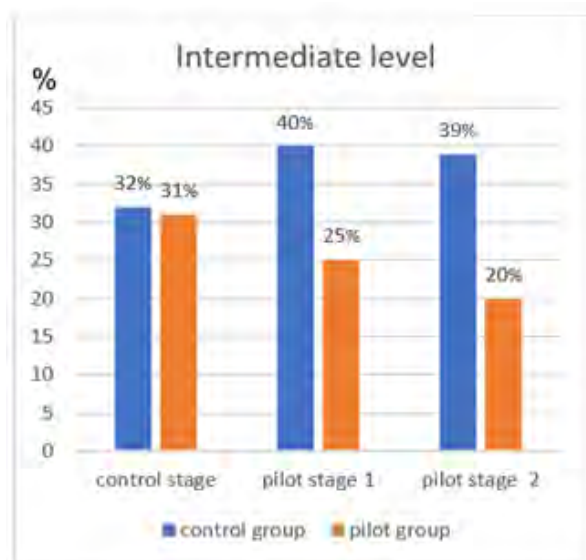

Fig. 3. Dynamics of development of intermediate level of language mediation of students at different stages of study (MGIMO Odintsovo)

Figure 3 shows the dynamics of intermediate level development of language mediation at different stages of pilot study at MGIMO. The implementation of the designed model allowed us to reduce the intermediate level from 31 % to 20 %, which confirms the efficiency of the author's model.

Let us present the cumulative dynamics of language mediation development at Plekhanov University of Economics (Moscow) and the Kuzbass Institute of the Federal Penal Service of Russia (Novokuznetsk, Kemerovo Region) (Figures 4, 5).
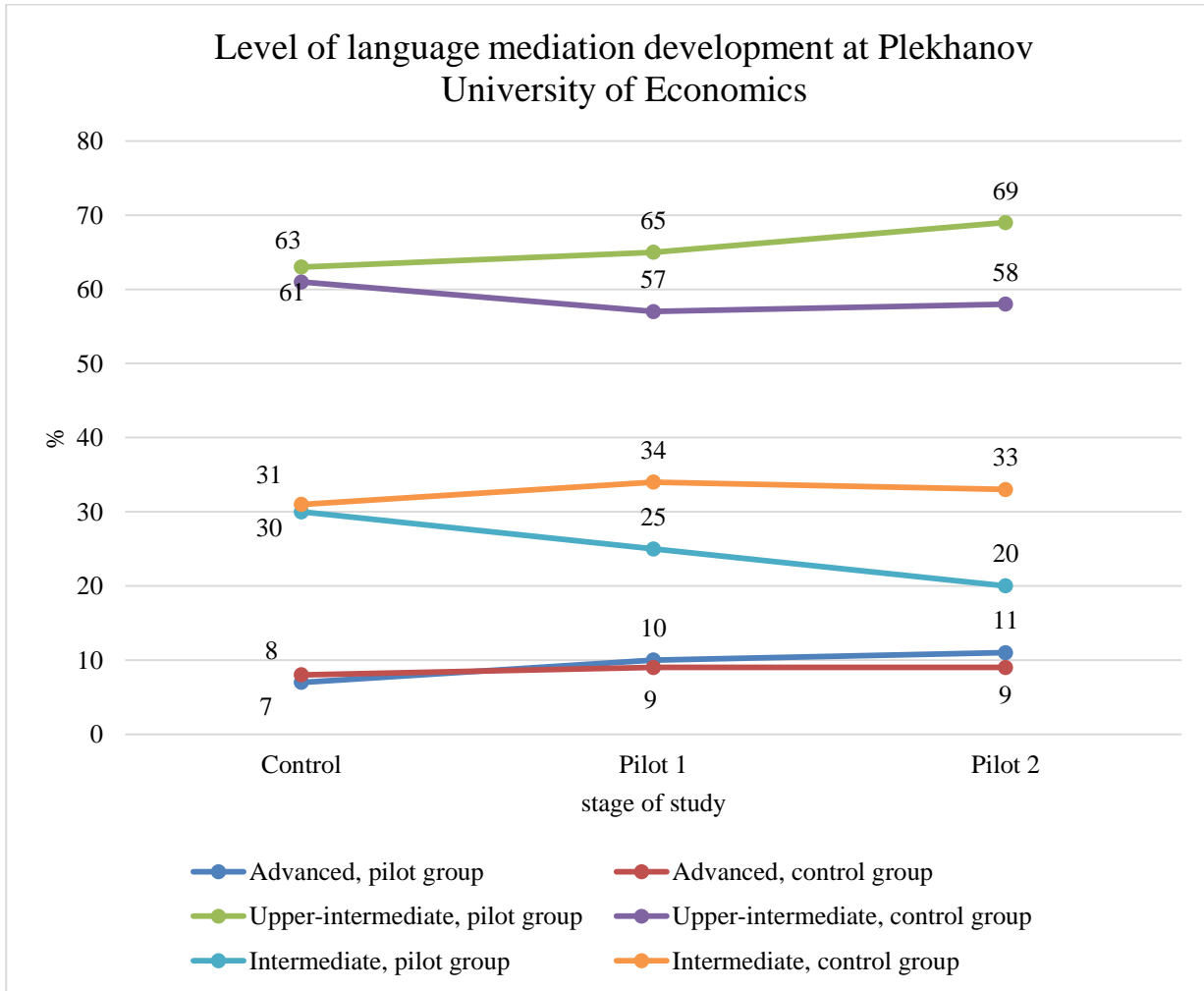

