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*Kotenko O.V.*

### Future Teachers' Foreign Language Competence Formation

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**Abstract.** In this paper, we have systematized priority areas to optimize the process of future primary school teachers and of pre-school educational institutions educators' foreign language competence forming, resulting from government regulation in pre-school and school foreign language education. Attention is focused on the content-related and methodological ware of the process of teachers' foreign language competence forming for further use in professional activities.

**Keywords:** *foreign language competence, professional competence, foreign language teaching, primary school teacher, pre-school educational institution educator*

**Problem statement.** One of the priority tasks of Ukraine's education system today is to train competent teachers, who will work at different stages of learning. The problem is particularly acute for training qualified primary schools teachers for foreign languages teaching in connection with the enactment of new State Standard of Elementary General Education, according to which the compulsory foreign language learning from the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and the second foreign language learning from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade in near future is introduced in general educational institutions. Pre-school educational institutions are involved in this process too. Demand for foreign languages learning by pre-school children in terms of supplementary education is growing. New approaches and foreign language teaching technologies are developing. New programs, manuals and others are appearing.

Taking the above-mentioned into consideration, systemic changes are required in the future teachers training process, which leads to the reorientation of such specialists professional training content to the optimizing a process of their foreign language competence forming for the purpose of further using these foreign languages in professional activities.

On the one hand, these changes are certainly positive, since the primary school teachers and pre-school educational institutions' educators foreign language competence formation with professional purpose is a step towards enhancing the competitiveness of such specialists in the labor market, on the other hand, there are inevitable fundamental changes in developing a model of this specialist, who is capable to teach a foreign language along with traditionally defined subjects' list.

In addition, there is a danger of reducing the effectiveness of the future teachers' professionalization, as the expansion of their professional functions is associated with the need to overcome objective obstacles in regulation of informative content of the different academic levels' educational plans, which are limited to the number of studied pre-requisite subjects, the amount of credits allocated for studying subjects according to a certain area of study and more. Thus, the primary need is to optimize the process of professional training of such specialists, taking into account the foreign language invariant.

Then the questions that have to be answered are: What is the specific nature of primary school teachers

and educators of pre-school educational institutions' foreign language competence forming? How students, future teachers, shall be trained to teach foreign languages? What scope of foreign language knowledge, methodological skills, personal qualities are necessary to use the foreign language in professional activities?

**Analysis of the latest researches and publications.** A set of qualities, knowledge and skills of the teacher are traditionally examined in the terms of defining the structural components of his/her professional competence. Analysis of pedagogical and methodological sources shows that V. Bondar, T. Baibara, N. Bibik, O. Savchenko, P. Gusak, S. Martinenko, O. Mitnick, L. Khomych and L. Khoruzha et al. thoroughly worked on the definition of structural components of the modern teacher's professional competence. The process of foreign language teacher's professional competence forming was studied in the works of E. Azimov, O. Bigych, N. Gez, S. Nikolaeva, V. Kalinin, O. Solovova, N. Kharitonova, A. Shchukin et al.

However, the problem of the primary school teacher and educator in pre-school educational institution's foreign language competence forming for the purpose of further professional use of foreign language is relatively new. Thus, **the objective of this paper** is to systematize approaches to the content formation of primary school teachers and educators of pre-school educational institutions' foreign language training, to define the main ways of improving the process of their foreign language professional competence forming.

**Presentation of main material.** It is commonly known that a professional competence of the teacher is an integrated formation of his/her personality, which synthesizes required competencies (psychological, educational, Ukrainian communicative, methodological, personal & motivational, instrumental, etc.), the practical demonstration of which provides an effective pedagogical interaction in the formation of the child's personality by means of school subjects [4].

At the same time, modern tendencies require making changes to the professional competence structure of primary school's teacher and pre-school educational institution's educator through the introduction of foreign language component.

Forming the foreign language competence of the teacher, who plans to use a foreign language in profes-

sional capacity, is not only the perfect language proficiency, but is also his/her ability to teach your child a foreign language, to form his/her polycultural personality. So we could not separate the philological component from methodological one. We believe that it is appropriate to now discuss foreign language professional competence of the teacher, which we have defined as an integrated formation of his/her personality that synthesizes the required competences (linguistic & methodological, psychological & pedagogical, personal & motivational), the corresponding competences (language, speech, linguistic & cross-cultural, discursive, sociocultural,) and personal qualities (the capability to self-education, self-knowledge, polycultural sensitivity, dialogueness, empathy, tolerance, etc.), the mutual influence of which contributes to effective pedagogical interaction in the forming foreign-language skills of pre-schoolers and primary schoolers.

Let's analyze the teacher foreign language professional competence formation in systemic manner from the viewpoint of the characteristics of its structural elements and general trends in the sphere of students foreign-language training ("Pre-school Education", "Primary Education" degree program).

Currently, teachers foreign language training is unfortunately characterized by lack of a systematic character. Relative unsystematicity is caused by external and internal factors. External factors include the lack of common national strategy for the training of such specialists. There are no training standards, educational & qualification description of primary school's teacher and pre-school educational institution's educator, considering foreign language invariant at the stage of developing the educational & training programs, new education plans.

