

РОЗДІЛ 1

ЗАГАЛЬНА ПЕДАГОГІКА ТА ІСТОРІЯ ПЕДАГОГІКИ

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COMPETENCY-BASED FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING OF STUDENTS IN UKRAINE OF THE LATE 20th – THE EARLY 21th CENTURY

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The article deals with the aspects of the genesis of Ukrainian higher school students' competency-based foreign language training in the late 20th – the early 21st century. There are observed some development trends for the national language education in the age of the educational system modernization and shifts in the socio-economic priorities. The prospects for studying the history of foreign language education are noted to be closely connected to the competency-centered educational concept.

Key words: foreign linguistic competence, global competencies, education modernization, teaching methods.

В статье исследуются аспекты генезиса компетентностно-ориентированной иноязычной подготовки учащихся ВНЗ Украины конца 20 – начала 21 веков. Прослеживаются некоторые тенденции развития отечественной лингводидактики в условиях модернизации системы образования и смещения социально-экономических приоритетов. Отмечается, что перспективы изучения истории иноязычной дидактики тесно связаны с компетентностно-центрированной образовательной концепцией.

Ключевые слова: иноязычная компетентность, глобальные компетенции, модернизация образования, методы обучения.

Лічман Л.Ю. КОМПЕТЕНТІСНО-ОРІЄНТОВАНА ІНШОМОВНА ПІДГОТОВКА СТУДЕНТІВ В УКРАЇНІ КІНЦЯ 20 – ПОЧАТКУ 21 СТОЛІТТЯ

У статті досліджуються аспекти генезису компетентнісно-орієнтованої іншомовної підготовки учнів ВНЗ України кінця 20 – початку 21 століття. Простежуються деякі тенденції розвитку вітчизняної лінгводидактики в умовах модернізації системи освіти і зміщення соціально-економічних пріоритетів. Зазначається, що перспективи вивчення історії іншомовної дидактики тісно пов'язані з компетентнісно-центричною освітньою концепцією.

Ключові слова: іншомовна компетентність, глобальні компетенції, модернізація освіти, методи навчання.

Starting up the intense reception and implementation of a competency-based learning in the Ukrainian foreign language education was simultaneous with the revolutionary modernization of education, in particular, higher education. In terms of legislation there was built a national educational strategy wherein the human right to education became protected by law. There was carried out a point-by-point higher education reform in accordance with the requirements for the development of the market economy. Thus, the Decree of the President of Ukraine from September 12, 1995 contained a number of innovative regulations for changing fundamentally the high school functional model [12]. The draftsmen, as O. Dniprov notes, “considered it necessary to improve the specialists' target training system within the government contract to meet the state-fund priority sectors' needs, according to the activity-specific state programs, as well as to meet the needs of the education by itself; to develop a mechanism for providing the state guarantees of graduate employability for state contract basis students; develop and adopt the system of managerial,

financial, scientific and methodological activities concerning the selection, training and education of young people” [2, p. 3].

In Ukraine, the higher education system rigorous transformation was launched along with the active implementation of a competency-based ideologeme into the European Higher Education Area. The system was rooted in the Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century “Learning: the Treasure Within” (1996) [18], which contained four pillars of education: learning to know; learning to do; learning to live together, learning to live with others; learning to be. Subsequently, through the international scientific and expert communities' joint efforts the global competencies were significantly extended and supplemented amid the main strategies: education quality enhancement, simplified access to lifelong learning; the openness and interaction of the world educational models.

In Ukraine, this approach was recorded either expressly or by implication in a number of regulations,

designating the higher education system development [1; 5; 6; 8; 9; 14; 15; 16].

It is as it should be that the measures on improving the European educational space made an indirectly influence on the development of foreign language education in Ukraine, which adopted the European integration social and economic development strategy. The issues are widely and comprehensively presented in the papers of G. Karlovska, T. Lytniova, N. Osipchuk, O. Pometun, S. Nikolaeva, O. Shenderuk and others. However, some points of the scientific analysis of foreign language training for students in the 90's need further classification and specification. In this regard, there emerged a necessity of reevaluating some aspects of higher education language teaching methods.

