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## Foreign language competence in manager professional structure and training

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# Foreign language competence in manager professional structure and training

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the problems of professional and foreign language training for manager staff. The authors study the importance of communicative component as an element of professional readiness, identify inefficiency causes of the existing system of language training for future managers, reveal the nature of professional and language experience and prove the need for their joint development in the process of quasi-professional activity as a condition of manager professional development. The approach to the content construction of teaching foreign languages in the higher professional education structure on the basis of language experience integration in professional activity is being revealed.

## 1. Introduction

Russian economy progressive movement and our country integration into the world education space serve as an international cooperation and partnership incentive in the field of personnel management, which is reflected in the growing need for highly qualified specialists who speak a foreign language at a productive level, that is, capable of conducting business foreign language communication and having socio-cultural knowledge.

The current economic situation in Russia allows managers to cooperate directly with foreign partners at home and abroad, to make deals, to expand markets, to participate in international exhibitions, presentations, conferences and congresses.

Meanwhile, studies in the field of professional linguistic didactics show that Russian managers are generally not ready for professional communication with foreign partners. Modern understanding of the culture of a leader is limited today only by emphasizing the importance of professional and General humanitarian competence, breadth of horizons and knowledge of basic ethical norms, leaving without due attention the importance of communicative training, foreign language skills, which is especially important for specialists of management profile, for which foreign language competence is an integral part of professional competence.

The discussed problem is also related to the fact that the globalization process taking place around the world has led to multi-national enterprises, where successful management decisions depends on the ability of managers to operate effectively in a multilingual environment. *The activity of large multinational companies in our country* is characterized by an intensive exchange of knowledge, ideas, human resources and products between the parent and subsidiary enterprises. An important feature of modern business is various European languages involving in the economic activity structure of the enterprise at the level of not only management decisions, but also over their execution control.

Professional foreign language competence of management personnel affects both its position in a company and regional labor market as a whole, and the language policy pursued by the company, communicative climate, system of language training, and language policy of the region play a decisive role in these globalization processes.

## 2. Methodology

The issues of specialist training for successful functioning in multipurpose professional activities designed in modern society are to be engaged in higher professional education. Researchers in the



field of vocational education note that the main purpose of vocational education is not only to acquire skills and knowledge, but also to find an answer to the question of how knowledge and skills are combined with personal qualities when it comes to choosing a particular job. Being "suitable" for a job is determined by social and cultural factors, and in this case vocational education – from employment to free entry into the market – plays a powerful role in this process, being an intermediary between the class-gender component and the requirements of the labor market [1].

However, if the authors agree on the role of vocational education, they have different views on its place in the training system. According to some authors, vocational education and training can be seen as the development and application of knowledge and skills for middle-level jobs needed by society from time to time. This definition is based on the concept of applied knowledge, as in the definition of Aristotle's art, or applied science, which requires clarification. This definition also places vocational education and training *at the professional level in the middle rank*, thus translating it into an applied hierarchy and economic structure [2].

In addition, educational policies should focus on understanding vocational education and training, young people needs and their success, and not only on responding to current and future labour market needs. In this regard, we need to study more young people trajectories who receive or have already received professional education [3].

*Problems of training specialists in non-linguistic areas to solve professional problems on the basis of foreign language proficiency, as one of the goals of professional education, are in the sphere of interests of theorists and practitioners in the field of language education.* A theoretical model of foreign language communicative competence, revealing the psychological and pedagogical mechanisms of its development are presented in works of L. Bachmann, I. L. Bim, N. D. Galscova, T. Dudley-Evans, M. Channels, J. Manby, R. P. Milrud, A. M. Mitina, M. Swaine, D. Himse, etc.). Attempts of practical implementation of these models are reflected in the concept of "Language for special purposes" and its variant "Subject and language integrated learning", as well as in the writings of A. P. Mynar-Beloruchev, P. Strevens, P. V. Sysoev, S. G. Ter-Minasova, A. Waters, E. Frenedo, T. Hutchinson, and others.

The purpose of vocational education today is in the specialist training for whom a foreign language is one of the main tools of professional activity and means of personal development.

### **3. Professional foreign language competence as structure component of specialist's readiness for professional activity**

#### *3.1 Approaches to the organization of language training in the higher professional education system*

Approaches to the implementation of the language component in the higher education systems of developed countries in the management personnel training are guided by international requirements and standards and, at the same time, bear the imprint of national traditions, take into account the factors of the language environment, political, economic, geographical, ethno-cultural and other conditions of the country. The greatest effect, as can be assumed, is achieved where language learning, multilingualism become an integral part of a person's lifestyle from early childhood, and education expands and conceptualizes this life situation. Language experience is organically included in the educational, educational, project, search and research, organizational and communication activities. Language learning acts as a necessary component of project activities, serves as a prerequisite for achieving its goals. The demand for language by the quasi-professional process changes the motivation and psychological mechanism of language acquisition, reduces the barrier to its study. In this regard, the training of a specialist who speaks a foreign language is considered as a new type of professional education, dictating changes in the strategies of language education and training strategies.