Fig. 4. Level of language mediation development at Plekhanov University of Economics
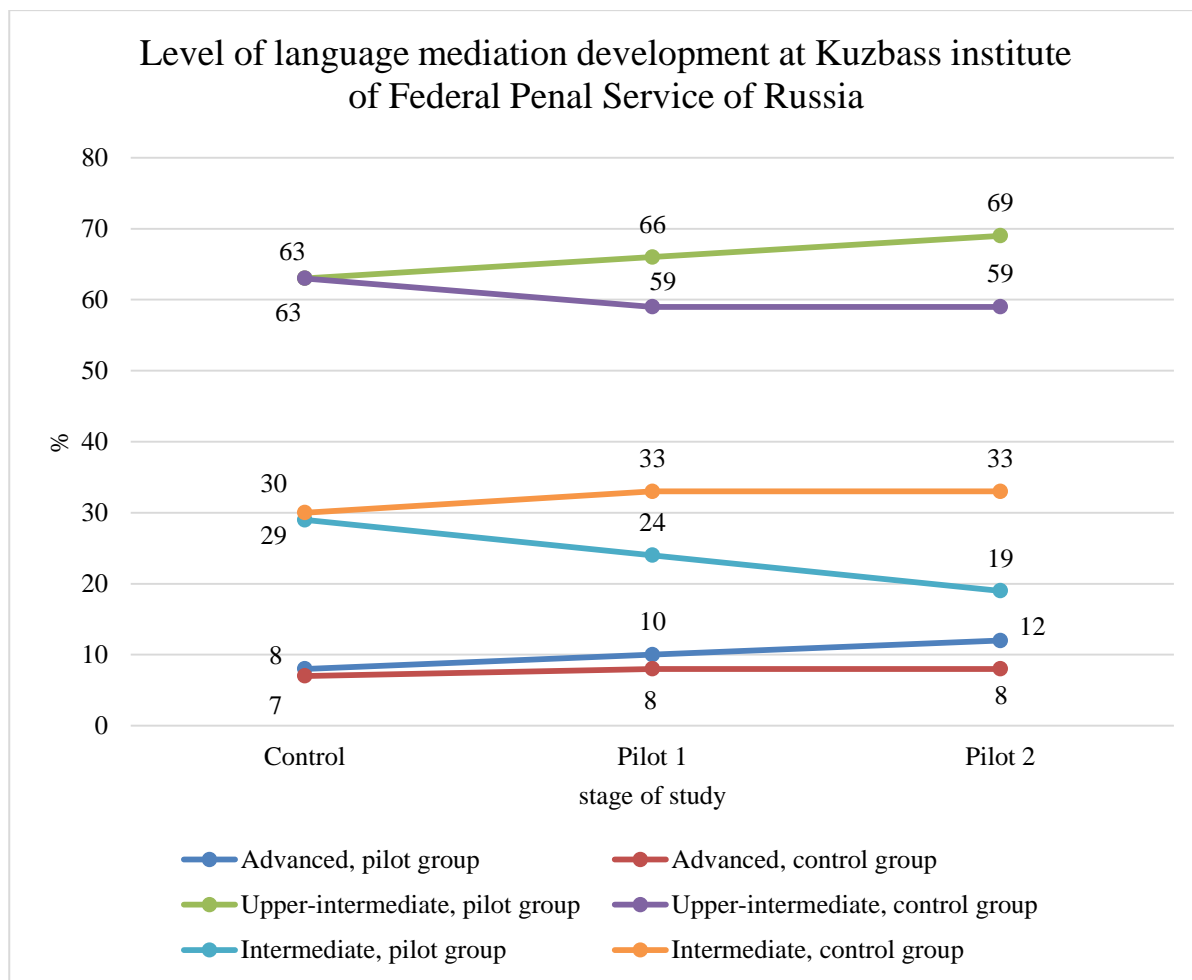
Fig. 5. Level of language mediation development at Kuzbass institute of
Federal Penal Service of Russia

