

Creative Teaching Methods in the Formation of Language and Speech Competencies: Experience Working with Arab Students

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Abstract

The article raises the topical issue of teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language to Arab students. Representatives of the Arab world have specific features in behavior, attitude to the organization of the educational process associated with cultural traditions, and upbringing. The Ukrainian system of higher education offers high-quality training. Among scientists, teachers, and methodologists, discussions are underway to choose the most effective methods of teaching international students the Ukrainian language. The study of creative methods of teaching Arabic students Ukrainian as a foreign language is very important, as it has not yet been the subject of a separate scientific study, and has not been covered in a separate article. The goal of our article is to outline the most effective methods of forming language and speech competencies for Arab students. The goal involves completing tasks: 1) to define language and speech competence; 2) to identify the effective use of language learning creative methods (classroom and distance education); 3) to check the effectiveness of the use of creative teaching methods in the formation of language and speech competencies of Arab students in listening, reading, speaking and writing. According to the authors of the article, creative methods are methods that meet the psychological, age, and mental characteristics of Arab students. We concluded that the active use of creative methods in the educational process gives positive results informed language and speech competencies, due to which international students have the opportunity to study and communicate in Ukrainian-speaking environment. We consider such results to prove.

Keywords: creative teaching methods, language competence, learning a foreign language, speech competence, teaching Arab students

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Introduction

Ukraine is interesting for foreign graduates with internationally recognized scientific achievements, effective teaching methods, and higher education institutions that provide quality education in 27 areas of training. Compared to other European countries, Ukrainian higher education institutions offer much lower tuition fees. According to the Ukrainian State Center for International Education (International students, 2020), in 2020, 76,548 international students studied in Ukraine. About 90% of them mastered professions, the rest learned language (6.45%), received postgraduate education (2.25%), took post graduate and Doctoral courses - 1.27%, surveyed in academic mobility programs - 0.01%. The most popular Ukrainian education is in the following countries of the Arab world: Morocco (2nd place out of 10; 8832 people, that is 11.54% of the total number of international students), Egypt (8th place out of 10; 3048 students, it is 3.98%), a small part of foreign applicants for higher education are representatives of Qatar, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria. Therefore, more than 15% of the representatives the Arab world in Ukraine receive higher education. We are interested in attracting even more applicants for higher education from the East to Ukrainian educational services.

A more effective organization of teaching the Ukrainian language as a foreign teacher take into account the national and psychological characteristics of the representatives of this region. We understand that the guiding principle of working with this group of students should be national-oriented learning.

Ukrainian is the language of state communication, which functions in all spheres of public life: in institutions, organizations, including higher education institutions. Since the years of Ukraine's independence, the problem of learning the state language and improving language and speech competencies are solved at the state level. Instructors who teach Ukrainian as a foreign language are constantly looking for the most effective forms of language learning. Currently, in the higher school in Ukraine, in the training of specialists, the priority is the competence approach based on the interactive construction of practically oriented educational classes. Methodists focus on the study of the logical and grammatical system of the Ukrainian language, and the implementation of this task will allow forming a sufficient level of language and speech competence for future professionals.

The formation and development of general competencies involves all educational standards of training. "General competencies include language and speech competencies" (Educational program, 2018). Every future specialist must know the state language at a level that allows him to communicate with representatives of other professional groups of different levels to inform professionals and non-professionals with information and experience in professional activities.

We understand that ensuring the formation of these competencies for international students is possible only with the introduction of creative methods in the educational process. Creative methods will strengthen the educational and cognitive activity of students, provide further self-development, form the ability to act creatively in unusual situations, work in a coordinated team. To know the language of instruction for international students is the key to successful mastery of the profession.

Creating a creative learning environment by the teacher using didactic language games, exercises with creative tasks, non-standard ways of organizing educational activities involves

dialogue between teacher and students, varying communicative activities in academic and situational randomness moving away from stereotypical perceptions of reality, avoiding standards and stereotyped thinking. Syllabuses, textbooks, manuals, and didactic materials on the Ukrainian language as a foreign language create by the needs of foreign graduates, and their age, gender, and national characteristics. Creative teaching methods help the teachers to organize enjoyable learning both in the classroom and remotely. The study of creative methods of teaching Arabic students Ukrainian as a foreign language is very important, as it has not yet been the subject of a separate scientific study and has not been covered in a separate printed article.