In the early 1990's, the teaching theory and practice paid great attention to coping with the deficiencies in the Soviet teaching methods, such as the academic activity ideologizing, the prevalence of pedagogical aspects over the educational and learner-centered ones, etc. That is why since Ukraine gained independence its language education has paid much attention to the learner-centered approach as one of the most effective and cross functional in building a teacher – student productive communication. That approach became the basis of humanitarian policy in teaching foreign languages. It is noteworthy that according to the decree of 07.08.2002, №. 405 of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the higher education institutions were required to deliberately work at enhancing the individual work with students [17]. In general, the tendency to humanizing the higher linguistic education was affirmed in a number of laws and regulations of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Thus, in particular, the “Information Order and Instruction Packet of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine” (1996) pointed out the necessary taking consistent and purposeful measures on preparing students for independent activities in the current higher school cultural, social and economic realities. Such a learner-centered approach was in the intentions and the explicit wording of the ideology of developing global competencies, the manifestation of professional competence, i. e., it fitted the competence-based educational paradigm. It is also specific that in the document, the idea of developing students' abilities to self-activity was projected on the higher education institutions activities, which were given ample opportunities to independently program the research and educational work, on the one hand, but they were required to bring the implemented activities in line with the fundamental laws of Ukraine, the regulations of educational standards, as well as legal and regulatory documents of the Ministry of Education and Science, on the other hand.

Analyzing the documentation goes to prove that the efficiency of foreign language training depended on the process of modernizing the educational system in Ukraine, in its positive and negative development, in large measure. For example, the extensive increase in the number of public and – somewhat later – private higher education institutions not always had a positive effect on building high level skills in students. Many

teachers of the state universities had secondary job in the private ones; it led to a decrease in the pedagogical potential, both for language education and the whole system of higher education. In general, according to the opinion of G. Kasyanov, at the turn of the century the increased number of universities and thus, students “came with the reduced quality of educational services, the powerful commercialization of higher education, the augmentation of “diploma disease” symptoms: the consumer's commitment to gaining a diploma to begin with” [4, p. 34].

This context should be enlarged, as many innovations, promoted by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, turned out to be polemical, as practice showed. For example, one of the most controversial moments in the advanced foreign language training of higher school students was a seemingly justified and consistent decision concerning the introduction of so-called double specialties, as the future experts in, for example, geography, biology, Ukrainian or Russian language, could receive a foreign-language education [3]. There appeared such specialties, as “History and Foreign Language”, “Foreign Language and Biology”, “Geography and Foreign Language”, “Russian Language, Literature and Foreign Language”, “Ukrainian Language, Literature and Foreign Language”. In addition, due to the fact that the Constitution of Ukraine (June 28, 1996) [6] assigned the rights of national minorities to use their native language as the language of tuition, it was introduced studying the mother-tongue in parallel with the profession-oriented learning of Ukrainian and Russian. The tendency has proved to be promising. Among other things, nowadays some universities perform successful students' bilingual training in Ukrainian and Polish, Russian and Bulgarian. At the same time, it requires further efforts both in managing the academic activity and engaging skilled teaching staff, for example, from Bulgaria or Poland.

On the one hand, this approach is quite natural, especially for the purposes of satisfying the general humanitarian requirements and the values of the individual, as well as taking into account the specificity of the major specialty extending knowledge in the foreign language definitions. But, on the other hand, the quality of foreign language competence obtained by the students of non-core faculties has been doubtful: whether it is valid for a student specialized in biology, geography or physics to make a special study of linguistics as well. In addition, the experience of cross-training has shown that the human capacity should be built up. It is significant that the “Information Order and Instruction Packet of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine” made a point that in 1995 there was observed a foreign language teachers shortage, especially in the rural areas, which was confirmed by, in particular, the low employer-sponsored enrollment of rural young people at the higher educational establishments [7, p. 15]. In such a retrospect, the current practice of promoting dual degrees, when a foreign language education plays an “accompanying” part, should be critically rethought.

Over the period the communicative approach was established as dominant methodological and didactic

guidelines for building foreign language competence in students; it caused the complete reframing of the existing training modules and content area: “No earlier than in the 1990’s of the 20th century the content of the subject “Foreign language” was given three compulsory integrated components: communication skills, which combined speaking, reading, writing, listening; linguistic knowledge and skills, which included phonetics and pronunciation skills, lexical and grammatical skills; as well as linguistic and geographic knowledge” [11, p. 14].

