

COMPETENCE-BASED APPROACH TO TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITIES

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The article analyzes the problem of introducing a competence-based approach, its implementation in the modern educational process, including teaching a foreign language. The issues of determining the hierarchy of competences are touched upon. The features of the professional competence formation of the future teacher and the specifics of the mechanisms and algorithms on which the professionalism of the graduate depends are considered.

Keywords: education; competence; educational process; foreign language; competence-based approach.

Significant social and economic changes are associated with the intensive introduction of information and communication technologies in various areas of production, science and education distinctly characterize the modern development period of post-industrial society. This entails a change in the essence and structure of education, production and society, the place and role of a person in them. Having knowledge only in a single area is not enough anymore, meta-subject knowledge and skills are required for a highly qualified specialist.

Therefore, modern education should provide the graduates not only with the set of specific knowledge, but with a sum of competences that ensure their readiness to carry out professional activities in conditions of uncertainty, the ability to critically evaluate and predict, and ideally – influence the rapidly changing processes within their branch of knowledge.

In fact the competence-based approach has taken root in the educational system and there are already a number of major science and theory studies on the problem of the competency-based approach, the conceptual framework that characterizes its key concepts has not yet been finally settled [3].

O. E. Lebedev defines the competence-based approach as “a set of general principles for determining the goals of education, selecting the content of education, organizing the educational process and evaluating educational results” [5].

From the standpoint of the competence-based approach, the result of education should not be the raw set of the information learned by the students, but the ability of the graduates to independently act effectively in various fields of activity based on the use of their own experience acquired in the process of learning.

The competence-based approach is implemented into national educational standards in multiple European countries. Noted by A. L. Andreev, in the transition from local pedagogical theory to a socially significant phenomenon, the competence-based approach gradually claims the role of a conceptual policy widely applied in modern education by various educational institutions and international organizations, most notably, in the European Union [1].

According to V. A. Bolotov, unlike the term “qualification”, competence is a mastered disposition of achievements the development of the continuous formation of knowledge and skills in a particular subject or group of subjects and allows one to solve various tasks, problems and situations [2]. Helping students to form a certain amount of key competences, which will subsequently allow them to successfully pass professional adaptation in modern society, is the essence of the competence-based approach in professional education.

I. V. Kuznetsova in her study analyzed the publications of foreign researchers and came to the conclusion that in the United States the prevailing approach in assessing students' competences is the behavioral approach, which is based on identifying the functional responsibilities of each graduate. In the UK it is the functional approach that also covers the functional characteristics of the quality of knowledge base and learning outcomes. In France, the competence-based approach is founded on three main positions: knowledge, experience and behavioral characteristics. The German education system is focused on the action competence, which focuses on creating the ability and readiness of a person to learn through all their life allowing for a qualitative shift towards educational and cognitive competence. Currently, in all European countries, the competence-based approach implies the unity of four types of competences: cognitive, functional, social and meta-competences [4].

To determine the hierarchy of competences A. V. Hutorsky proposes to take the differentiation of the content of education as a basis, dividing it into general meta-subject (for all disciplines), inter-subject (for a cycle of disciplines or educational areas) and individual subject (for each academic discipline). On this basis, all competences are represented by a three-level hierarchical structure:

- key competences – refer to the general (meta-subject) content of education;
- general subject competences – refer to a certain range of subjects and educational areas;
- individual subject competences – singular in relation to the two previous levels of competence, having a specific description and the possibility of formation within the framework of academic subjects [6].

Since the formation of key competences is considered the main result of learning, they must be formed in each individual student, permeate the content of all academic disciplines at all levels of education, and carry out continuity between individual stages of learning.

Professional competence as a whole is characterized by a set of integrated knowledge, skills and experience, as well as personal qualities that allow a person to effectively design and carry out professional activities and interact with the outside world. M. L. Zueva identifies six interpretations of the term “professional competence of a teacher”, among which two are the most common [3, p. 54-57].

The first one establishes the connection of the "professional competence" with the person's individual culture, its standard of education and upbringing, while the second is connected with the definition of professional competence involving a system of knowledge, skills, professionally significant qualities of a person that ensures the performance of certain professional duties.

Some researchers give preference to the general and special knowledge when investigating the professional competence of a teacher, others point at the importance of the teacher's personal qualities, or consider it necessary to supplement the teacher's knowledge and skills with certain psychological qualities.

Generalized characteristics of the concepts "competence", "ability", "professional competence" allow us to say that it is possible to understand the quality of a person, reflecting the teacher's readiness to realize their individual potential (knowledge, skills, personal qualities) for the successful solution of typical professional problems that occur in the real pedagogical activity of the information society as the professional competence of a future teacher.

However, at present the leading importance in pedagogical science is given to the problem of competence and the search for grounds for its implementation in modern education. Currently the development of post-industrial society, demands research in teacher education to ensure the high quality and effective performance of a graduate's pedagogical activity.

A competence-based approach to professionally oriented teaching of foreign languages should be based on the most effective mastery of foreign language. It requires a coherent and scientifically based theory of language learning.

Tutors are increasingly inclined to believe that teaching a foreign language is not limited to codified vocabulary language, but colloquial foreign speech as a real and direct means of communication. It is indisputable that the mastery of a foreign language is organically connected with learning different types of foreign speech activity.

Professional language training should be aimed at ensuring the quality of education and upbringing of students, improving the strategies for teaching foreign languages in higher education institutions and developing the competent personality of the student.

It is no longer possible to strengthen the professional and pedagogical skills of qualified personnel without knowledge of a foreign language in the conditions of the functioning educational standards.

The training of personnel for work in modern fields of activity requires an appropriate level of organization in the educational process and an increase in the quality of specialist training, including knowledge of foreign languages. At the first stage of higher education, one of the main goals of language teaching is to prepare students for the use of a foreign language in their future professional activities. The knowledge of a foreign language acquired at the university can also serve as the basis for further formation of professional competencies, creating the ability to use the language in different situations of communication, achieving professional goals and self-education skills when studying postgraduate courses.

The design and development of programs for higher education, their optimization and strengthening of the practical orientation of the future specialists training takes up specific features in any university. This is inevitably associated with resolving specific pedagogical tasks with the focus on the practical training of flexible and critically thinking future specialists. Improving the academic process forms their willingness to work in new conditions. These tasks are determined by the opportunities and abilities of future specialists to learn and upgrade their skills throughout their lives in order to accumulate up to date technologies and involve the gained theoretical background in practice.



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