

## Pedagogical Conditions of Multilevel Foreign Languages Teaching in Pedagogical Higher Education

Vasily V. Kadakin<sup>a</sup>, Tatiana I. Shukshina<sup>a</sup>, Svetlana I. Piskunova<sup>a</sup>,  
Larisa E. Babushkina, Alexander E. Falileev<sup>a</sup>

Mordovian state pedagogical institute named after M. E. Evseviev RUSSIA

### ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to pedagogical conditions of multilevel foreign languages teaching in pedagogical higher education. The purpose of the study is to form the students' skills in foreign language mastering, to form the ability to operate independently and autonomously in this activity, both in the specific learning situation, and in the context of the further continuous learning a foreign language. The article presents the results of the study of multilevel foreign language training of students of non-linguistic faculties of a pedagogical institute. It describes the pedagogical conditions aimed at optimizing and improving the quality of education. Some advantages and difficulties associated with the implementation of this technology are considered. It refers to the important problems of further researches in psychology, pedagogics and didactic features of linguistic competence formation. It takes into account the regional component and programs for Russian, native and foreign languages that means purposeful work on the teachers' mutual account of the language knowledge, which gains on language classes. The article states that multilevel training is an indispensable component in the course of the innovative education directed to training of specialists both in the strategic directions, and in a combination of fundamental and innovative training. One of key tasks in realization of professionally oriented language training formation in the innovative model of the professional development is cultural development of the language functional possession that allow to construct various and effective communication process.

### KEYWORDS

Innovative educational environment of a pedagogical institute, foreign languages, monitoring activities, multilevel foreign languages teaching, pedagogical conditions.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### Introduction

The entry of Russia into the global economic, cultural and educational space is related to the ability to live in the context of world cultures and feel the need for the appropriate level of language skills. However, despite growing international contacts in different spheres of Russian society, the discipline "Foreign Language" is still not a subject for the students, causing intense interest. Teachers say the

### CORRESPONDENCE

Larisa E. Babushkina

✉ Email: lb\_77@list.ru

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lack of a creative approach to the study of foreign language of students of pedagogical institution, the desire to perform only the minimum work needed to pass credit or an exam. In this regard, it is important to find ways to solve the problem associated with increased motivation to learn foreign languages. For example, some major institutions in Russia practiced multilevel foreign languages teaching for several years, which corresponds to the characteristics of modern society.

As it is known, the student and the teacher both take part in learning process, which should be focused on the ultimate goal that meets their needs. In other words, it is necessary to determine the motivating factor, aimed at students' susceptibility to this type of training.

### **Review of Literature**

A variety of researches of foreign language learning was presented in the foreign literature. Jouzdani & Biria (2016) tried to solve the problem of learning new and difficult vocabularies as well as guessing their meanings in the context. Llosa, Lee, Jiang, Haas, O'Connor, Van Booven & Kieffer (2016) found significant and meaningfully intervention effects on a research science assessment and the state science assessment with a focus on English language learners. Wei (2013) speaks about the Communicative Language Teaching approach in China's English foreign language classrooms. Kouritzin & Nakagawa (2011) explore participants' perceptions of whether or how foreign language learning is valued in the linguistic ecosystem and their consequent language-learning beliefs. Shi (2012) considers the using of ethnography as a methodology to investigate home literacy experiences of children learning English as a Second Language.

The learner-centered approach to teaching foreign languages set some objectives like the development of student's personality, the formation of skills in mastering foreign language, the ability to manage these activities independently and autonomously, both in the specific learning situation, and in the context of the further continuous foreign language learning (Sbrodov, Ivanenko & Rybkina, 2008: 92).

### **Methodology**

The monitoring activities aimed at identifying the quality of training of students of non-linguistic faculties in the discipline "Foreign language" were held during the 2013-14 academic year. Administration of the Foreign Languages Faculty and teachers of Foreign Languages Department of "Mordovian State Pedagogical Institute named after M. E. Evseviev" (Mordovian state pedagogical institute) decided to carry out experimental work on transition to multilevel learning of a foreign language of students of non-linguistic faculties. The purpose of this educational project is improvement of language proficiency achieved in the previous stage of training students on basis of innovative educational environment of pedagogical institute.