#### *3.2 Language education structure in vocational training*

The need of manager personnel in language training in modern conditions of globalization is considered as an aspect of the specialist personality formation. Researchers of pedagogy and linguistics problems proceed from the fact that language education is education in all modern (native and non-native) languages and cultures [4], that language education should be considered from the position of a holistic approach as: 1) value, 2) process, 3) result, 4) system [5].

*3.2.1 Language education as a value.* Taking as a fundamental point of view of S. Guershunsky, we can conclude that the value of language education at the higher professional school, which has increased over the past decade, is determined by the demand for foreign languages as a result of globalization of the integration processes of society, the introduction of higher professional education and the development of joint educational programs at the interstate level, the opened up opportunities of familiarization with the world experience and knowledge through the use of new information technologies.

In addition to the state and public importance of language education is also undeniable personal value for a future manager, which is due to: a conscious need for a foreign language as a means of communication in the modern multicultural world; the requirements of a competitive professional environment to the level of its language training, and the degree of compliance with these requirements; the desire for continuous self-improvement, using the advantages of foreign language proficiency, which determines for a particular person the prestige of language and language education.

That is, the need for language education as a value is determined by socio-economic, socio-cultural, psychological and personal factors. *Socio-economic factors* include the prestige of language skills; social need for language as a means of communication; competitiveness in the labor market; the possibility of real use of language in management; mobility; traditions in the study and choice of language. Under the *socio-cultural factors* are proximity and community cultures; attitude to people, culture and society; the system of cultural and social values, accepted in society; an interest of a different ethnic culture; the desire to find compromises in dealing with controversial issues, and others. *The psychological factors* reflect the need of the individual in the communication; ownership of the mechanisms of speech-thinking activity; the psychology and ethics of business communication. *The personal factors* refer to the individual abilities of the individual; its subjective position; desires, intentions, interests, plans, level of development, motivation in the study of languages, etc.

*3.2.2 Language education as a process.* Language education as a process of mastering a foreign language culture is accompanied by the formation of the ability to conduct intercultural communication in the field of management decision-making, which involves adequate interaction in everyday and professional situations with speakers of different languages and cultures with the mismatch of national stereotypes and communicative behavior. The guarantee of the effectiveness of such interaction is educational technologies, which provide the construction of the subject-subject activity of the teacher and students, aimed at strengthening the motivation in the study of languages and mastering the basics of the future profession, awareness of their ability to real communication and responsibility for the results of this process.

A necessary condition for the effectiveness of this process is to rely on the real experience of students, which they acquire in the process of mastering special disciplines. This experience is refracted to the situations of intercultural communication, where there is its inclusion in the language experience and thus maintained an interest in the continuous improvement of their foreign language training. That is, language education as a process is designed to create such pedagogical conditions that each student has the opportunity to receive high-quality linguistic and cultural training, which would allow him to improve his previously acquired foreign language and cultural experience throughout his life.

*3.2.3 Language education as a result.* The result of language education is the achievement of a certain level of language proficiency, which is understood as a set of competencies that allow a specialist to speak, write, read and understand the foreign language. That is, knowledge of a foreign language implies the possibility of self-realization of the individual through new forms of expression, which are mastered in the process of mastering the language. Moreover, knowledge of a foreign language is, first

of all, introduction to a specific discourse marked by a certain professional environment and national and cultural characteristics of the speakers of this linguistic culture. And finally, mastering the language, a person learns the complex of some extra-linguistic socio-cultural knowledge, skills and abilities that characterize a particular foreign student as representative of a certain linguistic and ethnic society [5].

*3.2.4 Language education as a system.* Language education as a system is aimed at creating psychological and pedagogical conditions for the development and realization of the creative potential of all its subjects through mastering a different linguistic culture in the process of intercultural interaction and knowledge.

To achieve a positive result, it is very important that language learning is not just in-depth, but has acquired a professional status.

The system of professional training should provide an opportunity to integrate professional experience into the content of foreign language education through the creation of situations where success in the professional and language fields are organically interrelated, and this requires a long period of time sufficient for the development of both language and professional experience. The need to find new approaches to the formation of foreign language competence of management personnel is also due to the fact that the use of translation work is economically inefficient, since the translator is usually not a specialist in a particular field.

