

## Lecturer's Speech Competence

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### Abstract

The analysis of the issue of lecturer's speech competence is presented. Lecturer's speech competence is the main component of professional image, the indicator of communicative culture, having a great impact on the quality of pedagogical activity. Research objective: to define the main drawbacks of speech competence of lecturers of North-Eastern Federal University named after M. K. Ammosov (NEFU) (Russia, Yakutsk) and suggest the ways of drawbacks corrections in terms of multilingual educational environment of higher education institution. The method of questionnaire was used in the research. The NEFU students took part in the research. The answers to the questionnaire allowed defining the most typical drawbacks for lecturers, working in the multicultural educational environment of region higher education institution. The mentioned drawbacks: words repetition, language rules breaking, wrong vocabulary or pronunciation of foreign words, use of colloquial language, etc. breaking the speech standards and decreasing the quality of lecture material presentation. The authors suggest improving lecturer's speech competence through the organization of special advanced training courses, business games, discussion platforms, teaching aids and handbooks broadcasting, on-line tutorials, and motivated dialogue mastering as the most effective way of students training process organization.

**Keywords:** speech competence, lecturer, multicultural educational environment

### 1. Introduction

Current state of professional culture, fierce competition on labor market, rising requirements to quality of professional activity make motivated concern on expert's image necessary. In the East cult image is defined by "face concept" (Soy, 2011), but in the West-by concept of respect, honor and status, providing the formation of public trust relations to expert's activity. The business world in the XXI century is made by people, "theoretically and practically familiar with all features of professional area; mastering innovative technologies of professional activity; constantly able to increase qualification" (Koryakina, 2012) and also ready to modeling and effective management of one's own professional image.

The concept of "image" (Eng. *image*, lat. *Imago*-image) (Dictionary of Russian early XXI century, 2006) was widely used "in the most different fields of knowledge: sociology, psychology, political science, anthropology, cultural science, linguistics ... Professional image is an important component of person reception" (Inozemceva, 2011).

The evolution of scientific believes on the essence of professional image is characterized by freedom of speech and interpretations. The content analysis of the researches on this problem allows drawing the following conclusion: in modern science professional image is understood as intentionally formed and controlled image to which representatives of various professions: teacher, doctor, engineer, lawyer, etc. have to correspond.

L. U. Donskaya thinks that "the image of the lecturer of higher education institution is the integral attribute consisting of the complex of external and internal individual, personal, and professional qualities of the lecturer which promotes the efficiency of teaching activity" (Donskaya, 2004).

"The formation of professional image directly depends on how it will be possible to create the expert image meeting the expectations of other people" (Kaljuzhnyi, 2006).

As integral formation the expert's image consists of interdependent components: internal (system of beliefs, values, faiths, affirmations and competence), external (kinetic and verbal elements) and procedural (culture, communication style). One of the basic elements of professional image which should be noted is *speech competence*—a body of knowledge and skills, allowing person to be fluent in dialogue and monologue, "to understand audible and readable speech, including the ability to make and understand speech in any functional style" (Romanova & Filippov, 2009). Some researchers sometimes call this type of competence as sociolinguistic, having in mind speaker's ability to choose necessary linguistic form and way of expression, depending on the terms of speech act: situation, communicative purposes and speaker's intentions, peculiarities of information perception by a communicant.

Successful lecturer's image has been developing through personal contacts and includes *speech competence* as the main one. For a lecturer, regardless of his/her specialization in the professional area, language is the most important instrument of professional communication, the essential part of qualification. The speech of a modern lecturer of higher education institution is not only an integrative indicator of common personal culture, but the recognition the lecturer's professional area as the sphere of extra speech responsibility. For a modern teacher it is necessary not only to have a wide range of knowledge in the field of taught discipline, pedagogics and psychology, but also "Skillful own words" (Shabanov, 2012), skillfully use literary emphatic speech and have the ability to form model speech behavior of future experts.

## 2. Methods

Speech behavior is getting lecturer's brand caused by specifics of one's professional activity. "Pedagogue—an expert on pedagogics, realizing educational and teaching activity" (Ozhegov, 1997). His role is—"expert, carrying training and education through head to head communication. He has the advanced dialogue ability" (Popova, 2011).