The following tasks have been put forward for the success of the experiment:

- 1) Monitoring the entrance to detect the initial foreign language level of first-year students;
- 2) Creation of pedagogical conditions aimed at efficient foreign language acquirement by students on basis of innovative educational environment of pedagogical institute;

3) optimization of the educational process of discipline “Foreign Language”, the use of intensive methods of skills development in foreign language speaking, reading, writing and listening;

4) Development of the system of monitoring activities.

Experimental work on multilevel foreign language learning was carried out in three phases between 2014 and 2015 on basis of three non-linguistic faculties of Mordovian State Pedagogical Institute – faculty of physics and mathematics, faculty of psychology and defectology, faculty of pedagogical and art education.

### Procedure

The initial level of language proficiency achieved in the previous stage of training, based on the selected levels (high, average, basic) was determined in the first phase (September 2014). Tests have been developed to the entrance control. They were created on materials of demo versions of Unified State Exam of last years. The entrance monitoring results showed that the majority of first-year students in all three departments have basic (elementary) level of foreign language (93%) (Figure 1).

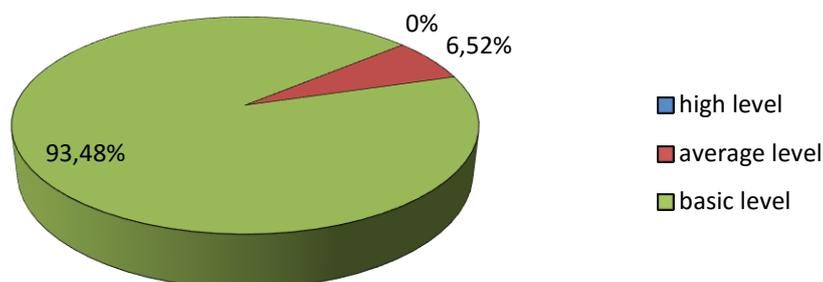


Figure 1. Distribution of data of entrance monitoring on levels of proficiency in foreign language by first-year students of the faculties participating in experiment

The analysis of first phase data led to conclusions:

1) Foreign-language communicative competence before carrying out experiment at first-year students has been created insufficiently;

2) The obtained result is increasing of the foreign language level based on the innovative educational environment of the institute.

The 237 examinees were students enrolled in 2014 to study at the institute and to learn a foreign (English) language. For intention realization of experimental research, experimental group (EG) and control one (CG) were created. Three student groups were combined in EG; they were 20 % of examinees. Others were in CG, the rest of students; they were 80 % of examinees.

For realization of multilevel foreign languages teaching a level program was created, which provides the possibility of implementing the teaching of foreign languages in two options (depending on the initial level of foreign language communicative competence of students): Basic level – A1; Average – A2; High – B1.

According to this program developed on basis of the standard program created under the leadership of Professor S. G. Ter-Minasova, minimum requirements for



the level of foreign-language communicative competence of students do not go out of the frame of basic level after completion of foreign language learning. The course consists of four obligatory modules, each of which corresponds to a certain sphere of communication (household, educational and cognitive, socio-cultural and professional spheres).

The reasons for the formation of EG were:

- In these groups there was most of students with the revealed average level of foreign language skills:

- The existence of positive motivation and interest of students in learning of foreign language (according to the students' survey, the motives and interest in foreign language learning were revealed).

The research has shown that:

- 11% of the interrogated students consider that foreign language learning is necessary for “the extension of the general outlook”;

- 27% are who lean foreign language as “the subject is in the schedule”;

- 46% admit that the gained knowledge can be used for performance of educational activity;

- 16 % believe that the use of the gained knowledge and skills is possible in further professional activities.

The received results demonstrate that not all students of non-linguistic faculties formed sufficiently motivating the study of discipline “Foreign language”. Generally, foreign language is learned not purposefully for future professional activity, and for general development.

During the second forming stage of experiment (2014-2015) the pedagogical conditions were tested in EG and CG, which were aimed at optimizing and improving the quality of foreign language teaching:

1. The use of the innovative educational environment of institute and the creation of the corresponding scientific and methodological support of the process of foreign languages learning.

2. The organization of foreign languages learning using programs of complementary education.

3. The Activation of the Olympiad movement of students of non-linguistic faculties.

4. The involvement of students to work in student scientific societies, to participate in scientific, cultural, and creative activities.

