A Pedagogical Activity-based Model for Sustainable Education of a Prospective Foreign Language Teacher

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Abstract: The paper is devoted to the problem of content designing teacher competency-based education for its sustainable development. The research takes into account the tendency of knowledge-based education giving way to competency-based education which is more beneficial for the growing economies. The research is based on the following approaches: competency-based, communicative, axiological, task (problem)-based. The paper gives the review on the issues related to the problems of definition, structure, development and assessment of foreign language teacher competences. A pedagogical activity-based model for the content development of a prospective foreign language teacher training curriculum has been developed. It is a three-constituent model including: input requirements on the side of ideal goals and results; pedagogical activity as a combination of profession oriented activities related to the performance of the tasks and solution of the problems in the context of current pedagogical values; output requirements on the side of practical needs. Three ways of the course content integration are suggested: horizontal integration of various courses by the same activity, vertical integration of several pedagogical activities in the same course, and entire integration of all courses through profession-oriented task and problem solving activities as the predominant teaching and learning method. The paper concludes that the application of the proposed model will assist to train students who are ready to enter the teaching field as confident beginning professionals capable of participating in the sustainable development of a particular region.

1 INTRODUCTION

The introduction of new Federal State Educational Standards of Higher Education (in the Russian Federation) in pedagogical area involves developing competences of prospective foreign-language teachers that enable them to solve job tasks of various types as part of pedagogical activity. Teacher's Professional Standard makes precise two generalized teacher's job functions including pedagogical activities for project development and implementation of educational process and basic general education programs in educational institutions. The current labour market indicates the demand for professional staff in this area. For example, Vladimir Region lacks 29 foreign-language teachers as on February 2021 (On-line Portal Labour and Employment Department of Vladimir Region). The regulatory documents are transparent concerning

teacher's education content in a particular area. Each Higher Educational Institution should define professional competences of prospective teachers based on Teacher's Professional Standard, as well as the analysis of requirements for professional competences required from graduates in the labour market, evaluation of domestic and foreign experience. Hence, the need to bridge the gap between theory and practice, to specify professional knowledge of practical use, to identify competences in the context of teacher's professional activities is quite evident. So, the research of the issues related to effective and efficient education content designing of prospective foreign-language teachers becomes pressing.

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2 METHODOLOGY

The research is based on the competency-based approach which implies competency (including a list of profession oriented competences) as the professional readiness of a prospective foreign language teacher to enter the working field. Communicative approach is applied to differentiate the related competences that are crucial for the considered field among which are communicative competence of a teacher and classroom interactional competence. Axiological approach in pedagogy presupposes the humanistic character of an education paradigm with the pedagogic values in the core of any educational activity. Task (problem)-based approach focuses on the course learning through gaining experience of doing meaningful profession oriented tasks or solving open-ended problems related to pedagogy.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW: TEACHER COMPETENCES AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES

European literature review related to teaching and learning to teach has revealed them "as complex, multifaceted, value-laden enterprises" (Caena, 2011). Francesca Caena (2011) following the ideas of Feiman-Nemser (2001), Williamson & McDiarmid (2008) writes the following: "The continuum of teacher learning and teacher education, which turns out to be fundamental in a lifelong learning perspective, implies the need for extended teacher professionalism" (Caena, 2011). A framework to guide teacher education is considered to comprise teacher skills and knowledge as objectives for student learning. Improving quality of teacher education is associated with improvement of teacher competences and promotion of professional values.

Various approaches to teacher competency structure have been developed.

Among the teacher requirements according to the Conclusions of the Education Councils (November 2007, 2008, 2009) are three groups: 1) a specialist knowledge of subjects; 2) pedagogical skills (teach heterogeneous classes, use Information and Communications Technology, teach transversal competences, create safe attractive schools); 3) cultures/ attitudes of reflective practice, research, innovation, collaboration, autonomous learning" (Caena, 2011).

Cambridge matrix of competences includes stage descriptions through which a teacher will progress in improving a specific range of abilities (relative not absolute) under each category. The proposed stages include the following: Foundation – Developing – Proficient – Expert. The five categories of the Cambridge English Teaching Framework: 1. Learning and the Learner; 2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment (2.1. Planning language learning, 2.2 Using language-learning resources and materials, 2.3 Managing language learning, 2.4 Teaching language systems, 2.5 Teaching language skills, 2.6 Assessing language learning); 3.Language Ability; 4. Language Knowledge and Awareness; 5. Professional Development and Values. "… gradual development of teachers' expertise over time involves growing understanding of teaching and learning, growing awareness of their own strengths, weaknesses and potential as a teacher, increasing sophistication in their planning, decision-making, teaching skills and reflection, as well as the ability to respond to a more complex range of classroom situations" (Cambridge English: Teaching Framework).