The goal of our article is to outline the most effective methods of forming language and speech competencies for Arab students. The goal involves completing tasks: 1) to define language and speech competence; 2) to identify the effective use of language learning creative methods (classroom and distance education); 3) to check the effectiveness of the use of creative teaching methods in the formation of language and speech competencies of Arab students in listening, reading, speaking and writing. Due to the interest in a number of higher education students among the Arab citizens, the following issues: unification of educational standards and curricula, organization of the educational process using the most effective methods of education, and methodological support of the educational process remain unsolved. The first problem solves by the state. We hope that our research will help teachers to improve the teaching of the language to Arab students.

Literature Review

Considering the specificity of our study, we analyzed the scientific literature on the following issues: 1) clarification of the definition of language and speech competence; 2) study of the state of research of foreign language teaching methods; 3) analysis of effective creative methods in teaching a foreign language.

The scientific literature sufficiently covers the concept of language and speech competence. The study their genesis is not part of the tasks of our publication. In our research, the concept of 'language competence' is understood as "the assimilation and awareness of language norms and their adequate application in using a particular language" (Renchka, 2014, p. 172). We interpret speech competence as the practical mastery of all types of speech activity, the basics of oral and written culture, basic skills and abilities to use language in various areas and situations of communication. Confirmation of the legitimacy of this definition is in (Pats, 2018): "the purpose of language training of foreign citizens is to meet their communicative needs in various areas of activity" (p. 90). But no less vital for us is the concept of 'communicative competence' because "educational standards provide the acquisition of higher education competencies, which reflect as the ability to establish and maintain the necessary contacts with others, a set of knowledge, skills, and abilities to communicate effectively" (Educational program, 2018). Communicative competence combines language and speech competence.

The main purpose of learning foreign languages is communicative. "This involves the study of language as a means of communication in the conversational and professional spheres" (Sheremeta, 2020, p. 158). Speech, and communicative competencies are formed "in close connection with professionally-oriented subjects in the process of educational, scientific and practical activities in the field of foreign language education" (Ilyina, Tarasuk, Novikova &

Gribova, 2018, p. 699). Therefore we fill every lesson on Ukrainian as a foreign language with professionally-oriented didactic material.

Among the researches on didactics, we are interested in the articles of Ukrainian researchers on the methods of teaching the Ukrainian language. "For modern teaching of Ukrainian as a foreign language are important: the practical orientation of learning, the functional approach to the selection, and presentation of language material, situational and thematic presentation of educational material" (Shelest, 2018, p. 53). Researchers recommend using the discussion method, the design method, and the role-play method. We successfully implemented these methods in our experiment. The application of these methods "creates a natural environment in the classroom, activates the creative abilities of students, develops their thinking and forms in them the skills necessary for modern society" (Zozulia, Prysiashna & Solodar, 2014, p. 26). The study is interesting in that it thoroughly reveals the content of vocabulary work at the phonetic, lexical, word-forming, morphological and syntactic levels: "systematic vocabulary work has a positive effect on the formation of speech and communicative competencies of students, gives significant results in mastering the Ukrainian language" (Piatko, 2017, p. 226). "Such tasks develop students' thinking in Ukrainian as a foreign language, expand their vocabulary, show the richness of the vocabulary of the language, deepen their professional knowledge" (Fetsko, 2021, p. 113). Having studied the experience described in the article, we used it to prepare methodological materials for the forming part of the pedagogical experiment.

Avdeenko's (2019) article helped to consider the problem of Arab higher education students with adjectives that do not exist in Arabic as a separate part of the language: "when studying adjectives in a foreign language by Arabic students, it is necessary to take into account the peculiarities of the functioning of adjectives in their native language" (p. 14). This publication helped to methodically build lessons on 'Adjective' based on a comparison of syntactic, phonetic and morphological features of adjectives in Arabic and Ukrainian.

The situation with the Covid-19 pandemic has forced the world's educational systems to move to distance and blended learning. New topics have been opened to study the possibilities and effectiveness of teaching aids in these formats. Hebah (2020) talks about the benefits of admixed learning: "that the use of blended learning has the potential to support EFL learning and maximize EFL learners' opportunities to practice the language freely at their convenience" (p. 191). In particular, we agree with the author the blended learning format allows students to become autonomous and construct knowledge rather than acting as their passive absorber.