### **1. The use of the innovative educational environment of institute and the creation of the corresponding scientific and methodological support of the process of learning foreign languages.**

Necessary conditions were created at all faculties for effective assimilation of discipline “Foreign language”: language laboratories and computer classes with multimedia and Internet access. In practice of foreign languages teaching at non-linguistic faculties the following technologies are constantly used by lecturers of Foreign Languages Department: the use of mobile and computer technologies (Kurina, 2015); the use of elements of problem training (Kireeva, Aitov & Galimova, 2014); the creation of electronic information and communication environment of foreign languages training (Babushkina, Kadomceva &

Kiryakova, 2015; Shukshina & Babushkina, 2014); the use of regional material as component of content of training a foreign language (Sbrodov, Ivanenko & Rybkina, 2008); the technology of work on grammatical mistakes at a lesson of a foreign language (Adamchuk, 2015); different types of tests used for estimation of results of English proficiency (Kostina & Pronkina, 2015); business game (Petrova & Galieva, 2014).

During practical exercises, laboratory works, organization of independent work the various information Internet resources are used providing basic training for the discipline and control of knowledge; network computer programs “Reward”, “I-Trainium”. It is known that active methods of training advantage the most the mental, practical and communicative activities of students in the course of mastering the educational material. The use of active methods system of foreign languages training is not only lecturer presentation of ready knowledge and memorizing and reproducing them by students but organization of interrelated types of educational and cognitive activities aimed at the development of interdisciplinary competences in foreign languages training. The technology of problematic and modular education, information and communication technologies, interactive learning technology are of particular importance in this regard (Yankina, 2015).

Lecturers of Foreign Languages Department carried out classroom instruction using interactive forms and methods. According to the curricula of faculties, about 20% of classes have to be carried out in an interactive form. Each foreign language class is interactive. The lecturers of department systematically hold open interactive classes. All foreign languages disciplines have electronic educational and methodical complexes, textbooks, chrestomathies, etc. The staff of the department is highly skilled. Lecturers regularly improve their skills.

## **2. Organization of classes in training programs of complementary education.**

The lecturers of Foreign Languages department have developed training programs of complementary education in a foreign language. These additional programs support individualization and self-realization of students, satisfaction of their variable and changing requirements: “English for beginners (for students of non-linguistic faculties)”; “The modern English grammar”; “English in everyday communication”, “Travelling around the UK (for students of non-linguistic faculties)”.

Actually additional educational programs are the innovative platform for working of educational programs for discipline “Foreign language”. The needs of students in various additional educational programs increase and become more differentiated. Even the interests of students are more diverse and dynamic. Complementary education in foreign language training is focused on satisfaction of individual and group requirements, which cannot be objectively considered at the organization of the general education. At the same time, the efficient use of the potential of complementary education in foreign language training assumes the use of modern decisions in the field of program content, and technology implementation.

## **3. Activation of the Olympiad movement of students of non-linguistic faculties.**

The purpose of the Olympiad movement is stimulation of the cogitative processes of students, increasing of the emotional perception of foreign language



training process, improvement of results of this one, formation of common cultural competences and the intellectual identity of the student in general, who is capable to acquire independently knowledge and to use them in practice, and also to be guided in the situations developing in the modern intercultural space.

The students of non-linguistic faculties of Mordovian state pedagogical institute became participants, winners of various events of national, regional and institutional level: the National student's contest of essays in a foreign language "A role of a foreign language in my future profession" among students of non-linguistic faculties of higher education institutions; The Republic student's Olympiad in foreign languages for students of non-linguistic faculties of higher education institutions and secondary professional education institutions of the Republic of Mordovia; The Institutional student's Olympiad in foreign languages for first and second years students of non-linguistic faculties.

#### **4. Involvement of students to the work of student scientific societies, scientific, cultural and creative activities.**

The scientific, cultural and creative sphere of educational environment of higher education institution is capable to provide students a wide range of conditions and opportunities for integrality realization of personal requirements that, in turn, stimulates the activity of free activities as full-fledged subjects of the educational process.

Students of physics and mathematics faculty take an active part in the festival "Christmas meetings" on the subject "Traditions and Culture of the Country of the Learnt Language". Students of pedagogical and art education and psychology and defectology take an active part in the workshop "Foreign languages at school and higher education institution".

#### **Analysis of the Results**

The third stage (2015) – final, – is directed to determination of efficiency of the allocated pedagogical conditions through the analysis, systematization and generalization of the results of the multilevel training work. Monitoring activities were held at the end of each studied module: the household sphere of communication – 50 hours, the educational and cognitive sphere of communication – 120 hours, the socio-cultural sphere of communication – 120 hours, the professional sphere of communication – 50 hours.

