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Development of Future English Language Teachers' Competence in Writing in Higher Pedagogical Institutions: A Review

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Abstract

This article reviewed existing literature on developing future English Language teachers' competence in writing in higher pedagogical institutions. Competence is defined as professional teachers' qualities such as openness, ability to adapt to new ideas, tactfulness, acquirement of their emotional state, ability to identify, analyse and compare foreign and local culture phenomena. It should be mentioned that competence in writing arises as an effective way of developing the personality of future teachers. Furthermore, the research marks out objective and subjective factors that influence the development of future English language teachers' competence in writing. Objective factors include reconstruction of the process of foreign language teaching, usage of interactive teaching methods, use of authentic texts, periodical control of students' knowledge, skills and abilities, teacher's personality etc. Among subjective factors, we distinguish students' qualities, analyse and compare cultural phenomena. Pedagogical conditions that influence the development of teachers' cross-cultural competence include simulation of cross-cultural written communication situations in the educational process. Additional factors include teachers' orientation on cross-cultural dialogue values that disclose not only cognitive and emotional aspects but also pedagogical and personal tolerance.

Keywords: competence, competence in writing, future teachers, foreign language, educational process, higher institutions, professional training.

1. Introduction

Implementing the conceptual foundations of language education is defined by the National Doctrine of Education Development of Ukraine in the XXI century. This instrument requires the development of new approaches to determining the tasks, content and technology of teaching foreign languages in various educational institutions (Nikolayeva, 2002). According to the current programs for philological faculties of higher educational institutions of Ukraine (Nikolayeva, Solovey, 2001), students who master the profession of a teacher with an accent on verbal aspect must have perfect not only grammatical and lexical aspects of language but also writing skills. The purpose of teaching writing in higher education is to develop students' skills and abilities to design their speech correctly, to express their thoughts logically and reasonably both orally and in writing. In mastering a foreign language, the relevant skills must be constantly improved and reach their highest level by graduation from a higher institution.

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Kryvchykova claims that improving foreign language competence in writing is one of the main aims of learning foreign languages in secondary and higher education in Ukraine (Kryvchykova, 2002). Modern course books for foreign language learners are written considering progressive trends and contain materials for teaching written communication as a mandatory component. The pages of professional periodicals regularly raise the issue of the effectiveness of the developed materials and find new ways to improve them.

Despite the theoretical and practical significance of these studies, it should be noted that in the theory and practice of higher pedagogical education concepts like the problem of developing competence in learning a foreign language (including English) in higher institutions and its importance in the context of training is not fully explored.

This article aims to analyse the problems of future teachers' competence in writing, identify the factors that help develop this type of competence, and clarify the pedagogical conditions that contribute to the development of competence in writing.

2. Results and Discussion

The training system for future foreign teachers must meet the norms of universal relations in society and promote the development of students' mobility in solving professional and communicative tasks creatively and independently. It must also ensure the development of skills to quickly adapt to changes in the professional sphere, which is achieved by increasing the activity of professional training and improving the learning process of all kinds (Brown, 2000). Needless to say that those students who want to become English language teachers have to improve their written communication skills because of the intensive development of international contacts and the related expansion of professional and personal communication (business and personal correspondence, participation in research projects etc.), and the leading role of written communication in English-speaking countries.

It is well known that writing is a decisive factor in the accelerated development of humanity. It has a significant role in creating and depicting spiritual and material values. Writing is not a natural but a social phenomenon, a human invention used by everybody. The analysis of scientific and methodical literature (Azimov, 2009; Berry, 1990) allowed us to determine that in modern methodical literature, such concepts as writing, written communication and competence in writing have particular distinctions. Thus, writing is defined as a sign system of a language fixation, which allows with the help of graphic signs to transmit information at a distance and fix it in time. Written communication is a form of language associated with the expression and perception of thoughts in graphic form. Thus, the concept of competence in writing implies acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities, and the psychological readiness to use them. After all, psychological barriers often slow down the process of mastering writing. The so-called "fear of a blank sheet", insecurity in one's level of language skills, fear of being funny in the reader's eyes – all these factors make writing really difficult to master. Overcoming psychological barriers and applying the acquired knowledge, skills and abilities in real writing communication is as difficult as mastering them (Zimniaya, 2003).

The future teachers' competence in foreign language writing includes the teacher's professional qualities such as openness, ability to adapt to new ideas quickly, respect for foreign language culture, tact, mastery of their emotional state, etc.; knowledge of the essence of intercultural written communication, ethnopsychology, etc.; ability to identify, analyse and compare the phenomena of foreign and personal culture, etc. (Khutorskoy, 2002). Competence in foreign language writing is an effective instrument of shaping the personality of the future teacher. This type of competence promotes the development of personal qualities of the students, increases the level of interest in mastering the language and allows you to use not only the students' consciousness but also their feelings and emotions. The development of competence in writing in the English language learning process is characterised by a combination of learning intercultural communication with the parallel development of the future profession, expanding cultural awareness of students associated with the peculiarities of future professional activity (Sharipov, 2010).

Factors that influence the development of future foreign language teachers' competence in writing can be divided into objective and subjective (Avery, 2002; Harmer, 2007; Mishchenko, Osova, 2019). Objective factors include the reconstruction of the process of learning foreign languages; the use of interactive teaching methods that allow to model real communicative

situations, solve pedagogical problems jointly, apply pedagogical games, create an atmosphere of cooperation, etc.; use of authentic texts; cultural component in the selection and construction of educational material; periodic control of students' knowledge, skills and abilities; the teacher's personality (respect students, the ability to understand their inner conditions, the ability to create a psychologically comfortable atmosphere in the classroom, a high level of foreign language competence), etc. Subjective factors include students' qualities (motivation, sense of the new, tolerance for another point of view, positive attitude towards a foreign language culture, etc.); analysis and comparison of cultural phenomena, etc.