At the same time, the specificity of the professionalization of these specialists lies in the fact that: firstly, the long-term experience in primary school's teacher and pre-school educational institution's educator's training leads to the lack of benchmark for prospective university students to the enhanced studying a foreign language in the form of training in this specialty, and thus, the lack of motivated students-freshmen reduces the productivity and efficiency of their foreign language competence forming in future; secondly, the lack of monitoring the level of basic foreign language knowledge and skills of prospective university students at the stage of their entry into higher education establishment leads to further learning in classrooms with different levels of foreign language proficiency. So the problem, how to introduce the diagnostic system to determine foreign language proficiency's basic level of enrollees with degree "Primary education", "Pre-school education", is of significant importance.

Among the internal factors, we note the lack of clear differentiation for the scope of purely linguistic subjects in the training of foreign language teachers and primary school teachers, and educator of pre-school educational institutions that will teach children. In fact, we are dealing not just with future foreign language teachers, but with teachers who will teach foreign language inclusive.

Disregard of specificity for future professional activities of such specialists results in excessive "linguistiza-

tion" of the content of profession-oriented subjects. There are many cases, when teachers guide the students within educational subject to the unreasonably wide array of theoretical knowledge, rather than to form a competency framework for personality of future teacher, thus forming the personal capacity to self-education and skills to adapt in a professional field. We believe that such a "linguistization" is not associated with the unwillingness of foreign language teachers from higher education establishments to take into account the specificity of work with this area, but with poorly developed training system of that person, who teaches how to work with future primary school's teachers and pre-school educational institution's educators.

Of course, if we structure the professional foreign language competence by components, then a philological component shall provide knowledge of language functioning patterns in the public space, primary language functions, features of foreign language speech generation, the relationship between language and mental peculiarities of native speakers of one or other foreign language [2, p. 66]. Therefore, it is necessary to study the subjects of philological course unit in enhanced manner: "Practical Grammar of Foreign Language," "Practical Phonetics of Foreign Language", "Practice of oral and written speech," "Practical Course of Foreign Languages", "Country Studies" and so on. In addition, the content of these subjects must be primarily professionally oriented.

However, in addition to optimizing the content of philological subject unit, we emphasize the need to strengthen the teacher's methodological training for foreign language lessons / classes conducting in the context of the teacher's foreign language professional competence forming. Because we believe that a teacher, who perfectly knows all aspects and kinds of foreign language activities, is not, in fact, a teacher, if he/she cannot teach, has no techniques, which allow teaching. Contents of methodological training should be reduced to the formation of stable stereotypes of the future teacher concerning forms and methods of organizing the foreign language educational process in primary school, pre-school educational institution, as well as to the specificity of forming the types of language-speech activities according to the psychophysiological development of pre-schoolers and primary schoolers [3]. It is about the formation of the teacher professional and methodological skills to use modern technologies in the sphere of foreign language teaching, methods and techniques of teaching; to efficiently plan and implement various forms of organizing the foreign languages educational process both within working hours, and after working hours; to analyze and take into consideration the individual psychological pupils' characteristics, depending on the level of language proficiency and the stage of foreign language teaching; to actively use modern training technologies; to assess the level of formedness of all the components of pupils' foreign language communicative competence without violating the principles of partnership in the process of educational interaction with them [1].

Another problem, which complicates the process of teachers' foreign language competence forming, is the

lack of methodological ware of educational process. The urgent need is to update training and methodological support of subjects on foreign language course unit aimed at taking the specificity of further professional activity of future teachers into account. Currently, there is also no clear distinction of information contents of training manuals and training & methodological manual for foreign language teachers and primary school teachers, who will teach primary school pupils a foreign language, all the more, the methodological literature for assisting teachers, who teach pre-schoolers a foreign language, is almost absent.

One more problem of teachers foreign language professional competence forming is the lack of science-based system of basic knowledge for particular educational subjects of course unit "Foreign Languages" and educational subjects of general professional course unit. Fundamental knowledge that is learnt in the special and general professional course units is often duplicated. We believe that the increase of the scope of professional training content due to duplication of basic knowledge in different course units do not provide the improvement of training quality. An important indicator of such a quality should become a rational selection and optimization of training material for educational subjects, which are based on scholarly apparatus of fundamental disciplines. For example, the content of the subject "Foreign Languages Teaching Methodology" includes learning of basic methodological categories such as: principles, methods, forms, learning tools and so on. In some sources, at the stage of interpreting these categories, a large array of lecture material is dedicated to the actualization of supportive knowledge on didactics with respect to the understanding general didactic principles, whereas, it is better to focus students on purely methodological, specific principles of foreign languages teaching as the primary rules to organize foreign language teaching, on which depends the strategy of selecting methods and techniques of the teacher's work in foreign language class, and as a result, defining the content, scope of educational material, forms of work in class [1].