In discussing distance learning, the Methodists also paid attention to the technological issues of its organization. The publication Yablokov (2020) is devoted to the topical issue of choosing the methods used in foreign language teaching and analysis of technological support for learning foreign languages by specific objectives: "We consider this support as an essential component of professional training" (p. 282). We agree with the author on the issue of professional orientation of methodological support of the discipline by the educational purpose. This approach will help achieve the most significant effect. Web learning, according to Cheng-Shih & Ryan (2016), has many prospects for the development of critical thinking in learning subjects. Therefore, according to the authors, the use of creative methods in such learning is effective: "The research findings show 1) positively remarkable effects of web-based creative thinking teaching on creativity,

2) positively notable effects of creativity on learning outcome, and 3) positively significant effects of web-based creative thinking teaching on learning outcome" (p. 1675). However, it should be borne in mind that the method of web-learning described by the authors was partially implemented and was not systematic. Therefore, it should be borne in mind that in 2019, the opinions of researchers on web learning were divided.

Among the creative methods that are discussed by Methodists most actively in the project method as a way to obtain scientific and methodological knowledge: "This contributes to the development of work qualities required for the fulfillment of the technological, functional, organizational and productive of the jobs where they will perform once they graduate" (Andrés-Concepción, Alonso-Betancourt & Figueredo 2015, p. 70). The authors demonstrate the professional orientation of students through the introduction of the educational process of creative methods (in particular, projects).

Against the background of intensification of researchers to determine effective ways to learn a foreign language (including Ukrainian) in online and offline, the issue of organizing training in groups with different entry levels remains unexplored. It is necessary to study the content of professionally-oriented materials, the creation of unified textbooks and manuals based on cooperative programs.

Methods

Our research group used methods of theoretical research: we analyzed scientific works on the topic to determine the degree of research of the problem; in order to study the list of language competences and tools for their formation our researchers studied the educational programs for the preparation of bachelors of the specialties; and our group of researchers analyzed textbooks and manuals on language training of students on which it is expedient to implement creative methods.

From the methods of empirical research, we used the following: conversation with teachers to discuss the hypothesis of the experiment, to coordinate actions during the experiment; student questionnaire to identify the level of proficiency of Ukrainian and the level of awareness of the importance of language in professional activity.

Our scientists used methods of studying the products of students' activities (completed practical tasks, independent work, individual tasks, results of practice, participation in didactic games) to confirm the hypothesis.

Our research group conducted a formative pedagogical experiment to confirm the hypothesis of the study.

Participants

The material for the article is the results of a pedagogical experiment conducted in the 2019-2020 academic year and the first semester of 2020-2021 based on the following institutions of higher education: O. M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy in Kharkiv, National University of Pharmacy, Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts, Automobile and Highway University. Despite the large number of international students (including Arabic) studying in mentioned higher educational institutions, foreign language teachers have joined forces to solve

the problem of choosing the most effective methods of teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language to this category of students.

According to the research hypothesis, creative teaching methods are effective methods. In the new realities, these methods are implemented in online format and offline format. A total of 132 Arab students took part in the survey, but 126 people took part in the experiment due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the preparatory phase of the pedagogical experiment analyzed the language training of Arab students on the following indicators: training in the primary department (yes-no), the results of entrance testing for the Ukrainian language (for graduates), the level of motivation of Arab students to learn Ukrainian languages.

To select the didactic materials used in the experiment, we considered the specialty of students of 1-2 courses study. After studying the honest answers of the survey participants, the Arab applicants for higher education divided into two groups. The survey yielded the following results. The majority of respondents (64%) said that they know more than three languages: Arabic, French, English / Italian / Spanish, to the extent necessary for communication on household topics. Other students indicated that they knew two languages at a sufficient level. 78% of respondents told Moroccan language as their native language, and 12% told French as a common language of communication in the country and family; the rest (approximately 10%) said that they consider themselves bilingual as they switch from one language to another automatically. Many Arab students thought that the Russian language existed in Ukraine: they had such information from their relatives, friends, and acquaintances who had recently graduated from Ukraine and used the Russian language. Therefore, the teachers told the students about the history of the Ukrainian state and language. As a result, the students realized that currently, there is only one Ukrainian state language in Ukraine. Moroccan students noted the similarity of the stories of two languages: Ukrainian in Ukraine and Arabic in Morocco, due to the long geopolitical influence of Russia on Ukraine and France on Morocco, respectively. 60% of respondents said that they were not very actively interested in culture and language in the format of watching videos. A small number of respondents (about 8%) were able to name the rock bands 'Ocean Elzy' and 'Skryabin', 27% said they know the colors of the flag of Ukraine, heard the anthem, and see knew the football player Andriy Shevchenko. 84% of respondents graduated from the Faculty of Preparatory: during the oral communication, the majority demonstrated a relatively high level of language proficiency. Despite the desire of students to study at the university in English, all respondents are aware that learning Ukrainian as a foreign language is provided by the educational program, so to master the curriculum, students master Ukrainian.