Thus, the data, presented above in Figures 2-5, **confirms the model's efficiency (**Figure 1**)** and
the work done in the language mediation development field. As the data in the control groups
strongly prove an increase in advanced and upper-intermediate levels and a corresponding
decrease in the intermediate level of language mediation development. To put that into perspective,
we presented this data in table (see Table 1).

Table 1. Dynamics of level of language mediation development at MGIMO University, Plekhanov
University of Economics and Kuzbass Institute of the Federal Penal Service of Russia at different
stages of the study

Level of language proficiency	MGIMO			Plekhanov University of Economics			Kuzbass institute of Federal Penal Service of Russia		
	Control study	Pilot Study1	Pilot Study2	Control study	Pilot Study1	Pilot Study2	Control study	Pilot Study1	Pilot Study2

Advanced Pilot group	8	9	10	7	10	11	8	10	12
Advanced Control group	6	7	7	8	9	9	7	8	8
Upper-intermediate Pilot group	61	66	70	63	65	69	63	66	69
Upper-intermediate Control group	62	53	54	61	57	58	63	59	59
Intermediate Pilot group	31	25	20	30	25	20	29	24	19
Intermediate Control group	32	40	39	31	34	33	30	33	33

The data obtained in Table 1 provide strong evidence of the efficiency of the pilot study in the intended direction.

To prove the validity of the results obtained and the efficiency of the developed model, that was implied at MGIMO (112 students), we used the non-**parametric method Pearson's Criterion χ²** (significance level 5 %), formula (1).

Method Pearson's Criterion χ² was aimed at evaluation the difference between the distributions of empirical and theoretical frequencies and comparison the number of students whose language mediation level increased with those students whose level remained the same (Tables 2, 3, 4).

Table 2. Empirical frequencies (E)

Groups	Outcome		Total
	Mediation level has improved	Mediation level remained the same	
pilot	31	25	56
control	14	42	56
Total	45	67	112

The data in Table 2 show that E in the pilot groups is higher than in the control groups.

Table 3. Theoretical frequencies (T)

Groups	Results		Total
	Mediation level has improved	Mediation level remained the same	
Pilot	$\dfrac{45 \times 56}{112} = 22.5$	$\dfrac{67 \times 56}{112} = 33.5$	56
Control	$\dfrac{45 \times 56}{112} = 22.5$	$\dfrac{67 \times 56}{112} = 33.5$	56
Total	45	67	112

The materials of Table 3 demonstrate theoretical frequency (T) calculations. Comparison and conversion of empirical (E) and theoretical (T) frequencies (Table 4).

Table 4. Calculation Table x^2

Groups	E	**T**	(E-**T**)	(E-**T**)²	$\dfrac{(E-T)^2}{T}$
Pilot (level improved)	31	**22.5**	8.5	72.25	3.21
Pilot (**level didn't improve**)	25	**22.5**	2.5	6,25	0.27
Control (level improved)	14	**33.5**	-19.5	380.25	11.35
Control (**level didn't improve**)	42	**33.5**	8.5	72.25	2.16
					$\displaystyle\sum_{i=1}^{m}$ 16,99

Thus, we got χ_1^2 = 16.99 > 3.8 (Table 4), which made it possible to deny the null hypothesis (NH) at a high level of significance (P < 0.05, the number of the freedom level (2-1)*(2-1) = 1). We clarified the number of degrees of freedom by the following formula: f = (r − 1) × (c − 1). Accordingly, for a four-slot table 1 in which 2 rows (r = 2) and 2 columns (c = 2), the number of degrees of freedom is f2x2 = (2 - 1) * (2 - 1) = 1. So, it can be admitted that the recorded difference in the pilot and control groups was not due to incidental causes but was a direct consequence of purposeful mediation skills development activities in the context of created model conditions.

