



Journal
of Danubian
Studies
and Research

European Educational Principles of Forming Foreign Language Communicative Competence Among Students of Non- Linguistic University Faculties

Tetiana Soroka¹

Abstract: A foreign language becomes an effective tool for achieving professional and personal goals, and a personal and activity-based approach in teaching helps to develop a student's value attitude both to the process of learning a foreign language and to the results of own activities, minimizing the usual formal attitude to a foreign language as only a discipline included in the curriculum. The aim of the study is to investigate principles of forming foreign language communicative competence among students of non-linguistic university faculties adopted by the Council of Europe as Pan-European recommendations on language education. Taking into account the difference between the concepts of "competence" and "competency", competencies are part of the whole, forming its unity and constituting the activity side of using a foreign language, and competence is a personal quality, including an emotional and value attitude to the actions performed. Actually, proficiency in a foreign language can be competence as a separately considered property of a person and competency as part of the general professional training of a future specialist. The components of competence are competencies that provide speech and non-speech activities of a language user. Competencies are formed and developed in the process of university studying.

Keywords: foreign language; communicative competence; professional training; education

1. Problem Statement

The modern era is rightly called the age of information, as it puts forward its high demands on the informative side of human life. Knowledge of a foreign language becomes an important prerequisite for success and a condition for achieving the intended goals. This is due to the fact that a person needs to find what one needs in

¹ PhD, Associate Professor, Izmail State University of Humanities, Ukraine, Address: Repina St, 12, Izmail, Odessa Region, 68601, Ukraine, Tel.: +38 (04841)51388, Corresponding author: magpie3f@mail.ru.

informative sources in the field of science, technology, culture, art, history, politics, social life, everyday life, etc., to establish and maintain communicative contacts in the social and professional spheres. Now, when information flows are moving at a tremendous speed, the task of each specialist is to learn how to navigate it in a timely manner and benefit from it for the realization of professional goals, tasks and interests. A modern specialist should be a person with a high level of professional training, general culture, intelligence and erudition, as well as with the ability to self-study and respond to rapid changes in the surrounding world.

The discipline “foreign language” is a mandatory component of European educational standards in the field of higher education. As a result of mastering the discipline, students should have a certain type of competence from the category of general cultural and professional ones, correlating with the competencies laid down in the main educational professional program.

2. Critical Overview

In addition to the main goals of forming a certain level of foreign language competence and competencies, learning a foreign language increases the level of a person’s general culture, trains thinking, attention and memory. It teaches working with information and develops communication skills. The process of learning a foreign language can be characterized as constantly changing, improving and labile. It requires compliance with new standards and goals and at the same time taking into account and optimizing the accumulated pedagogical experience in the formation of foreign language communicative competence among students. At the center of this process is a student’s personality that is a person with one’s personal and individual characteristics, a system of values and relationships. And this means that the system of approaches in teaching and learning a foreign language will never stop in its development, taking into account the needs of modern human relations and the surrounding world. In addition, a student of a higher educational establishment is a specialist in the very near future, who is placed in conditions of fierce competition and professional development, which implies orientation to one’s prospective needs of using a foreign language to achieve professional goals and solve professional tasks. In addition, a student of a higher educational establishment is a specialist in the very near future, who is placed in conditions of fierce competition and professional development, which implies orientation to one’s prospective needs of using a foreign language to achieve professional goals and solve professional tasks.

Therefore, the issues of improving the effectiveness of teaching foreign languages at the university do not lose their relevance, meeting the requirements of time and an individual. Modern personality-oriented pedagogy is the pedagogy of action, reform and innovation. The system of knowledge, skills and abilities acquired by students at the university should be focused primarily on the earliest practical application in the profession. This is especially true in relation to applied disciplines and practical courses, which also include a foreign language.

The most important pedagogical goal is the prognostic goal of training and the formation of the prognostic competence of the future specialist. During the period of study at the university, a student passes (according to L. Antonyuk) the adept stage, that is, the stage of professional training, when there are significant changes in self-consciousness, personality orientation, awareness, other aspects of individuality. There is a holistic assimilation of value ideas about professional community, mastery of professionally-significant knowledge, skills. Professionally-significant qualities are developing; their systems are being formed (Antonyuk, 2016, p. 78). Therefore, at this time, by influencing the motivational sphere of the student's personality, it is necessary to develop an interest in mastering a foreign language and taking into account its importance in future professional activity. In other words, a student learns a foreign language more effectively if understands why and how it can be used in the profession. Prognostic competence, according to V. Bakhrushin, is the result of education (general and professional), in which the graduate's level of preparedness for life and work in society, one's knowledge and skills of predicting quality activities give the opportunity to define goals, plan, program, design, work with information (Bakhrushin, 2000, p. 87). In this regard, we can talk about three most important modern pedagogical approaches to learning: personal, active, prognostic. They take into account the main abilities of a personality of a future specialist, the development of which is promoted by innovative pedagogy: communicative, activity-based, reflexive, problem-research, simulation-modeling, as well as the ability to self-determination (Hymes, 1984, p. 123). The study of a foreign language in higher education, being inextricably linked with the educational process of the university, which prepares a student for the future professional life, is able to focus on each of these abilities and be an important element of the general professional training of a competitive specialist. This makes it necessary to identify, take into account and create pedagogical conditions for the most effective teaching, which allow providing a system of forms and methods of teaching and learning a foreign language in such a way that it becomes possible to solve not only didactic, but also activity and prognostic tasks of student personality development. Pedagogical