After analyzing the answers, we divided the students into groups of RG (research group) and IG (inspection group). During the division, the level of proficiency in the Ukrainian language at the beginning of university studies and the level of motivation to study it were taken into account. The analysis of language training on these indicators allowed to divide the participants of the experiment (126 people) into the following groups: two research (from now on - RG1 and RG2) and two inspection (from now on - IG1, IG2). RG1 and IG1 are students with the level of Ukrainian language proficiency very low or zero. RG2 and IG2 are students who studied Ukrainian independently or graduated from a preparatory department with a sufficient level of knowledge.

The number of students in groups according to the level of expertise: students didn't study or have a very shallow level of expertise - 43 (RG1 - 23, IG1 - 20), they graduated from the preparatory faculty/department, with a sufficient amount of speech competencies for communication - 65 (RG2 - 38, IG2- 45). We will present the results of the entrance and final tests by indicators in the comparative table in the 'Results' section.

At the last phase of the experiment, the comparison of indicators according to specific criteria (motivational-value, linguistic and cognitive, text-communicative, language-normative) in RG1, RG2, and IG1, IG2.

Research Instruments

Ukrainian pedagogical science has long used proven scientific research methods (empirical, complex, and theoretical). Among the practical methods we used the following: 1) to select the most appropriate teaching methods, we organized observations of behavior, organization, daily routine, habits, preferences, interaction of Arab students; 2) comparison of the mentality, psychological characteristics of Arab students with other foreign graduates allowed specifying the chosen creative methods, to see their effectiveness; 3) a questionnaire developed by teachers of philology made it possible to measure the level of motivation of Arab students to study the Ukrainian language and identify reserves of abilities; 4) the pedagogical experiment organized and conducted for 1,5 years according to the classical method, aimed to confirm or refute the hypothesis, which is to assume that the use of creative teaching methods at the lessons of Ukrainian as a foreign language will increase the language and speech competence of Arab students.

We used the following complex methods: 1) for the selection of scientific literature on the research topic - analysis and synthesis; 2) we used the modeling method to organize methodical materials of practical direction where the connection with the future profession is needed: in professional texts, before reading and after-reading tasks, selection of professional vocabulary, topics of dialogues according to the future profession.

Among the unique methods of scientific research, we used the grouping method to students divided into RG and IG, and to didactic materials, which according to the curriculum, were grouped by topics, goals, and types of speech activities (listening (listening and comprehension), reading, speaking and writing).

In RG, classes of Ukrainian as a foreign language with constant active use of creative teaching methods offline and online. In IG we conducted classes in the usual way: with moderate and unsystematic use of these methods

The questionnaire developed by teachers to divide students into these groups provided open-ended answers to the following questions: 1. What languages do you speak? 2. What is your native language? 3. What do you know about the language situation in Ukraine? 4. What is the state language in Ukraine? 3. Did you study the Ukrainian language before coming to Ukraine? 5. Did you graduate from the preparatory faculty? 6. What language (Ukrainian or English) will you study at the university? 7. What advantages of knowledge of the Ukrainian language do you see in your situation? 8. Do you plan to visit the cultural and historical monuments of Ukraine during your studies?

Work with students on new linguistic phenomena is organized in several interrelated stages: "1. Repetition of information obtained earlier or important for the study of new material; 2. Perception is a recent language phenomenon that is perceived better when different means are used (visualization, board, textbook, multimedia presentation, online-simulators, Internet resources, etc.); 3. Awareness of the essential features of the language phenomenon with the use of unique teaching methods (analysis, observation, comparison); 4. Memorize the concept, word, and its linguistic meaning, structure of syntactic constructions, etc.; 5. Reproduction is the final stage of learning new material: retelling, giving examples; 6. Use of mastered algorithms" (Borodina, 2016, p. 46-47).

Research Procedures

We conducted a pedagogical experiment for 1,5 years (two semesters of the 2019-2020 academic year, and the first semester of the 2020-2021 academic year) based on four institutions of higher education in Kharkiv.

The experiment involved eight teachers from four universities in Kharkiv. We have developed a schedule for a pedagogical experiment.

I phase (1st semester, 2019-2020 academic year)

Competence: phonetic, lexical.

Creative methods: making up, association, role and situational games, a dramatization of educational or educational material, collective creative work, creative tasks for audio materials, adapted texts of journalistic style.

Students demonstrate their ability to perform reproductive tasks.

Expected results: the formation of the good side of speech (student pronounces the sounds of all phonetic groups correctly and clearly); formation of phonemic processes (student can hear and distinguish the sounds of a foreign (Ukrainian) language); have an idea of the different ways of word formation, the ability to use words correctly in the proper sense; highlight sound and semantic differences between words.