The system of language education in higher education is a relatively autonomous subsystem of a single language macro system, in the center of which there are people who determine its purposeful functioning and development. The whole system works to achieve specific goals, where the result is a system-forming factor that ensures the ordering of all components of the system. Thus, **language education in higher education can be considered as a *process* of forming the ability to intercultural communication in a valuable professional context as a result of the integration of language experience in the structure of professional activity through the system of future manager professional training.**

#### **4. Professional activity and language experience model**

Speaking about the system of higher professional education, it should be recognized the need for a different approach to the design of foreign language education in the field of personnel management, which involves a revision of the goals and content of language education with a focus on building a **multidimensional model of professional activity with included language experience**. Professional activity is understood as a set of four components: functional (professional activity as a system of tasks solved by a specialist); competence (professional activity as a set of competencies); cognitive (professional activity as an integral part of knowledge, as a result of functioning of two factors: internal (i.e. activity of consciousness) and external (professional culture); personal (value-semantic, professional activity as a system of motives and meanings of activity).

##### *4.1 Functional component in the professional activity structure*

The system of tasks solved by a specialist as a **functional** component in the structure of professional activity reflects the nature of this activity and should be adequate to it. The psychological condition for the implementation of this system is the reliance on the relevant type of experience [6]. The inclusion of language experience in the process of solving professional problems should ensure their more effective implementation, the achievement of goals in situations of intercultural communication.

Training of specialists in the field of management is to form the experience of communicative actions in the system of professional tasks that would allow professional contacts with the use of a foreign language in various fields and situations, to function as a powerful linguistic personality in professionally significant speech events of different types.

##### *4.2 Competence component in the professional activity structure*

**Competence** component essence in the structure of professional activity with included language experience is that language experience is manifested not in speaking about their profession in a foreign language, and to manage this activity on the basis of a set of competencies to ensure its successful implementation.

Analysis of existing research within the competence approach allows identifying three key competencies of a specialist with experience in foreign language activities: linguistic, discursive and intercultural.

*Linguistic* competence involves the acquisition of a certain amount of formal knowledge and relevant skills related to various aspects of the language, for the construction of grammatical forms and syntactic constructions that will allow carrying out their communicative intentions in situations of professional communication in accordance with the level of language proficiency.

If the presence of linguistic competence indicates the formation of ideas about the language and tends to focus on the language outside the context, *discursive* competence reflects the willingness to use the language, taking into account the professional specifics of the management environment. The key point in determining the degree of formation of discursive competence is the readiness for oral and written interaction within the professional context using relevant strategies in each specific discourse in the appropriate genres, styles and registers.

*Intercultural* competence is considered to be an integral part of foreign language communicative competence. A modern manager should be ready to carry out professional activities in accordance with the requirements of intercultural communication, which is interpreted as a set of specific processes of interaction of communication partners belonging to different linguistic and cultural communities [4]. Intercultural competence is determined by a variety of factors, including the environment, behaviors, values, age, ethical standards. Forms of interaction between people are constantly changing, and the manager must be ready for an adequate response to these changes. National culture, national identity, organizational, corporate, professional culture, stereotypes – all these concepts are used to categorize different types of cultures and people in them. Knowledge of their characteristics is necessary to identify and analyze the problem in order to adapt to a new situation or form of behavior.

Intercultural competence therefore includes the ability to interact with a foreign-language ethnic environment and a constant willingness to change their behavior in accordance with the parameters of this environment through the recognition and use of cultural differences to create a favorable business environment.

#### 4.3 Cognitive component in the structure of professional activity

The **cognitive** component of professional activity is related to such categories as knowledge, thinking and understanding processes involved in the performance of professional duties. The essence of this component is that language experience as a component of readiness for professional activity reflects the interaction between psychological, communicative, functional and cultural factors. This is expressed in the ability of flexible use of various types of information, the ability to effectively construct mental representations in the process of activity, based on its foreign-language potential. There is an introduction to the world culture, to the culture of the peoples of the partner countries in business, an understanding of their lifestyle. A specialist who speaks a foreign language and is able to use it in the performance of functional duties, has the opportunity to learn the spiritual heritage of countries and peoples, their historical and cultural memory, to find more effective ways to achieve cultural understanding.

The synthesis of knowledge about the specifics of native culture and foreign culture, common knowledge about cultures and communication allows you to learn rational techniques of communicative activities, creates the desire and willingness of a specialist to engage in interpersonal interaction, determines his attitude to the partner in communication, which ultimately determines the quality and results of the joint activities are an indicator of the level of formation of professional culture.

#### *4.4 Personal component in the professional activity structure*

Personal (value-semantic) component of professional activity, as a system of motives and meanings of activity, reflects the degree of transfer of the individual to the level of self-development, self-realization, when realizing his subjectivity, a person seeks to bring new to the culture of professional activity, transforming it and him. The effectiveness of this activity at the same time increases immeasurably due to the fact that its content now acquires a qualitatively new personal meaning, acts as a meaning and value for the individual, becomes a source of personal experience.