The results of the monitoring activities for each faculty are considered below. So at faculty of pedagogical and art education the following results are received. As we can see from Table 1, the received results are not characterized by positive dynamics. So, for example, the second monitoring which is carried out at the end of module "educational and cognitive sphere of communication" shows reduction of progress quality of students with high and average levels that it is connected with transition to studying of more difficult subjects. In addition, it should be noted that the students of this faculty do not complete training of discipline "Foreign language" yet and the results can be changed.

Table 1

The results of monitoring activities at the faculty of pedagogical and art education

Monitoring activities	Number of students		
	with high level	with average level	with basic level
Entrance control	0	1,4 %	98,6 %
Monitoring 1	30 %	33 %	37 %
Intersessional control 1	40 %	47 %	13 %
Monitoring 2	20 %	43 %	37 %
Monitoring 3	39 %	41 %	20 %
Intersessional control 2	37 %	42 %	21 %
Monitoring 4	41 %	35 %	24 %
Intermediate control	26 %	54 %	20 %

Levels dynamics of foreign language proficiency of students at the faculty of pedagogical and art education participating in multilevel training is visually shown in Figure 2. On average, qualitative progress on discipline “Foreign language (English)” at the faculty of pedagogical and art education makes 80%.

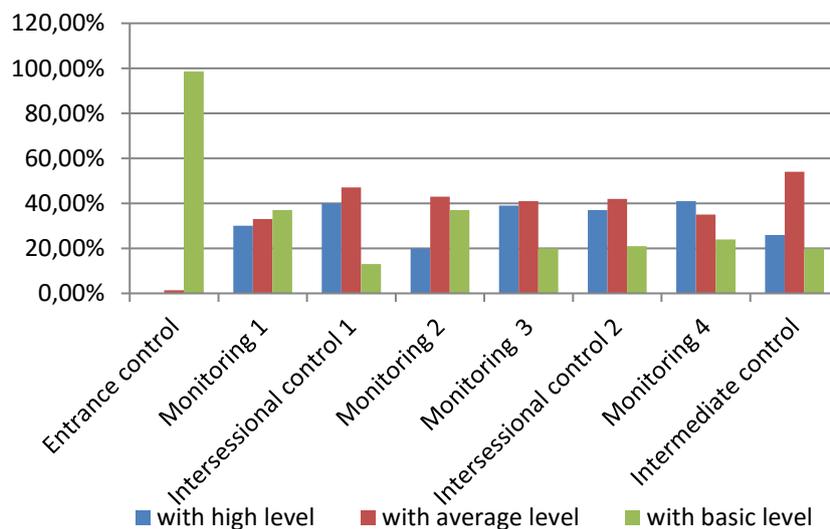


Figure 2. The levels of foreign language proficiency of students at the faculty of pedagogical and art education



The following results of monitoring activities at physics and mathematics faculty are received. As we can see from Table 2, increasing of number of students with high and average level of foreign language proficiency is followed, however students are much less with high level of foreign language proficiency, than with average level. In fact, these results follow from that only English is learned at this faculty, so students with German and French languages must learn English that in turn complicates the process of foreign language learning in general.

Table 2

The results of monitoring activities at physics and mathematics faculty

Monitoring activities	Number of students		
	with high level	with average level	with basic level
Entrance control	0	1.1 %	98.9 %
Monitoring 1	0	28 %	72 %
Intersessional control 1	0	25 %	75 %
Monitoring 2	2 %	57 %	41 %
Monitoring 3	3 %	51 %	46 %
Intersessional control 2	6 %	51 %	43 %
Monitoring 4	4 %	52 %	44 %
Intermediate control	12 %	54 %	44 %

Visually dynamics of levels of foreign language proficiency of students at physics and mathematics faculty is possible to see in Figure 3. Because of multilevel foreign language training, average qualitative progress of foreign language proficiency at physics and mathematics faculty is 66 %.