Based on the argument of Cochran-Smith (2006) Francesca Caena (2011) assumes "that any teaching, learning or training practice represents a value choice about key issues, mediated by institutional trends and external regulatory mechanisms; the responses to these key issues thus imply decisions linked with beliefs, priorities and ideals, as well as tendencies to maintain or change the present social order" (Caena, 2011). Among the three broad areas of competence (working with others, knowledge, society) European Commission distinguishes two clearly related to professional values and attitudes: working with others (developing a student's potential and interpersonal and cooperative skills of a potential teacher), working in and with society (being responsible professionals in local educational communities, developing students as citizens with global responsibilities, encouraging attitudes to cooperation, intercultural dialogue and respect (Caena, 2011).

Communication in the classroom is described in a number of works from the viewpoint of the teacher's speech (Nunan, 1991) and communicative interaction with classroom students (Walsh, 2011; Wasi'ah, 2016). Steve Walsh introduces classroom interactive competence which is regarded as the ability of teachers and students to use interaction as a guidance and assistance tool for teaching (Walsh, 2011). The researcher emphasizes that the focus should be made not only on what the teacher says, but also how s/he interacts with students. Thus a lesson is proposed to

be regarded as a set of micro contexts generated by a teacher and students during a set of interactions.

Most of the analyzed Russian works are dedicated to the problem of developing and evaluating job significant competences of prospective foreign language teachers, among which are the following groups: professional-communicative competence, methodical competence, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competence.

E. N. Solovova (2004) introduces the concept of professional-communicative competence and considers it as a component of communicative competence of foreign-language teachers, alongside with language, speech, social and cultural ones in the light of emphasis on communicative tasks that are to be solved by a teacher in the process of professional activities (Solovova, 2004). A. A. Korenev, A. M. Mikhailova (2019) go further in research of professional and communicative competence from the viewpoint of teachers' professional context and expand this concept by including the following as components: using language in the classroom (in particular, interactive communicative sub-competence as its integral part), profession-wide socio-cultural communication aspects, and extracurricular communicative tasks (Korenev and Mikhailova, 2019). Professional-communicative competence from the authors viewpoint is considered as a pack of communicative, discourse, social, pragmatic and socio-cultural skills enabling a teacher to effectively interact with students and create the atmosphere during classes that best supports promotion of students' active speech behavior (Korenev and Moiseeva, 2015). A model of interactive professional-communicative teacher's competence in the classroom is proposed, which includes three constituents: the linguistic aspect (language competence), the content component (methodology skills), and the interactive component (interaction skills with students) (Korenev and Mikhailova, 2019). Key principles for the development of these skills are as follows: situational context, communicative orientation, step-by-step approach and common didactic principle to link teaching with life. Among teaching techniques there were highlighted interactive technologies, cooperative teaching, and project technologies. The development of professional and communicative competence of prospective foreign-language teacher is to be implemented as foreign speech practicing courses, where a number of certain exercises are recommended to perform as well as to conduct teaching methods' courses in foreign language and to

include them into practical training programs (Korenev and Mikhailova, 2019).

The second group of investigated competences is methodical competence, which is regarded as the core of pedagogical and training activities of a foreign-language teacher and is defined by the authors as follows:

- a teacher's skills related to teaching foreign language and culture (Koryakovtseva, 2018);
- the integrative property of a foreign-language teacher's personality, which determines her/his readiness and ability to effectively solve teaching problems (Yazykova and Makeeva, 2012);
- the ability and readiness for project development and implementation of teaching process as foreign-language interpersonal and cross-cultural communication, as well as reflexive activities (Lubotinsky, 2014).

The structure of methodical competence is considered by academic methodologists differently:

- based on subject-matter of methodical competence as a process of solving dominant types of teaching tasks, taking into account the stages of their solution and the roles performed by a teacher and the relevant sub competences, methodical competence includes: (1) goal-setting stage (teacher-researcher, teacher-technologist, solves gnostic, and constructive tasks): gnostic, project development, constructive technology, information technology competences; (2) goal-attaining stage (practicing teacher solves organizational, communicative educational tasks): gnostic, constructive, communicative organizational, communicative teaching, correctional gnostic competences; (3) goal-ascertaining stage (the teacher-researcher solves gnostic and constructive tasks): reflexive-gnostic competences (Yazykova and Makeeva, 2012);
- as methodical competence is of holistic nature then it comprises technological readiness, value orientations of a prospective teacher, readiness for creative self-actualization in pedagogical activity, the ability to analyze and critically evaluate her/his own teaching activities (Kozhukhov, 2008).

The foreign language teacher's ICT competence is considered as a five-component structure including (1) value-motivational component: teacher's awareness of needs and interest and motivation formation to use ICT in their professional activities,

(2) cognitive component: theoretical knowledge of the ICT use in foreign language teaching, (3) operational component: ability to choose and use modern ICT in teaching, (4) communicative component: the teacher's ability to share the knowledge and skills, and to discuss with colleagues the ICT use experience, (5) reflective component: evaluation and self-evaluation (Sysoyev and Evstigneev, 2014).

4 A PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITY-BASED MODEL

I suggest the pedagogical activity-based model for designing professional competency-based education of a prospective foreign language teacher which includes three main constituents: (1) input requirements, (2) teaching activity as a number of types of professional activities associated with solving corresponding types of tasks in line of today's pedagogical values, (3) output requirements.