### **5. The purpose of language education in vocational training**

Therefore, the purpose of language education in the system of management reserve training is the formation of foreign language professional competence of the future manager in the unity of all its components through the development of professional and language experience in situations of intercultural interaction, and the integration of language experience in the structure of professional activity, which implies:

- assignment of experience of foreign language activities, which is implemented through a system of tasks aimed at providing future managers with the opportunity to master a foreign language at a level that allows them to solve professional issues in the chosen field, to successfully operate in their environment, taking into account the specifics of intercultural communication (functional aspect);
- formation of a system of competencies that involves knowledge and knowledge of the main aspects of modern professional communication, practical knowledge of language tools, the ability to present the content side of their professional field with these tools, analysis and assessment of real business communication, decision-making in relation to their speech behavior, finding more effective ways to achieve cultural understanding (competence aspect);
- ability and readiness to cognize the surrounding reality through the use of language means, introduction to the world culture, knowledge of the spiritual heritage of countries and peoples, possession of the culture of professional activity (cognitive aspect);
- perception of language as a value that has a personal meaning, and the specialist's desire to subjective analysis of their communicative potential, control their speech and actions of their business partners and to change their speech behavior if necessary (personal aspect).

### **6. Language education in vocational training**

Implementation of the goals is carried out, first of all, through the **content** of education, which is designed to provide: an appropriate world level of general and professional culture; integration of the individual into the national and world culture.

The content of any education is culture; the content of foreign language education is foreign language culture. The foreign language speaking implies communication in a foreign language in the space of a foreign linguistic culture, as well as the use of language to achieve specific communicative purposes [6]. Culture is understood today as a generalized civilized space, i.e. as a product of human thought and activity. This is an experience and norms that define and regulate human life, people's attitude to new and different ideas, ideological systems and social forms. Speaking about foreign language education in higher education, culture should be understood as a holistic professional and speech experience, which should be mastered by a specialist, and which can be represented as a holistic system of professional tasks, for which it is necessary to know a foreign language. The criterion of the integrity of such experience is the degree of professional activities effectiveness, the ability to solve these problems, the achievement of goals.

Considering the structure of professional activity and the goals of foreign language education in higher education, it can be assumed that the content of higher professional language education consists of the gradual assimilation of **professional** experience, which occurs in the process of mastering the subject-activity side of special disciplines, and **language** experience, acquired on the basis of inter-subject interaction in situations of intercultural communication in the form of reflection, creativity and

self-development, and, moreover, the personality of a specialist acts as a product of integration of professional and language experience.

If we interpret the content of education as a certain set of experience types that students should master, the development of this content can be represented as a continuous complication of the composition and structure of the types of experience included in it, which is due to the continuous development of all spheres of social culture [7].

Underestimation of the role of professional experience in language education is the cause of inefficiency of the existing system of education at the University. Professional experience is the experience of performing professional functions, the content of which can be presented in different ways, depending on the professional environment in which the implementation of future activities is planned. The specifics of professional experience as a component in the content of language education are that it simultaneously has a purely subject (a certain scope of application of this experience) and non-subject (universal strategies and types of communication, regardless of profession) aspects. Language experience, therefore, cannot be considered autonomous in relation to the subject matter of academic disciplines. It is characterized by specific ways of development, involving the entry of the subject in a professionally-oriented educational situation, and an auxiliary role in relation to the professional component in the content of education.

Mastering this qualitatively new competence cannot be achieved within the traditional discipline "Foreign Language". It requires the creation of qualitatively new practical training modules that ensure the formation of professional experience in solving communication problems on the basis of orientation in professional and language situations [8].

Problems also arise in the clash of interests of professional and educational bodies in organizing out-of-class training which makes educational process practically oriented. In general, the idea of the representatives of the labor market according to the forms of cooperation, venue, duration, and the criteria for assessing the effectiveness of this training remain unchanged [9].

Nevertheless, all the scholars agree on the need to coordinate efforts to develop common approaches and requirements to vocational training. As it is pointed out, universities, governmental organizations and employers' associations need to get together to create a uniform set of short, straightforward and easily memorable definitions of key skills in order to facilitate shared understanding. Consensus in this regard on the parts of universities, government organizations and employers can only be to the benefit of future graduates [10].

## 7. Conclusion

Therefore, professional-foreign language competence as the purpose of Manager training, assumes its ability to adoption of administrative decisions on the basis of implementation of foreign language communicative competence in situations when the solution of professional tasks at the level of the world standards of quality of professional activity is impossible without the foreign language opening access to the world information bases.

This competence is a new type of education, including the development of integrated professional and language experience, which is a system of subject knowledge, knowledge of ways of functioning in a professional environment, awareness of their own value as a subject of this environment on the basis of mastering a foreign language as a tool of professional activity, an integral part of the culture of modern management.

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