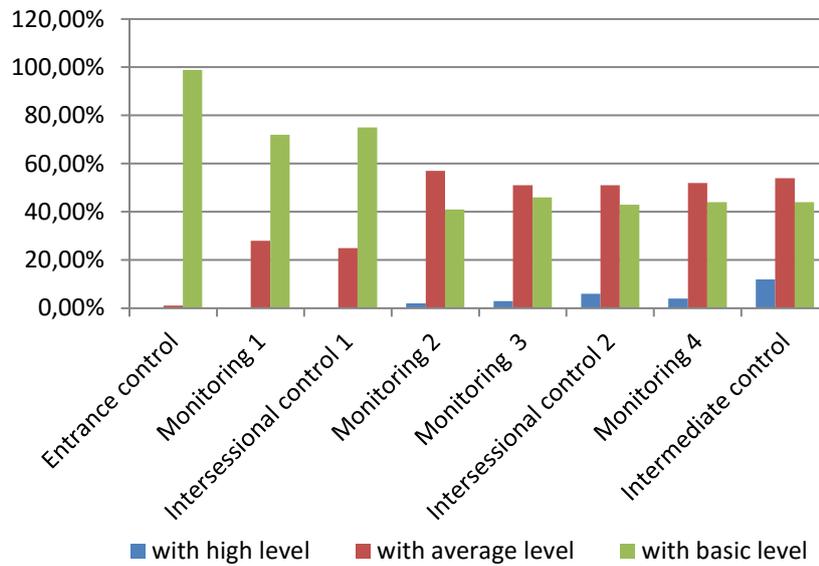


Figure 3. The levels of foreign language proficiency of students at physics and mathematics faculty

The following table 3 shows the results of monitoring activities at the faculty of psychology and defectology. After graduating of foreign language training 12 % students received high level of foreign language proficiency, 49 % students are with average level, 39 % students are with basic level of foreign language proficiency.

Table 3

The results of monitoring activities at the faculty of psychology and defectology

Monitoring activities	Number of students		
	with high level	with average level	with basic level
Entrance control	0	1.4 %	98.6 %
Monitoring 1	1.4 %	24.6 %	74 %
Intersessional control 1	5 %	25 %	70 %
Monitoring 2	5 %	35 %	60 %
Monitoring 3	7 %	36 %	57 %
Intersessional control 2	7 %	40 %	53 %
Monitoring 4	8 %	52 %	40 %
Intermediate control	12 %	49 %	39 %



Visually dynamics of levels of foreign language proficiency of the students of faculty of psychology and defectology, is possible to see in Figure 4. Because of multilevel foreign language training, average qualitative progress of foreign language proficiency at physics and mathematics faculty is 61 %.

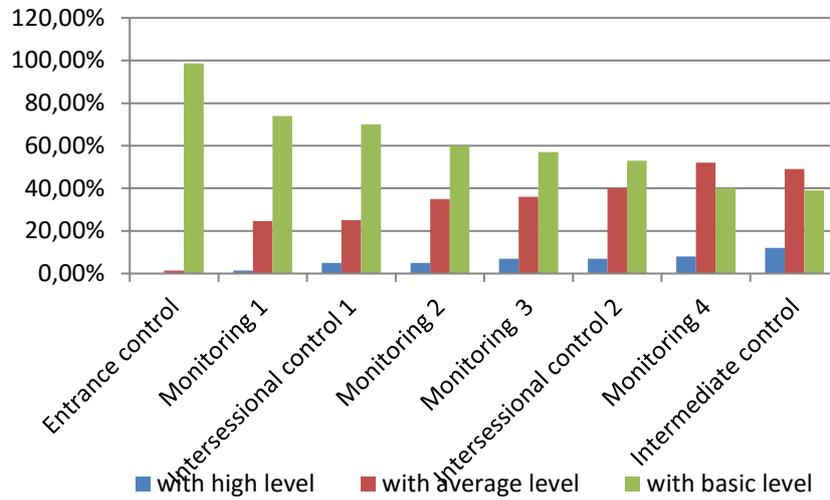


Figure 4. The levels of foreign language proficiency of students at the faculty of psychology and defectology

To summarize the results received in the monitoring activities held at the faculties we can apply to figure 5. The results show that during experimental work the number of students with high and average level of foreign language proficiency has increased, with basic level of foreign language proficiency has been reduced. Experiment results indicate that using of innovative educational environment of Mordovian state pedagogical institute for foreign languages training is qualitative. On average, qualitative progress on discipline “Foreign language (English)” at the faculties participating in experiment is 69 %.