conditions are an effective, real mechanism for including the maximum number of opportunities for optimizing the pedagogical process, which stimulates the activity of a teacher and a student and helps to find the most effective forms of their interaction.

3. Purpose of Investigation

The aim of the study is to investigate principles of forming foreign language communicative competence among students of non-linguistic university faculties adopted by the Council of Europe as Pan-European recommendations on language education.

4. Research Course

The interest in the issue of foreign language communicative competence is explained by the change in the paradigm of teaching and learning a foreign language, when communicative goals are put at the forefront, implying a living command of the language, opposed to a static amount of knowledge, when the implementation of the curriculum and compliance with the educational plan becomes an end in itself for a teacher and a student.

However, the possibility of a final definition of foreign language communicative competence is still in the nature of a discussion. The problematic nature of the definition of this concept is due to some factors: complex component composition, subjectivity, personality-oriented nature, individualization in relation to each individual language user, a wide range of implementation (household, professional, scientific, technical sphere), the complexity of the communication process, the implementation of the intended purpose, the controversial nature of the understanding of the words “communication”, “competence”, “competency”, etc.

Foreign language communicative competence is a multicomponent concept that includes multidirectional competencies for performing various speech and non-speech actions to achieve certain communication goals. Communicative competencies are divided into those related to knowledge of the surrounding world and the personal system of values and linguistic ones proper, that is, into general and communicative speech.

In the “Pan-European Recommendations on Language Education” adopted by the Council of Europe, communicative speech competencies include linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competencies. Linguistic competencies are lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic, and orthoepic competencies. Sociolinguistic competence consists of linguistic markers of social relationships, rules of politeness, expressions of folk wisdom, registry differences, dialect and accent. Pragmatic competence consists of discursive, functional competence and speaking programming competence (Nikolaeva, 2003, pp. 108-130).

Competencies are a meaningful component of learning. Actually, they are what should be taught and learned. Competency can be considered as a set of knowledge, skills and abilities acquired during training as well as the ability to perform any activity based on acquired knowledge, skills and abilities. In relation to the study of a foreign language, competency characterizes a certain level of language proficiency and includes interrelated competencies: linguistic, discursive, speech and communicative (Zadorozhnaya, 2017, p. 13). In modern pedagogical literature, the list of foreign-language competencies is supplemented by socio-cultural, analytical, strategic, professional, social and other ones. However, all of them cannot be considered without a projection of their further use, that is, outside of the activity implementation.

The Ukrainian researcher S. Nikolaeva considers language, on the one hand, as a competence, on the other – as a performance. Competence is based on vocabulary, grammar and pragmatics, regulating the use of language, as well as non-verbal communication tools. Language as a performance is associated with communication, action and interaction. The key question remains which speaking products (words, sentences, dialogues, texts) are used and what influence they carry (Nikolaeva, 2003, p. 230).

Zadorozhnaya O. draws a line between speech activity aimed at informing and speech actions that include the transmission of expressive information that ensures the regulation of relationships. The structure of speech actions includes the subject, the object to which the information is addressed, the purpose, the content, verbal and nonverbal means (Zadorozhnaya, 2017, p. 15).

This once again confirms the close connection of language, action and activity and allows us to emphasize the activity side of foreign language communicative competence. The concept of foreign language communicative competence includes not only language and speech components. Competence can be considered only in

the unity of knowledge and activity components, when the speech competencies acquired as a result of learning a foreign language become an instrument of real activity for their use, take a pragmatic character and can be applied in various fields, when a person who has reached a certain level of foreign language competence can be considered a valid language user.

We define foreign language communicative competence as a set of knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for the implementation of activities for the perception and production of texts in a given communication situation (context) in a language that the user speaks and which is not one's native language. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the main functions of communication, which are expressed not only in the exchange of information, but also in interaction and perception, as well as the person-person nature of communication. Competence is not a closed, well-established system, firstly, because mastering and improving knowledge of a foreign language is a continuous process, which, provided it is relevant, does not end and is not limited to studying a foreign language at a university, secondly, because for various of language users it has its own content and is determined by the predicted goals of foreign language communication.