To prove the reliability of the obtained results and discover effectiveness of the designed model of language mediation development at Plekhanov University of Economics we applied **Student's parametric method. 83 first**- and second-year students of Plekhanov University of Economics have taken part in this study. The working hypothesis is that our model of the language **mediation development will be more effective than traditional teaching. 5 students' tests were** considered during the pilot study. According to their results (Table 5) we have calculated the validity of the differences and checked the propriety of the suggested hypothesis.

Table 5. The results of the pilot among the 1st and 2nd year students of Plekhanov University of Economics **according to Student's method.**

Groups	Number of students, n	Score for or tests (rating works)				
Pilot	43	46	34	39	41	37
Control	43	31	41	37	33	38

We calculated the average arithmetic values of X (X_i is the value of the individual measurement, i.e. scores per test) for each group separately by the following formula (2), where k is the number of measurements in the group (in our case k = 5 tests).

$$\bar{X}_э = \frac{46 + 34 + 39 + 41 + 37}{5} = \frac{197}{5} = 39,4$$

Let us substitute values from Table 5:

$$\bar{X}_к = \frac{31 + 41 + 37 + 33 + 38}{5} = \frac{180}{5} = 36$$

Comparison of average arithmetic values proves that the value ($\bar{X}_э = 39,4$) in the experimental group is higher than ($\bar{X}_к = 36$) in the control one. However, for final approval of the effectiveness of work undertaken, it is necessary to verify the statistical reliability of the differences between the calculated average arithmetic values. To do this, in both groups we calculated the standard deviate (5) by the following formula:

$\delta = \frac{X_{imax} - X_{imin}}{K}$, where X_{imax} — the largest dimension for the corresponding group, X_{imin} — the smallest, K — the tabular coefficient (K = 2.33 in our case).

Then we substituted the values from Table 5:

$$\delta_э = \frac{46 - 34}{2,33} = 5,15; \ \delta_к = \frac{41 - 31}{2,33} = 4,29$$

and obtained a standard error of the average arithmetic value (m) according to the formula:

$$m = \frac{\delta}{\sqrt{n}} \ (\text{при } n \geq 30)$$

Next, we calculated the standard error of the average arithmetic value (m) for each group:

$$m_э = \frac{5,15}{\sqrt{43}} = 0,78; \ m_к = \frac{4,29}{\sqrt{43}} = 0,65$$

After that, average error of difference was obtained by the following formula:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_э - \bar{X}_к}{\sqrt{m_э^2 + m_k^2}} = \frac{39,4 - 36}{\sqrt{0,78^2 + 0,65^2}} = \frac{3,4}{\sqrt{1,0309}} = 3,35$$

To determine the validity of the differences, we compared the obtained value (t) with the boundary one at a 5 % significance level $(p = 0,05)$. The number of freedom degrees was $s = n_э + n_к - 2$, where $n_э = 5$ and $n_к = 5$n are the total number of individual results in the experimental and control groups respectively.

$s = 5 + 5 - 2 = 8$

Boundary value at p = 0.05 and 8 degrees of freedom: $t_{гр} = 2,31.$

So, we got $t_{гр} = 2,31 < t = 3,35$, therefore, the differences between the average arithmetic test scores of the two groups are considered valid at a 5 % significance level which allows us to conclude that the work we have done in the field of mediation development is effective.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays language mediation development is very relevant while foreign language education implementation. Thus, nowadays students of non-linguistic universities need to possess not only foreign language proficiency at the C1-C2 levels, but also language mediation proficiency, especially in the professional sphere, which meets the requirements of the current Standard and international trends in the field of language education development. The designed model of language mediation development of non-linguistic students appeared to be efficient due to the provided findings.

Finally, we do not claim to provide a thorough solution of the issues studied in this paper. The research is an attempt to reveal the main approaches to solving the problem of language mediation development, based on the theoretical analysis and pilot study outcome, to disclose the possible ways of this problem solvation in the field of higher professional education.

6. Acknowledgements

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