II phase (2nd semester 2019-2020 academic year)

Competence: lexical, grammatical (morphological, syntactic).

Creative methods: fantasizing, combining, functional analogies; research tasks: to compile a matrix, characterize the language material, create and express a symbolic story, and creative work with texts of journalistic and official business styles.

Students demonstrate their ability to perform reconstructive tasks.

Expected results: be able to form adjectives from nouns; formation of the grammatical structure of language: the ability to use extensive phrasal speech; ability to construct simple sentences correctly, to see the connection of words in sentences, to extend sentences by secondary and homogeneous members; ability to work with a deformed sentence, independently find mistakes and correct them; compose sentences based on keywords and pictures.

III phase (1st semester 2020-2021 academic year)

Competence: grammatical, stylistic.

Creative methods: project tasks, project method, heuristic conversation, discussion, controversy, debate, press conference, 'brainstorming', creation and presentation of reports, messages, reviews, annotations on texts of journalistic and scientific styles.

Students demonstrate their potential for reconstructive and creative activities.

Expected results: the ability to use adequately and appropriately speech in specific communication situations, using both vocabulary (intonation) and non-speech (facial expressions, pantomime) means of expression of speech; sociability, mastery of communicative skills in the use of means of expression.

The study material is selected and prepared by the "Standardized requirements for levels of proficiency in Ukrainian as a foreign language A1-C2" (Synchak, Mazuryk, Boiko, & Antoniv, 2020). The study material will be studied by students who master Ukrainian as a foreign language at level B2, contains professionally-oriented exercises and tasks.

During the experiment, we followed five main principles of creative methodology: systemic (continuous implementation of different creative tasks in each class), dynamic (task development), software (complexity should correspond to software requirements), structural (purposeful method of learning) and expressive (effective understanding of language norms).

Understanding the importance of sufficiently developed communicative skills allowed teachers to organize and conduct a pedagogical experiment in the classical format. In the research groups, innovative ways were used constantly, in each lesson, in all types of language activities. In the inspection groups, creative methods were partially and limited introduced but taking into account the initial language level of students.

According to the results of comparative analysis of Arabic and Ukrainian phonetic systems at the first stage of learning, we actively used reading aloud: individual sounds, words, and phrases (groups RG1 and IG1), short texts according to the curriculum (groups RG2, IG2) at the first stage of learning.

In the second and third phase of the experiment, phonetic work concerned improving reading and pronunciation skills of Ukrainian words and phrases (groups RG1, IG1), creation and utterance of monologues, and participation in dialogues (groups RG2, IG2).

As Moskalyuk (2016) notes: "didactic games are a kind of games according to rules that combine two spheres of human activity simultaneously - learning and play" (p. 223). In all phases of the experiment, our team of scientists used story-based role-playing games. The only condition was taking into account the level of language proficiency of the participants of the game (I phase: 'In the hospital', 'In the dean's office', 'In the library'; II phase: 'Interview with an architect', 'The Job Interview'; III phase: 'Dialogue with the supervisor', 'Defense of the course project'), games-exercises ('Find a mistake', 'Make sentences', puzzles, crosswords, etc.), construction games (logically build the text from the given parts; write the end of the story with 2-3 sentences, swapping paragraphs, etc.), business games (collective preparation of a CV of an imaginary candidate for the position, 'Customer and architect-executor of the project', 'Discussion of the task by a group of development engineers'). Therefore, for the participants of groups, RG1 and IG1, dialogues were simple, and the participants of RG2 and IG2 acted out the discussions with more

complex speech constructions. In these and other games, students improved their communicative competencies, showed their own creative abilities. In groups RG1 and IG1 we more often used reproductive games aimed at forming the necessary competencies; in groups RG2 and IG2, games of problem-searching (with elements of search and analysis) were added, and creative content (development of individual creative potential). Purely philological games such as 'Word Game' (to find out the meaning of the noun 'table' in combination with the adjectives) will help to improve lexical, grammatical, and stylistic norms.

In the third phase of the pedagogical experiment with RG2 and IG2 students, we used the case method. It is a miniature business game, as it combines professional activity with gaming. Here is an example of a case: "The company announced a competition for the vacant position of architect. You have long wanted to work in this company. The applicant must have creative personal qualities and creative skills. Prove convincingly that the company should hire you. Demonstrate your creative skills."