"The most important characteristics of educational interactions of students and teachers of higher education institution are consistency and continuity, transitions from classroom training to extracurricular activity, from educational focused to academic research, from officially regulated to informal confidential communication. All this sets the certain requirements to the style of pedagogical communication which is defined by teacher's communicative abilities; the attained level of his relationship with students; teacher creative manner, peculiarities of students' group" (Gerasimova, 2013).

First, he delivers knowledge and guides the speech of students as subjects of educational process. On the way in which the teacher communicates with students, depends the degree of students' informative interest to subject, so does the motivation, that in turn, determines the efficiency of knowledge and skills acquirement on subject by students; influences the culture of interpersonal relations; creates the corresponding moral and psychological environment of educational process. For students, lecturer's speech is a model which imposes special responsibility on a speaker in selecting necessary linguistic means.

In socializing with students the teacher realizes the important mission—training "the man of culture" (Bibler, 1993). "The man of culture" is the person refusing from the acquisition of ready facts and frame of minds, overcoming the dogmatic point of view, able to exceed the bounds of the only paradigm, not looking for ready answers to life issues; the person capable to dialogue, active self-knowledge and self-development

Secondly, lecturers' interpersonal communication makes essential impact on the quality of educational environment. Modern scientific and social interaction, experts' group work, informal and formal professional and scientific contacts are more widely carried out within professional community on specific specialization and interests. Discussion, debate, exchange of opinions, conversation, expert's opinion on the state of subject area, etc. can be regarded as a communication format. The competence to be guided readily at received information, give good reasoning, master emotional-expressional vocabulary and speech standards, be ready for public professional dialogue with diverse primary audience (scientific community, general public, mass media, business community, government institutions, etc.) have an impact on communication efficiency and quality in "the lecturer-the lecturer" dyad.

Thirdly, lecturer's speech competence is reflected in paper work execution according to standards, norms and rules of given professional communication area. Global information system development and standardization of the educational environment led to significant increase in quantity and types of paperwork of various communicative and functional styles used by participants of speech act in globalized environment. The qualities of speech paperwork execution, "mistakes presence or absence allow drawing conclusions about the level of the language efficiency and professional competence of a lecturer in whole, and actively work on the formation of professional image" (Chorossova, 2014).

Fourthly, a unique feature of lecturer's professional communication is his/her readiness for informal communication with colleagues and students in the course of which benevolent, friendly and creative relationships enriching partners as individuals are built. Such communication shapes general values, scientific and professional interests, inspires creation of new ideas, communications, projects, collectives, ready to scientific co-authorship in the context of this project.

Thus, in academic professional communication lecturer's *speech competence* is realized in *several spheres* (Chernyak, 2011):

- academic (communication, reinterpretation, reproduction and production of information);
- public (teaching outside higher education institution, performances at conferences, seminars);
- business (creation and exchange of different business paper in official area);
- informal interpersonal (communication with students and colleagues).

The level of speech competence of the lecturer, having a great impact on speech image and the opportunity to exercise the efficient communication, is revealed in particular competence components:

- "speech competence which is connected with the ability to observe language norms, ensuring speaker safe against reputation mistakes;
- communicative competence, assuming free change of speech registers in different communication situations and keeping all richness of speech etiquette;
- textual competence, defining the ability to create texts according to the sphere of communication and chosen genre;
- lexicographic competence, providing the major for the lecturer ability to search necessary information for solving informative and communicative problems" (Chernyak, 2011).

### 3. Results

The pilot study in the form of a questionnaire called "The lecturer through the eyes of students" was conducted by authors. The purpose was to define features of the speech image of the lecturer, working in Russian language in multilingual educational environment of higher education institution. The location of higher education institution is the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). It is the largest region of the Russian Federation and "multicultural, multi-religious, multinational environment with specific geographic natural climatic conditions, and traditionally developed forms of economic and spiritual life" (Panina, Zalutskaya, & Grigorieva, 2014). Yakutia is multinational republic by ethnic composition including the Sakha (Yakuts)-47%, Russians-40.1%, Ukrainians-3.6%, the Yukhagirs-1.9%, the Evens-1.2%, Tatars-1.2%, the Chukchi-0.1%, the Dolgans-0.1%, other nationalities-5.2%. According to the Law "On languages in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)" the state languages are Russian and Yakut, and Even, Evenk, Yukhagir, Dolgan, Chukchi have the status of official languages in the areas of compact settlement of these nations. 44% of even, 25% of evenk, 70% of yukhagir, 82% of chukchi children learn native language at school. The most effective and promising spoken language, taking into account fully developed traditional relations and mentality, for people of Yakutia is Russian. It is consolidating for yakut community, that is why functional positions of Russian language in the republic is consistent.