When it comes to students of non-linguistic university faculties, it is necessary to designate a foreign language as a non-core discipline, which, however, is of an interdisciplinary nature. A foreign language is included in the disciplines of compulsory study for future specialists of all specialties and focused on both personal and professional qualities of the future specialist.

The Council of Europe has been actively developing issues of providing participants in language education with the necessary tools in the form of effective recommendations. The result was the "Pan-European Recommendations on Language Education" with an accentuated activity-oriented approach to language learning. The essence of this approach is that language users are, first of all, members of society and perform certain tasks in certain conditions, in a specific environment and in a separate field of activity. Types of speech activity are an integral part of a broader social context that gives them full meaning (Nikolaeva, 2003, p. 88). Speech activity is considered as a component of a broader activity that makes up the social interaction of a language user using one's general and communicative speech competencies.

Therefore, narrowing the concept of foreign language communicative competence to the concept of professional foreign language communicative competence, we

emphasize that professional foreign language communicative competence is included in the sphere of readiness for professional activity and assumes the ability to operate in a foreign language in the professional sphere of communication. For a graduate of a linguistic university faculty, this primarily concerns the willingness to perceive texts in another language in order to obtain professionally relevant information. However, the text and working with it, although the most real and accessible, is not the only object of realization of foreign language communicative competence.

Teaching a foreign language in a non-linguistic university faculty is implemented by achieving the following goals: *practical* (to form students' general and professionally-oriented communicative speech competencies for ensuring effective communication in a professional environment); *educational* (to promote the formation of students' ability to self-education); *cognitive* (to attract students to academic activities); *developing* (to help students in the formation of general competencies in order to develop personal motivation (values, ideals), to strengthen students' confidence as language users, optimize their positive attitude to language learning); *socio-cultural* (to achieve an understanding of diverse and international socio-cultural problems in order to find the best way to work in a variety of professional situations); *intercultural* (along with the study of a foreign language as a system of lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, spelling, orthoepic laws that make up linguistic competence, to create conditions for awareness of foreign language proficiency as a tool for understanding another culture and establishing intercultural relations).

The content of the training should be considered as a set: object of teaching (language, speech, speech activity, culture); object of learning (knowledge, skills and intercultural communication); result of training (competence): linguistic, speech, communicative, socio-cultural competence (Bakhrushin, 2000, p. 54).

It is advisable to prepare a student for the fact that in the conditions of professional activity there will be a need for oral communication, business correspondence, analytical processing of foreign sources, public speeches, translation using computer translation automation systems and electronic dictionaries. And if preparing for all these forms of professional communication is difficult, then it is necessary, at least, to familiarize a student with the possible types and forms of using foreign language knowledge, skills and abilities, prolonging the process of mastering a foreign language in the form of self-education.

Cognitive, interactive, perceptual aspects of professional communicative competence are highlighted by L. Antonyuk on the example of the formation of professional communicative competence in the training of software engineers (Antonyuk, 2016, p. 45).

Such aspects are applicable to other specialties, since at each of the selected levels a student forms a bank of: opportunities to communicate; means of interaction with objects and subjects of professional activity; skills of interpreting the results of such interaction with their transformation into a personally significant system of perceptions. These aspects of foreign language communicative competence aim the student at practical use in the professional sphere of the acquired knowledge, skills and abilities that form one's foreign language communicative competence.

Studying the problem of forming a culture of foreign-language business communication on the example of students of economic specialties, Yu.D. Desheriev defines the composition of such a culture by general cultural, linguistic and communicative components (Desheriev, 1988, p. 78). Such content, firstly, emphasizes the humanistic meaning of education, in the center of which is the personality, secondly, emphasizes the knowledge component as the basis of emerging competencies, and thirdly, proves the importance of an activity-oriented educational process, when the formed system of knowledge, skills and abilities becomes a tool for solving professional tasks.

In this regard, it is possible to distinguish seven main directions of forming foreign language communicative competence of a student of a non-linguistic university faculty and their corresponding approaches: student's personality – personal approach; the system of knowledge acquired in the process of learning a foreign language – competence approach; oral and written communication skills in the household and professional sphere – a communicative approach; the activity that a person can carry out by applying the acquired knowledge is an activity approach; forecasting of possible activities and readiness for it – a predictive approach; culture of native speakers of the studied language as an authentic environment for the implementation of foreign language communicative competence – a socio-cultural approach; the professional activity of a student as a future specialist is an interdisciplinary approach.