Systematic vocabulary work also took place with the introduction of creative methods. The knowledge acquired by students at the phonetic, word-forming, and morphological levels is impossible without vocabulary work. The objects of vocabulary work are commonly used words foreigners use in everyday life, lexical and semantic series that function in different contexts, and professional vocabulary. To prevent lexical errors, correct speech inaccuracies, identify ambiguities, and synonyms, we introduced the following types of creative tasks: selective work on the text; observational research; research-search.

Grammar and spelling rules students practiced during various exercises. Arab students often ignore written works aimed at the drilling spelling rules, so they show a relatively low grammar level. To close the knowledge gaps for students of groups RG1 and IG1, members of the research team made cards with individual tasks. They also had the opportunity to practice language and speech competencies with the help of online simulators in the format of full-time and distance learning.

In order to form spelling skills, students of groups RG2 and IG2 carried out research-restoration - read the text, insert the missing letters in words, explain; spelling workshop with elements of analysis - to explain the lexical meaning of the words highlighted in the text; research-analysis; performed selective work.

Classes in the language classroom also had differences, which consisted not only in the methodology of their conduction and selection of didactic material but also in taking into account the psycho-physiological characteristics of Arab students.

Experimental teachers used the opportunities of language classrooms to reproduce audio information, created conditions for virtual immersion in the Ukrainian-speaking environment, pronunciation training and simultaneous translation. In the language classroom, students performed exercises individually, in pairs, or in teams. Using the opportunities of the language classroom made learning the Ukrainian language more efficient and enjoyable. Given the tendency of Arab students to ignore tasks, teachers have provided the language classroom with the possibility of simultaneous performance of duties by all participants in the learning process.

Auditioning researchers used to study new material (formation of sound images of new language elements): "as an element of dialog (without listening, there is no communication), as a special kind of foreign language exercise (monologue unity of reading, storytelling)" (Zozulia, Prysiashna & Solodar, 2014, p. 25). Before listening to the texts, students performed the following types of exercises: for students of groups RG1, IG1: read explanations of unknown words and phrases; find out the meaning of words on your own, using a dictionary; for students of groups RG2, IG2: to remember the importance of phrases; explain the differences between related words; form as many cognate words as possible. After listening to the text, students performed tasks: RG1, IG1: answer the questions; choose the correct answer to the question; read the passage, open the brackets, choose the word that corresponds to the listened text; agree or disagree with the opinion; RG2, IG2: complete the sentence; prepare an essay on the content of the information you heard to. In groups of students who did not study the Ukrainian language, teachers used videos (for example, Hanna Chubach, Natalia Mai, Lesia Horova), educational video presentations, and cartoons, clips we used in different learning formats. During the preparation for the listening, teachers felt a lack of material in the Ukrainian language. Foreign translated products were treated with caution because the content of cartoons and clips did not correspond to Ukrainian realities. The links to the website <http://krok.miok.lviv.ua/uk/> were a sound basis for selecting audio material for RG1 and IG1 groups. Students of RG2, IG2 groups got acquainted with video recordings of meetings with well-known experts, visited galleries, exhibitions, watched modern films.

To form and develop reading skills within the curriculum, teachers used educational texts on various topics: history, culture, traditions, language, scientific progress, technological development, etc. Experimental teachers selected most of the readers journalistic and scientific styles. The texts differed in complexity, number of characters and pre-text and post-text tasks. In the first phase of the experiment, there mainly were test tasks.

We used formal language (linguistic) and communicative games, such as dice, dominoes (preposition + noun in a particular case). To properly perform such exercises, students must carefully study the content of the text, know the grammar of the Ukrainian language.

The students composed dialogues from the first days of studying the Ukrainian language. Involvement in the conversation begins with an acquaintance the teacher's phrase, 'My country is Ukraine, and yours?'. The use of illustrations in texts gave a good result. For example, first-year students of all levels of language proficiency are interested in discussing aphorisms and images to the parables of Omar Khayyam and Ukrainian fairy tales. To do this, we used visual material in the form of cards with the image of numbers and objects: for RG1 and IG1, it is the image of products, things, and stationery; for RG2 and IG2, there were thematic cards (for example, for the specialty 'Construction and Civil Engineering' there were the cards of building materials: brick, cement, reinforcement elements, etc.). In the second and third phases of the experiment, Arab students actively participated in dialogues-agreements, dialogues-exchanges of impressions and thoughts, dialogues-discussions, etc. Yes, each extracurricular activity ends with a discussion. For example, after visiting an art museum, a university museum, and a walking tour of the city, students were expected to talk about the exchange of impressions received from the event; in the first lesson after the holidays, students exchanged impressions about the rest. At the last phase of the experiment, students had enough experience and professional vocabulary to participate in dialogues on a professional topic, reported at the annual scientific conferences.