State and society as a whole formulates requirements for training prospective teachers at the input, the first element of the system, recording them as educational standards that determine the guideline and curriculum content scope to achieve primary endpoints: development of universal, general professional and professional competences. It is proposed for the purpose of training foreign language teachers to extend the list of competences as a result of mastering the main educational program by one more competence that involves specific features of teaching a foreign language, namely, international cooperation competence i.e. readiness to organize and implement international projects at the premises of an educational institution. A foreign language is not only a goal, but also as a teaching tool, where its cross-curriculum nature reveals. Moreover, since the language stores, mirrors and conveys culture then foreign-language education implies co-studying of languages and cultures. The subject of study focuses on communicative competence development and thus necessitates using it as a communication tool in the light of interaction of cultures. All the above-mentioned calls upon developing prospective teacher as an organizer of cross-cultural communication and interaction. Our successful practices of developing this competence within the frame of international projects based on the regional specifics (national cultural values through local manifestation) is described and can be recommended for applying during training prospective foreign- language

teachers with the view of sustainable development of a particular region (Pankratova, 2016, 2017, 2019).

Input requirements can be described as ideal goals and prospective results to be achieved which reflect the society's vision (stated in federal educational standards) of the future development of the education system for the benefit of the society as a whole.

The second constituent of the model correlates with the organization of teacher education content in view of understanding the professional competence of a prospective teacher as readiness for pedagogical activity, which is performed as a number of types of professional activities associated with the solution of respective types of tasks based on the relevant knowledge. Pedagogical activity for job training can be represented by foreign-language communication activity, methodical activity, psychological and pedagogical activities, research activity, international activity. Preparation to implement each of them demands mastering solution technologies for respective tasks. For example, methodical activity requires solving project tasks, tasks related to conducting a lesson, reflexive tasks, etc.; psychological and pedagogical activity deals with solution of awareness-raising tasks in various academic and non-academic situations, tasks related to interactions with students, parents, colleagues, etc.; research work involves the task of testing new teaching methods and teaching aids and presenting the obtained results to pedagogical community, etc.; in regard to international activity it is necessary to solve problems of finding foreign partners and implementing joint projects, etc. Step-by-step action algorithm is proposed to use as one of the tools for teaching types of activities and it summarizes successful practices of its implementation considering variability of implementation methods. For example, we have already described the algorithm for implementing an international project that we use as part of practical training (Pankratova, 2019).

It seems appropriate to develop competences of prospective foreign-language teacher through meaningful integration not only horizontally, combining academic disciplines separately for each type of pedagogical activity, but also vertically, integrating several types of pedagogical activity in one academic discipline. For example, linguistic disciplines on foreign language theory will be aimed not only at the development of language constituent of prospective teacher's communicative competence, but also methodical competence from the viewpoint of teaching language aspect under study to students at different stages of training. Entire integration means

organizing University classroom activities in any course as the process of performing pedagogical activities through doing profession-oriented tasks and solving profession-based problems.

The basic element of each type of pedagogically oriented professional activity is value-based, since mastering pedagogical values (norms regulating pedagogical activity) takes place in the process of implementing pedagogical activities (Slastenin, 2002).

Market demands for teachers and practical needs of an educational institution contributing to the sustainable development of a particular region are studied at the output, the third element of the system. Requirements to a teacher are formulated in the respective Professional Standard of a Teacher from the viewpoint of performing generalized labor functions, a detailed study of which enables to define professional competences and indicators of their maturity, which can be compared to the respective types of pedagogical activities and types of profession-oriented tasks with respect to pedagogical values.

The analysis of the demand for graduates of our Institute in 2017-2020 manifests that all graduates of the University located in a small town are employed: the vast majority work as foreign-language teachers in various educational institutions. A large number of them came back to their small homelands, which is obviously positive, since the formed competences will let them not only to continue professional perfection passing through the stages of teacher's development from a foundation teacher to an expert teacher, but also to raise cultural standard of the area where they live and work, since the axiological approach is the basis of pedagogical training.

However, the content designing teacher competency-based education should start with the first and third constituents as they regulate, ally with public needs, since the second constituent relates to the organization of teacher's education content, which should be necessary and sufficient to meet both groups of requirements and be flexible for restructuring in case of changing them.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Thus the proposed model for the content development of prospective foreign language teacher training curriculum, on the one hand, reflects the given economic and professional reality in the region. On the other, it is adaptable to the changing socio-economic conditions, development of public and individual needs with respect to existing pedagogical values, social order to teacher's training, the education organization and content of prospective teachers, market needs for teachers and job requirements to a teacher. Academic performance requirements in preparing students for teaching foreign languages should be readjusted so as to correspond to the prospective job functions associated with the profession of a teacher. The application of the proposed model will assist to train students who are ready to enter the professional field as confident beginning teachers capable of participating in the sustainable development of a particular region. The suggested approach can be applied in different professional context training.

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