It is advisable to consider the concept of a socio-cultural approach in the formation of foreign language communicative competence, since it integrates other approaches, simultaneously influencing a student's personality and one's ability to

apply the emerging foreign language communicative competence in situations of real communication with speakers of another culture. Sociolinguistic competence, regulated by linguistic competence, allows to carry out language activities as required by the situation of real communication. Proximity to the situation of real communication is the basis of modern approaches in teaching and learning foreign languages in all areas of educational activity.

In the course of training, students learn not only to use a foreign language orally and in writing in non-professional and professional spheres of activity, taking into account the laws of its existence at all levels of the language system (phonetic, grammatical, lexical, syntactic), but also learn the features of language and speech behavior in accordance with the situation in which communication takes place directly, taking into account the social status of the speakers, as well as the cultural and ethnic characteristics of the interlocutors.

Since any language is an integral part of the national and cultural specifics of the image of the world, which includes a variety of components and phenomena, learning a foreign language by students means, among other things, the cognition of both the subjective (individual) and general (collective) mentality and culture of the people of the studied language, and also involves familiarization with the ideas, assessments and experience of other cultural commonalities.

The sociolinguistic component of the sociocultural approach in teaching a foreign language to university students is of the greatest interest for the study, since sociolinguistic competence reflects collectively the social and cultural conditions under which the language is directly used in a real communication situation (focus on the social principles of relationships at the communicative level between people of different ages, gender, classes and social categories, etc.; features of the functional and stylistic design of the speech flow of the interlocutors at the time of the conversation).

It is necessary to note the influence of sociolinguistic competence in relation to students' perception of the peculiarities of national variants of polyethnic languages (stratification of the language vertically and horizontally), dialect and accent, which allows recognizing the linguistic and speech characteristics of certain segments of society, place of residence, origin, occupation, etc. D. Hymes emphasizes the need for purposeful formation of sociolinguistic competence as a multifactorial integrative whole, implying mastery of linguistic, speech, linguistic and socio-cultural paradigms (Hymes, 1984, p. 98).

O. Zadorozhnaya identifies the following levels of intercultural communication: linguo-cultural level (lexical units with socio-cultural semantics and the ability to apply them in situations of intercultural communication: non-equivalent words, background words, realities); culturological (socio-cultural, historical-cultural, ethno-cultural background, knowledge of traditions, customs of the people of the language being studied, information about the national character, about the peculiarities of everyday life, about the level of well-being of the population, about the basic values and typical assessments for members of this society, about the norms of behaviour); sociolinguistic (linguistic features of social strata, representatives of different generations, genders, social groups, dialects: speech stereotypes, situational clichés, communicative clichés, formulas of speech etiquette, models of speech behavior); socio-psychological (possession of socially and culturally conditioned scenarios, nationally-specific models of behaviour using communicative techniques adopted in this culture) (Zadorozhnaya, 2017, p. 14).

5. Concluding Remarks

The conducted research allows to formulate the following conclusions. The multi-vector nature of the educational process requires a careful approach to the pedagogical conditions in which the formation of foreign language communicative competence takes place. The development of a new model of humanitarian education is actualized by the conditions of learning, the formation of motivation, which affects the definition of intermediate and final goals, the construction of a pedagogical process that meets the interests, goals, needs, motivational guidelines of a student. In this process, feedback, motivation, stimulation, reinforcement become its important components.

Being external to a student, the process of forming foreign language communicative competence permanently causes one's internal attitude and evaluation. And it is obvious that their positive character is reflected in the motivational and value sphere of the individual, reinforcing both external and internal motives.

The pedagogical process is a stable system of interaction between the teacher, the student and the conditions of their interaction, has its own structure characterized by goals, content, methods, means and forms of its organization, intermediate and final results. Structural and functional connections in it are built taking into account its laws and principles.

6. Further Research

The prospect of research is to investigate pedagogical technologies for stimulating students' educational activity.

References

Antonyuk, L. (2016). *Competence approach in higher education: world experience*. Kiev: Institute of higher education of Vadym Hetman KNEU.

Bakhrushin V. (2000). *Competencies and learning outcomes in new standards of Higher Education*. <http://education-ua.org/ua/>.

Desheriev, Yu. D. (1988). *On modeling the reflection of culture in language*. Kyiv: UMK VO.

Hymes D. (1984). *Vers la competence de communication*. Paris: Hetier.

Nikolaeva S. (2003). *Pan-European recommendations for language education: study, teaching, assessment*. Kyiv: Lenvit.

Zadorozhnaya, O. (2017). The essence of the concept of strategic competence in modern linguodidactics. *Scientific Bulletin of Uzhgorod University*. Vol. 2, No. 41. Series "Pedagogy. Social work".