Dialogues predominate in the teaching of students of all experimental groups. Teacher and students ask each other questions. The teacher comments on the implementation of written assignments. In the third phase of the experiment, students independently composed dialogues and evaluated the dialogues of their friends. During the assessment, students took into account the number of lines in the dialogue (14-16 lines), the presence of errors, the relevance of the situation and the purpose of communication, compliance with etiquette, emotionality.

To extend the vocabulary of students of groups RG1 and IG1, such games as ‘Word puzzles’ (for example, food - potatoes, profession - engineer; doctor - pills, driver - car) were used for students of groups RG2 and IG2, cards - puzzles with professional thematic vocabulary were used (term - definition).

Reading and reading comprehension is another criteria for successful language acquisition. In the organization of this type of activity, we attached great importance to before reading exercises, which is to prepare an international student for the perception of new information and to update already acquired knowledge. To do this, we can offer tasks of this type: to establish a correspondence between words and their meaning; find out the importance of these words with the help of a dictionary; fill in the gaps with the words from the reference in the correct form; determine which of the given words is the main in the thematic chains of words. We selected the texts according to the level of students' language skills. Teachers used contextual exercises to attract attention while reading the text: pay attention to the spelling of highlighted words, pay attention to the spelling of numerals in the text, pay attention to the emphasis of the highlighted words. Post-text exercises also differed in the level of language proficiency of students. Students of groups RG1 and IG1 performed the following exercises: emphasize new words in the indicated sentences; answer questions; readout highlighted words; insert missing letters. Students of RG2 and IG2 performed the following after reading tasks: to explain a specific statement; find synonyms for words in the text; choose from the text antonyms to the given words; find in the text certain lexical and semantic groups; the name from which the words formed complex words; choose common root words; paraphrase a sentence. To test how students learned the text, teachers used the following techniques: ‘Sorting’, ‘Auction’, ‘Question-Answer’, ‘Agree-Disagree’, and ‘Remember Everything’.

Language acquisition is impossible without writing exercises. Students of RG1 and IG1 did the following tasks: "Complete and write a sentence based on the information of the text," make and write a nominative plan of the text; from the given words, form feminine nouns with the suffix - *ичь*, etc. For students of RG2 and IG2, registered performance of tasks of the following type is provided: to write a short translation of the text; describe your attitude to what you've read; write an essay on the proposed topic, work in pairs: take/give (respectively, register as a dialogue) an interview about one of their working days; create a flyer of services or products of your own company. Given the level of language proficiency (from A1 to B2), using a specific variety (puzzles, role-playing games, simulation games, cards, and playing field, etc.) games. Students learned the elements of argumentation by constructing and writing sentences with conjunctions *because*.

Participants RG2 and IG2 performed the following creative tasks: the stylistic transformation of texts (students receive tasks to retell or rewrite the text in another way, for example, everyday phrases: in a business telegram, official business message in conversational style, etc.).

Starting from the second phase of the experiment, students gradually became involved in project work. This activity requires a lot of effort and attention from students, who are not ready for long-term performance, and Arab students are more impressed by the tasks that can be done quickly and get points for their implementation. But a more prepared audience of students of groups RG2 and IG2 at the end of the third phase of the experiment made a presentation: a correspondence tour of the city; conducted interviews with classmates on the topics identified by the program and arranged them in the form of dialogues; demonstrated project work according to the specialty; prepared and held the annual student scientific conference. During the preparation of these projects, students developed scenarios of activities, recorded videos (if necessary), prepared texts of speeches, and created presentations for them. The role of the teacher was to organize and coordinate the actions of students, creating a favorable atmosphere for creativity. In the remote work, we used an interesting creative method - a web quest ('Internet search'). We consider this technique a kind of mini-project. The main task of such a mini-project is to search for information on the Internet.

Before searching for information on a given topic, students received a precise algorithm consisting of step-by-step instructions for each phase, and a description of the results that students should get at the end of each step. On the recommendation of teachers, students pre-selected and analyzed authentic Ukrainian-language Internet resources that they could use to search for information. The teachers organized the discussion of the web quest in the form of a conference. At this conference, students demonstrated their practical work. According to our observations, the students were most interested in the combination of elements of training: *speak, write, draw, play, create, and experience*. Combining such styles of presentation of educational material ensures its practical perception on the intellectual ('brainstorming', problem-solving), and emotional levels (games, role-playing games, discussions). The pedagogical experiment demonstrated the high efficiency of creative teaching methods in forming language and speech competencies of Arab students.