Searching for an optimal educational model, adapted to the specificity of student audience, significantly diversified the theory and practice of language training methods. Arguably, at that particular time there happened a paradigm shift in the language education as for building foreign linguistic competence. It goes without saying, the tendency to identify the most productive learning technologies, testing different methods of teaching and learning languages has discovered many ambiguous, contradictory aspects, such as the eclectic use of teaching methods, or the marked prevalence of one methodological model over others. However, these shortcomings in the development of the Ukrainian language education have been quite natural against the background of its scientific, theoretical and technological flourishing.

In fact, the last decade of the 20th century manifested the stepped-up introduction of new methodological developments and creative revision of the time-tested ones. To illustrate the situation there should be presented some, the most sought-after, methods for students’ foreign languages training: intensive learning experience, initiated by G. Kitaygorodskaya, suggestopedia, a teaching method developed by G. Lozanov, which is used mostly to learn foreign languages, the methods of monologue and dialogue activation of vocabulary reception and retention mechanisms, listening, including audio-lingual (Ch. Fries, R Lado) and audiovisual (P. Guberina, etc.) methods, the conscious-practical method (B. Belyaev), the emotional-semantic method (I. Schechter), the method of activating the reserve capacity of the individual and the collective, suggesto-cybernetic method (B. Petrusinsky) and others. In general, at that stage, pride of place went to the role playing, communicative and developmental teaching method, situational cognitive method and integrative techniques; to select them was determined by higher school students’ aims, goals, values and needs.

Such educational space reversed the model of “teacher – student” relationship: having moved away from the Soviet methodical tradition a teacher acquired the function of a moderator in students’ foreign language training focusing on the individual-oriented work.

The national scientists consider the implementation of the teaching and learning activities in the end of 20th – the beginning of 21st century to be conducted by using the integrated educational technologies, which included: 1) methods and instructional techniques; 2) diverse learning tools; 3) the various organizational and pedagogical forms of academic activities [10]. For example, at the turn of 20th – 21st centuries applying such information technological tools and organizational forms of

teaching, as online lessons, electronic learning materials, distance learning and so forth, was widely accepted. At the same time, using the information technologies or newish teaching methods was not necessarily to improve students’ foreign linguistic competence. On the one hand, teachers and students mastered the alternative forms and technologies of teaching and learning foreign languages, but on the other hand, the scientific and methodological resource of the offered methods hardly ever met the requirements of foreign language proficiency in the higher educational establishments, did not fit into the teaching traditions.

The remarkable thing is that providing teachers and students with educational materials was somewhat eclectic at the end of the past – the beginning of this century. Replenishing the higher educational institutions library stock mainly depended on the available financing of one or another institution, but the library collection mainly consisted of text-books gathered at varying times. Naturally, the text-books were markedly different as follows from their objective, theoretical and methodological content. Among the most popular English text-books there should be called the ones edited by V. Arakin, N. Bonk, C. Eckersley, Yu. Krutikova, V. Kaushanskaya, N. Kobrina, I. Galperin, V. Vasilyev and others. The text-books focused on teaching listening, reading, writing, interpretation, etc.

The analysis of the educational materials as well as the publications in periodicals shows that in the 90’s of the last century – the early 21st century there were made attempts to build a national model of foreign language training. However, due to the limited education resource, the imperfection of the material base (for example, in most cases, it was the lack of computerized classrooms), the long-term transition to a competence-based educational methodology, as well as the other compelling reasons, the Ukrainian teachers failed in building the national model.

Nevertheless, it should be recognized that the experience gleaned from the studies in the 90’s of the 20th century has brought positive results. Indeed, due to the intensive testing of various forms and methods of teaching foreign languages it has been able to obtain consensus on the implementation of a competence-based approach. It is worth noting that, in our view, the content of the competence-based foreign language education is synergetic, because it includes all of the most productive and potentially sought-after technologies; building the foreign linguistic competence in Ukrainian higher school students refers to the varied use of optimal education tools. For example, in the opinion of V. Parkhomets, among the other things, competence-based learning contains “...cognitively oriented technologies: dialogue methods of teaching, discussion workshops, problem-based learning, a cognitive-based method, cognitive maps, instrumental logic training...” [13, p. 198].

To make building students’ foreign linguistic competence promising in Ukraine one should structure a competence-centered terminological system and emphasize the significant components of teaching, which correspond to the educational paradigm.

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