One of the ways to intensify the teaching of written communication is to use the principles of communication in teaching writing and the principle of professional orientation. The principle of communicativeness provides a high level of mastery of the English written communication, develops communication skills, promotes education, development and self-education of students, and, most importantly, provides for the development of competence in writing in the process of learning written communication, which together with speech, language, general educational and sociocultural competencies form the students' communicative competence (Khutorskoy, 2002; Zimniaya, 2003). The principle of professional orientation presupposes education compliance with the needs of students' general educational and professional-pedagogical development. Consequently, this develops students' professional competence by acquainting students with foreign language teaching methods and techniques and involvement in professionally oriented tasks.

It is known that to achieve the communicative goal, written texts must correspond with the following characteristics: content, comprehensibility, logic, coherence, semantic and structural completeness and must be designed using language tools, including grammar, characteristic of a particular functional style at the level of language system and speech norm. It should be mentioned that the actualisation of the problem of the development of future foreign language teachers' competence in writing within the modern methods of teaching foreign languages puts new demands on the process of teaching future teachers. Thus, the current draft of the English Language Program for higher education institutions defines specific writing skills that students of language faculties of higher education institutions must master: to express themselves by writing an essay on a topic or situation in accordance with the goals, objectives and communicative portrait of the addressee freely; write a message depending on its form correctly; organise and use the material for a targeted language learning; apply personal linguistic abilities, needs and goals, various learning strategies effectively. Among them are critical skills, the role of which has grown significantly in the context of personality-oriented learning, which considers a student as an equal subject of learning and allows each student to express themselves as a person. These are the following skills:

- express their own opinions in writing effectively and respond to the opinions of others;
- convey in writing a particular emotional attitude;
- present and develop arguments, providing evidence "for" or "against" a certain point of view;
- build arguments, evidence and opinions in the written text structurally;
- systematise arguments, highlighting the most essential parts and providing illustrative and supporting information;
- give a critical assessment of literary works, etc. (Council of Europe, 2001; Nikolayeva, Solovey, 2001).

It is clear that the formation and development of these skills should occur in conditions that stimulate critical thinking and encourage students to form and express their own opinions. The analysis of scientific and methodical literature (Avery, 2002; Brown, 2000; Mishchenko, 2019; Zhernovnykova et al., 2016; Zimniaya, 2003) allowed to determine the following conditions that contribute to the development of future foreign language teachers' competence in writing. Thus, for the effective development of competence in writing, it is necessary to provide internal and external conditions for a positive perception of writing as a type of communicative activity.

Internal conditions, among which the main needs and motives are provided by didactic, methodical and specific for written communication principles of learning (cultural and linguistic stylistic orientation, reliance on functionally adequate authentic model text, contrasts), as well as the organisation of written communication training based on combining elements of the genre, procedural and structural-oriented approaches with elements of the method of activating both the individual and team capabilities. This combination creates conditions for forming a positive

emotional assessment of situations in written communication, taking into account the individual students' characteristics, early professionalisation of learning and development of interpersonal communication culture.

Among the external conditions, a unique role belongs to the teaching tools such as multimedia training programs that are developed following the principles of using technical instruments of training (expediency, necessity, informativeness, reliability, minimisation of negative impact on user health). These programs can conduct educational, motivating, individualising and controlling functions and provide methodological support for students' classroom and independent extracurricular activities (Mishchenko, Osova, 2019).

Among the pedagogical conditions for the development of future foreign language teachers' competence in writing, we can distinguish:

- the teacher's focus on the values of intercultural dialogue, which can be manifested in cognitive, emotional and active aspects;
- teachers' intercultural competence, pedagogical and personal tolerance, focus on the pedagogy of cooperation;
- designing the content of dialogue of cultures taking into account cultural educational information;
- the uniqueness of the native culture values, their relationship with universal values and other cultural values; intensification of foreign language learning through interdisciplinary links;
- modeling of situations of intercultural communication in the educational process.
- All these conditions stimulate the development of future foreign language teachers' competence in writing.

Many argue that a foreign language should be considered an academic discipline and a component of the process of culture learning. The development of future foreign language teachers' competence in writing is facilitated by the saturation of the content of the English language teaching with cultural information; organisation of the learning process as a dialogue of cultures, use of the educational potential of folklore; use of interactive forms, methods and techniques of development of foreign language communicative skills; use of original textbooks; integration of traditional methods with the latest learning approaches and technics.

3. Conclusion

Thus, the development of future foreign language teachers' competence in writing should be based on the principles of creating the necessary foreign language regime in the learning process and expanding the space of foreign language writing environment, integration of communication and writing. Purposeful development of future foreign language teachers' competence in writing is possible on the basis of the development of students' motivation in the educational process; strengthening the cultural component by using a system of authentic texts, analysis and comparison of linguistic phenomena; use of interactive teaching methods; provided a high level of intercultural teachers' competence and their pedagogical tolerance. Interdisciplinary links in the process of learning English contribute to the expansion of the information space, which is necessary for the development of future foreign language teachers' competence in writing.

We consider a comprehensive study of the development of future English language teachers' competence in writing promising, which will lead to its construction as a holistic system, as well as searching for effective teaching strategies, interactive methods of teaching English that contribute to the successful development of future foreign language teachers' competence in writing.

4. Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript declare that there is no interest in conflict, and all reference materials were dully acknowledged.

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