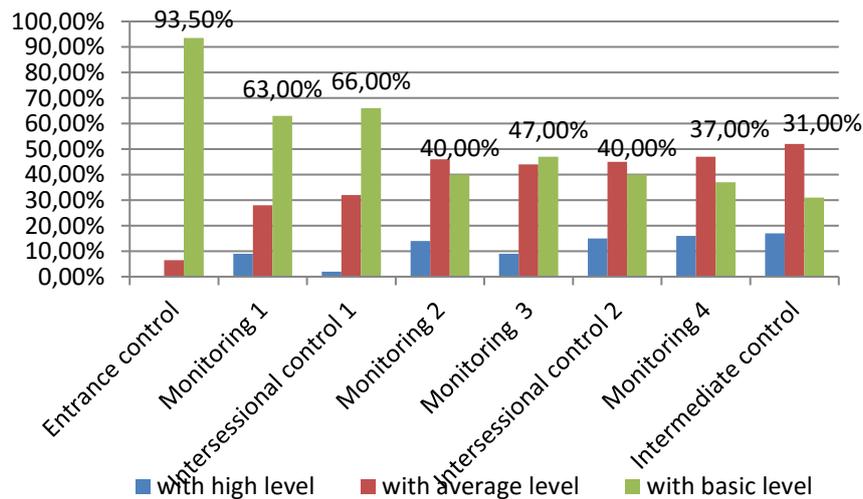


Figure 5. The levels of foreign language proficiency

## Results and Discussion

Because of multilevel foreign language training students with basic level are capable to understand and to use familiar phrases and expressions which are necessary for specific objectives performance in speech; to be presented or to present others, to ask and to answer questions about the residence place, acquaintances and property; to take part in a simple conversation if interlocutor speaks slowly and distinctly and is prepared to help.

Students with average level are capable to understand the separate sentences and often to find expressions connected with the main spheres of life (for example, the main information about themselves and members of family, purchases, employment, etc.). A detailed study of lexical units of language helps to identify the unconscious implicitly marked installation of communicants and, on this basis, to show results of perception of information recipients (Mitina & Falileev, 2012: 97). Students with average level can carry out the tasks connected with a simple exchange of information on familiar or routine subjects. They can tell about themselves, their family, describe main aspects of everyday life in simple terms.

Students with high level are capable to understand the main ideas of accurate messages presented in literary language on different subjects (for example, at work, study, leisure etc.). They know how to deal with most situations that may arise during their stay in the country of the learned language. They can make the coherent message on the known or especially interesting subjects. They can describe impressions, events, hopes and aspirations, express and prove the opinion and plans for the future.

Skilled and experimental research of multilevel foreign language learning of students of non-linguistic faculties of pedagogical higher education institutions has shown the following positive results:

1. Students, who participated in the experiment, has the stable positive motivation to learn a foreign language.
2. Each student of experimental group sees positive dynamics of his own results as he learns a foreign language.
3. The uniformity of groups influences the choice of tasks and their performance. If students who are approximately equal on perform the task unite, they can try to divide all work equally, help each other with a case of difficulties, and tactfully correct each other's mistakes.

## Conclusion

It is necessary to refer to the important problems demanding further researches, in our opinion, the study of psychology and pedagogical and didactic features of formation of linguistic competence taking into account the regional component and coordinate programs for Russian, native and foreign languages. This implies purposeful work of lecturers on accounting of mutual consideration of language knowledge and skills, which students receive at language classes.

Thus, multilevel training is an indispensable component in the course of innovative education directed to specialists training both in strategic directions, and in combination of fundamental and innovative training. One of key tasks in formation realization of professionally oriented language training in the innovative model of specialist is development of cultural possession of the functional kinds of language allowing framing variously and effectively communication process.

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### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### Notes on contributors

Vasily Vasilievich Kadakin is a Candidate of Pedagogical sciences, Rector at Mordovian state pedagogical institute named after M. E. Evseviev.

Tatiana Ivanovna Shukshina is a Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor and Vice-rector of scientific work at Mordovian state pedagogical institute named after M. E. Evseviev.

Svetlana Ivanovna Piskunova is a Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, Professor and Dean of Faculty of Foreign Languages at Mordovian state pedagogical institute named after M. E. Evseviev.

Larisa Evgenievna Babushkina is a Candidate of Pedagogical sciences, Associate Professor at Mordovian state pedagogical institute named after M. E. Evseviev.

Alexander Evgenyevich Falileev is a Candidate of Cultural science and Associate Professor at the Department of English and German languages and teaching methods at Mordovian state pedagogical institute named after M. E. Evseviev.

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