Results

At the initial and last phase of the experiment, the Ukrainian language was tested by participating students in order to compare the results. The criterion is considered to be the standard in pedagogical research. The authors identified the following criteria for the formation of language and speech competencies of Arab students:

- 1) motivational value: the presence of a set of motives and needs that motivate students to learn a foreign (Ukrainian) language; emotional attitude to learning and self-education;
- 2) linguistic and cognitive: availability of a system of knowledge about language, language culture, language traditions, features of communication, generally accepted rules and norms of behavior during interaction in various spheres of life; operation of this knowledge;
- 3) text-communicative: the ability to compile and structure professional texts and documents, prepare for public speaking and pronounce it, use various forms of collective discussion of professional problems; active listening skills;

4) language-normative: the ability to master practically the Ukrainian language in various types of speech activity in the scope of topics due to professional needs.

We differentiated the criteria and indicators developed by us at the level of formation according to the traditional three-level scale (primary, sufficient, high). We believe that this scale is relevant to the specifics of the object under study.

We summarized the results of the pedagogical experiment in table one.

Table 1. *The results of the pedagogical experiment using creative methods in teaching Arab students the Ukrainian language*

Levels	RG1		RG2		IG1		IG2	
	Entry	Result	Entry	Result	Entry	Result	Entry	Result
High	4.00 %	36.00 %	39,5 %	58,5 %	10.00 %	20,2 %	28.00 %	32.00 %
Sufficient	12.00 %	46.00 %	51.00 %	41,5 %	14.00 %	44.00 %	18.00 %	33.00 %
Basic	84.00 %	18.00 %	9,5 %	0.00 %	76.00 %	35,8 %	18.00 %	35.00 %

High level: students have fully completed the tasks, answered all the questions correctly, did not violate the rules of vocabulary, quickly and accurately perceive oral speech, can to reproduce and analyze scientific texts; answer questions independently and correctly; freely construct your statement; understand and perceive the text at the same time.

Sufficient level: students made several grammatical and lexical mistakes that do not significantly affect the final results; the pace of reading is the same as most students have, the participants of the experiment partially completed the task, and the focus is on the reading process, not on reading comprehension; reveals the main essence of the issues.

Basic level: students completed the tasks satisfactorily, and partially reproduced the basic knowledge of grammar; violations in the use of vocabulary are significant; the reading rate is slow; the answers to the questions are inaccurate, not always correct; understanding of the actual content of the text is partial.

Teachers noted that in mixed groups (students of different nationalities), Arab students are more interested in learning the Ukrainian language. Our team members explain this interest by the fact that the propensity for active communication is an integral part of the mentality of the Arab world. In groups with representatives of other nationalities, such as Chinese, Hindus, and Arab students, they took a more active part in the class, trying to explain Ukrainian words to other classmates in sign language, English, etc. Thus they were more communicative. Therefore, compared to other non-experimental groups, even in the absence of creative teaching methods, Arab students demonstrated a higher level of proficiency in the Ukrainian language.

Discussion

In our article, we outlined the definition of language and speech competencies. In our opinion, language competence is the assimilation and awareness of language norms and their adequate application in the process of using a certain language. Speech competence involves the practical mastery of all types of speech activities in various fields and situations. Language and speech

competence are components of communicative competence. Researchers Renchka (2014), and Pat (2018) came to the same conclusions.

We have identified effective creative methods for use in language learning in classroom and distance formats. With a practical orientation of learning, a functional approach to the organization of language material, it is most appropriate to use the method of discussion, the method of projects, role-playing games, ‘brainstorming’, etc. Confirmation of the legitimacy of our position can be found in the works of Sheremeta (2020), Ilyina, Tarasuk, Novikova, & Gribova (2018), Shelest (2018), Zozulia, Prysiashna, & Solodar (2014) Piatko (2017), Fetsko (2021), and Yablokov (2020).

The results of the final testing showed that the creative teaching methods used in the pedagogical experiment are effective in the formation of language and speech competence of Arab students.

Conclusion

The use of creative methods in teaching international students the Ukrainian language has indisputable advantages in activating the cognitive activity of students, the dynamics of the lesson, and a higher level of knowledge acquisition compared to the classical structure of the study. Today we have the opportunity to combine traditional forms of work (in the language classroom, cards with individual tasks, exercises, cases) with innovative (online simulators, research on electronic dictionary platforms, demonstration of excerpts from movies, cartoons, songs, project individual and group work with using software tools, etc.).

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