Future primary school teachers and pre-school education institutions' educator foreign language training provides proficiency in four types of speech activities and translation skills; proficiency in learnt language system, speech behavior rules in different situations of official-business and everyday communication, knowledge of sociocultural life aspects of the country, language of which we learn. Classes have aspectual and complex nature [5]. For this purpose, phonetic, lexical, grammatical units may be generally distinguished in speech-oriented classes in the foreign language course. Teaching is organized taking into account the difficulties in the process of foreign languages learning to overcome native language interferences and to expand linguistic philosophy of students. Foreign language training within the area / specialty "Primary Education", "Pre-school Education" includes the following levels [3]: Threshold level, which takes 1-2 months of the first year; Vantage level, which lasts until the end of the first year; Upper Intermediate level – the second/third years;

Mastery level – the third/fourth years; Effective Operational Proficiency level – the fourth/fifth years.

Discussing the forms of work in classes and the control methods of students' foreign language communicative competence formedness level in foreign languages classes, it's necessary to emphasize the priority of interactive teaching methods, group forms of work aimed at developing the skills of listening and speaking based on language skills (phonetic, grammatical, lexical) according to the communicative approach to foreign languages teaching, which includes making the foreign language communication need. Students learn a foreign language in accordance with the principle "Memorize When You Act!", i.e. they learn grammar, vocabulary, phonetics, combining this with communicative situation and focusing on the complexity of learning foreign languages.

Concerning forms of control, the level of student's foreign language skills formedness is defined according to the principle of approximation (approaching the correct pronunciation), which is used in most of the European countries. According to the above principle, the correct pronunciation is deemed to be such a pronunciation, during which the message content is not distorted (even if the sounding is not quite correct). However, it is important to focus students on the correct phonation in terms of language phonetics. In our viewpoint, the assessment of methodological skills is an already outdated tradition to determine the level of methodological competence using theoretically formulated questions in exam paper, which orient students to the reproduction of what they have heard, rather than to the analysis, synthesis of obtained methodological knowledge. Therefore, at the stage of formative assessment or final check, you should offer students a number of man-made methodological situations, which they shall solve by applying skills formed [3].

**Conclusions and prospects for further scientific studies.** Thus, the foundation to optimize a process of teacher's foreign language professional competence forming should be the creating such a theory and methodology training, the priorities of which are fundamental sociolinguistic, cultural, methodological knowledge that will promote a perceptual unity of the educational process and serve future specialists as a functional tool for professional communication in the sphere of pre-schoolers and primary schoolers foreign language teaching.

Taking the above mentioned into account, we consider it necessary to systematize the priority areas of activities to optimize the process of teacher's foreign language training. These areas are:

– Standardization of regulatory and legal support for professional training of primary school teachers and educators of preschool educational institutions, taking into account the foreign language invariant (updating educational and qualification description, educational and vocational programs, introduction of diagnostic system to determine basic level of prospective university student, introduction of the subject "Foreign Language" into the list of mandatory subjects at the stage of independent external assessment for high school graduates that are willing to enter the specialty "Primary Edu-

cation", thus providing a full selection of group with foreign language level not less than B1).

– Systematization, differentiation and individualization for the content of primary school teachers and pre-school educational institutions educators' foreign language training (it should be a clear separation of information contents for foreign language teachers, primary school teachers and preschool educational institution's educators professional training, who will teach a foreign language among traditionally defined subjects' list in the primary school / pre-school educational institution; the rejection of excessive "linguistization" for information content of profession-orientated subjects).

– Creating the foreign language learning environment of the student, the conditions for the continuity of language training for students (activating the students' educational, scientific, social and humanistic work during their studies in higher educational establishments by engaging native speakers in the training process; students' participation in various scientific events devoted to the problems of organizing the professional activities under the conditions of language space globalization; holding various extracurricular educational activities

with students to enhance their foreign language professional competence).

– Training educators of higher educational establishments to work with teachers in the context of forming their foreign language professional competence (capacity of teachers to accumulate all the scientific and cultural achievements of mankind in a certain field within professional activities, to adapt them according to the level of training, specificity of students' future professional activities and to transfer the obtained social experience to those, who are studying, in terms of their own worldview).

We believe that compliance with above mentioned conditions actually influences on the efficiency of the teacher's foreign language professional competence forming.

We see prospects for further scientific studies in introducing the diagnostic system to determine the base level of proficiency in foreign language of entrants of the training areas "Primary Education", "Pre-school Education" and updating the criteria for assessment of students' learning outcomes of the above mentioned specialties.

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**Аннотация.** В статье систематизированы приоритетные направления оптимизации процесса формирования иноязычной компетентности будущих учителей начальной школы и воспитателей дошкольных учебных заведений, которые обусловлены государственным регулированием в сфере дошкольного и школьного иноязычного образования. Внимание акцентировано на содержательном и методическом обеспечении процесса формирования иноязычной компетентности педагога с целью дальнейшего применения в профессиональной деятельности.

**Ключевые слова:** иноязычная компетентность, профессиональная компетентность, обучение иностранным языкам, учитель начальной школы, воспитатель дошкольного учебного заведения