The effect of multicultural composition of Yakutia's population is multicultural, multilingual educational University environment.

Researches characterize multicultural educational environment as a combination of all conditions of vital activity in which integration of common cultural, social and personal source are carried out. This peculiar environment of a lifestyle of a community, living in a certain area, encompassing such forms of organization as practiced by this community, the basic methods of production and household activities, interaction with nature, and various social institutions, language, religious beliefs, customs, habits and tradition, art, science, mythology, and distinctive features of mindset and self-expression, patterns of interpersonal behavior. A person, living in this environment, should be ready to adequate perception of proceeding changes, continuous renewal, innovations acceptance and producing, and also fruitful intercultural interaction in difficult conditions of modern civilization development" (Panina & Zalutskaya, 2013). The multicultural educational environment is represented by several interactive components:

- multicultural multinational group of students;
- multicultural teaching staff;

- cross-cultural nature of pedagogical process;
- socio-cultural environment of educational institution.

The discrete role in this educational environment is given to the lecturer of higher education institution. Lecture's personality and her/his vocational status are in this case the leading factors of languages integration and the sense of multicultural environment; the realization of strategic education line, focused on the formation of students' readiness to constant development in multicultural and multilingual educational environment; the improvement of students' personal language area, students' personal multi-language environment, forming linguistic identity.

75 students of humanitarian faculties and institutes of North-Eastern Federal University named after M. K. Ammosov took part in the research. Respondents were the representatives of different nationalities. 89% of them-Yakuts; 9% Russian; 1% Tatars; Evens 0.5% and 0.5%-other.

Their answers to the questionnaire allowed to define the level of speech competence of the lecturers of higher education institutions in Yakutia in certain spectrum, reveal drawbacks and advantages in mastering speech culture, define some ways of speech improvement, and what is more, illustrate tendencies of further development

According to research results respondents mentioned the basic personality properties, comprising the professional image of a modern lecturer. The most useful are subject knowledge, professionalism, and availability of lecture material explaining, sociability, goodwill and tolerance.

Table 1. Main components of lecture professional image

Image parameters	Number of respondents, %	Rating
Knowledge of the subject	27.3	1
Professionalism	23.7	2
Availability of educational material explaining	18	3
Sociability	15.2	4
Goodwill	12.1	5
Tolerance	3.7	6

The research results testify that students think the lecturer must have the following important characteristic of speech competence: availability of lecture material explaining and sociability. Students understand them as following: first of all, lecturer's ability to explain the material definitely, illustrate by good examples, facts, ideas of distinguished scientists, express one's opinion. Ability to listen and react adequately is necessary in dialogue communication that gives the chance to the lecturer to maintain the adequate feedback with students.

However, the results of monitoring showed that the lecturers do not always follow language norms and pay attention to students' speech mistakes. Communicative failures, violation of language norms, mistakes connected with interference influence of the native language are frequent phenomena in lecturers' speech. Research results: the most urgent thing for mastering is lecturer's speech competence at high level. The most typical drawbacks for lecturers of the higher education institution, noted by respondents:

Table 2. Research results "The lecturer through the eyes of students"

##	Typical drawbacks for lecturers of the higher education institution	Number of respondents
1	The unreasonable repetition of one and the same words disturbing the comprehension of key information, causing irritation and distracting attention from lecture material	70 students
2	Emphasize the language rules breaking: presence of spelling errors, the set of grammar and speech mistakes, wrong vocabulary or pronunciation of foreign words, departure from orthoepic rules of Russian language	54
3	The use of colloquial language and slang expressions breaking the standard sample of lecturer's communication and unacceptable things; students think they are undesirable details of lecturers' professional communication.	36

-93% of all respondents register the unreasonable repetition of one and the same words disturbing the comprehension of key information, causing irritation and distracting attention from lecture material;

-71% of students (the majority of which are bilinguals) emphasize the language rules breaking: presence of spelling errors, the set of grammar and speech mistakes, wrong vocabulary or pronunciation of foreign words, departure from orthoepic rules of Russian language;

-48% of students consider the use of colloquial language and slang expressions breaking the standard sample of lecturer's communication and unacceptable things; students think they are undesirable details of lecturers' professional communication.

Speech monotony, lack of discrete word intelligibility and emotional color, alogism in the presentation of educational material, lecturer's unwillingness to face-to-face contact with audience are also noted as drawbacks.

#### 4. Discussion

According to research results lecturers having average and low level of speech competence, need to improve the ability to speak, especially speech and communicative sub competences. Its relevance is caused by peculiarities of university language environment where training is carried out in several languages, Russian is the main one. Native speakers of Russian (teachers and students) as well as bilinguals (teachers and students) for whom Russian is not native take part in the course of training. For the most part bilingual teachers and bilingual students realize interpersonal communication in native language, but communication and acquirement of educational information are realized in Russian. Such communication language shift becomes an impact factor on the quality of lecturer's professional communication and causes, mentioned by students in questionnaires, drawbacks in lecturer's speech.

The suggested solution on the quality of lecture's speech competence problem is seen in organization the centers on improving the level of Russian language proficiency for lecturers of multilingual higher education institutions: constant monitoring; conduction of "Lecturer's ability to speak" advanced training courses; consultations for teachers and students according to the separate units of Russian language (spelling, grammar, syntax); organization of emergency aid service on orthoepy items (pronunciation, accent, articulation); contests and quizzes for finding out the expert in Russian among lecturers; business games on the use of words of foreign origin; lecturers' taking part in annual All-Russian campaign "Total dictation", etc. We also think that it would be useful to issue handbooks, idioglossaries, teaching aids on speech etiquette of higher education institution (standards of speech activity of lecturers, employees and students), as language ecology demands active introduction the norms of harmonious verbal communication into educational environment which in some degree will help to correct aggressiveness of modern rhetoric in different speech spheres.

Corporate means of mass media (newspaper, site, digest) of North-Eastern Federal University named after M.K. Ammosov can be a platform for presentation of practically useful information in the format of conferences, "round tables", discussion platforms, advisory stations, "offices" of emergency speech aid, reports to "orthographic police", etc.

One should draw attention to self-education and self-improvement of a lecturer, consciously working for efficient professional communication with colleagues and students. One way is mastering not only the skill of monologue (report, lecture, reporting information), but also dialogue.

The dialogue nature as the quality of consciousness (according to M. M. Bakhtin, "to live means to participate in dialogue" (Bakhtin, 1997), need for dialogue as human spiritual requirement, the universality of dialogue as the basis of mutual understanding cause its important role in individual education and development. The Ancient Greek philosopher Socrates used dialogue as "a way of truth searching" (Boober, 1995). The teacher by raising issue excited curiosity, student's informative interest and he himself, reasoning orally, in the search of the answer guided the student's thought on the way to knowledge. As a result of such conversation (dialogue, discussion) the gained knowledge was emotionally coloured, and more effective in relation to the studied notions, rules or any course of actions.

Dialogue assumes the teacher mastering the skills of creation of essential psychic atmosphere of open attitudes, goodwill and mutual trust. Its goal is understanding to one another and "uniting the adherents"» (Zaretskaya, 2001). Dialogue training becomes co-authorship, co-education; the leading role here is given to the lecturer able to improvise, ask problem questions, respond to the needs of students, involve students in views exchange and change communicative role; master speech style, appropriate to given speech situation and corresponding expression means (intonation, motion, mimicry, gestures); control the attention of students as partners of professional communication and maintain their interest to a subject.

## 5. Conclusion

Lecturer's speech competence is based on the set of numerous personality properties and qualities demonstrated in the variety of chosen verbal and nonverbal means. It is realized in humanitarian technologies of professional communication, such as dialogue, dominating in the professional communication of the lecturer in the course of training. Dialogue training is interactive training where the interaction between a lecturer and a student takes place. "Without relationship with other people there is no professional growth and training of creative, professional dialogue interaction, which is the indicator of social and psychological individuals adaptation, the level of communicative competence and one of the main objectives in modern educational process" (Karimulaeva, 2014).

Lecturer's ability to control one's speech and the speech of other subjects of educational process, variety of communication types, and presence of bright communicative individuality are the indicators of lecturer's professionalism, readiness for public, mutually beneficial and useful communication in any speech situation. The expert's image in the field of the higher education assumes the aspiration of a lecturer to mastering the elitist type of speech culture. Only in this case it is possible to speak about high qualification and a consistently elevated image of the higher educational institution pretending to leading positions in Russian rating.

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