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FORMATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN STUDENTS OF ECONOMICS

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Abstract. *The article considers the concept of communicative competence and identifies its main components, stressing the importance of foreign language communicative competence formation as the final goal of language learning. It also describes the stages of foreign language communicative competence formation specifying the main objectives of each stage and giving their short characteristics. The article pays particular attention to the ways of how to form communicative competence in the process of teaching and learning a foreign language in higher education institutions.*

Keywords: *competence, communicative competence, foreign language communicative competence, linguistic competence, socio-professional competence.*

Introduction.

The problem of forming communicative competence in students in the process of learning a foreign language is a key factor in the professional training of a modern specialist. The effectiveness of processing tasks, establishing cross-cultural professional relationships, and constructive conflict resolution depends on the level of formation of foreign language communication skills. In the context of Ukraine's integration into European economic, political, cultural and educational structures, society needs specialists who are not only competent in their profession, but also possess a sufficient level of foreign language communicative competence. At the current stage, the foreign language communicative competence of an individual becomes the leading goal of foreign language learning by students of higher education institutions of various fields of training with the final result of using a foreign language as a means of intercultural communication and the enrichment of professional training experience. Educational activities in higher education institutions should take into account individual psychological characteristics, value orientations, students' professional expectations, and should also contribute to the resolution of contradictions in the educational process and the achievement of harmony between all participants in



the process of teaching and learning. The posed problem is related to the primary scientific and practical tasks of training highly qualified, mobile, competitive specialists. Therefore, one of the tasks of a modern higher school is to train a competent, competitive specialist who can successfully solve problems, think flexibly and outside the norm, and be able to adapt to rapidly changing living conditions in a multicultural environment.

Therefore, the **purpose of the article** is to reveal the content of the concept and component structure of foreign language communicative competence and to investigate the stages and ways of its formation.

Presentation of the main material.

The main factors that effectively influence the formation of foreign language communicative competence include professional orientation, humanistic style of communication and cultural aspect. During classes, students learn to correctly explain certain social phenomena, competently solve the tasks set by the teacher, evaluate and forecast different situations, analyse trends, work with business correspondence, learn how to conduct negotiations, conclude contracts, etc. Business vocabulary, communication style, as well as the culture of behavior are also integral meaningful parts of the concept of communicative competence and are closely studied. It is known that in non-linguistic higher education institutions, fewer hours are allocated to the study of a foreign language, so communication skills must be formed in a complex of different educational disciplines. However, it is precisely in foreign language classes that this aspect becomes crucial, since future specialists can get closer to the cultural environment of the country whose language is studied. That is why it is very important to realize the diversity and identity of cultures when comparing them and take into account their interrelationship and influence on one another.

So, how to organize the educational process so that students are able to use a foreign language both when communicating in real life situations and for acquiring knowledge, so that they are able to navigate the socio-cultural aspects of the country whose language is being studied?

Practice has shown that the solution of this problem is greatly facilitated by the



atmosphere of collective communication, organized on the basis of creating and modelling communicative situations which stimulate students to motivated speech, and, at the same time, communication in such situations makes it possible to consciously assimilate foreign language material.

Competence today is interpreted as an intellectually and personally conditioned life experience of a person's social and professional life, which is based on knowledge, values, and inclinations acquired during training. The training of a new generation specialist requires a high level of skill and responsibility.

Thus, it can be concluded that competence is the provision of a complex combination of all structural components, i.e. knowledge, activity and personal qualities – are mutually influential and closely related. This is especially evident in the light of defining main tasks, set by the strategy of implementing the competence approach in education.

The key skills in shaping foreign language communication are linguistic, communicative and socio-professional competences. They are interrelated and jointly form the future specialist's ability to interact in an interpersonal, educational and professional environment, using a foreign language as a means of communication and information transfer.

Linguistic competence is the student's ability and willingness to communicate in a foreign language. Linguistic competence is based on a complex of specific grammatical, lexical, spelling skills that enable an individual to master language for communicative interaction.

Communicative competence means the ability to establish and maintain the necessary contacts with other people, a certain set of skills that ensure effective communication.

Socio-professional competence is fundamental and integral-cognitive, social and professional activity.

Prerequisites that ensure the success of the formation of communicative competence in students should be noted as a priority. They include:

- a favorable psychological climate in the student group based on mutual respect,



support and understanding, which encourages free expression of students' opinion;

- formation of an attitude towards the profession, which form professional stability and a tolerant attitude to foreign culture as an indicator of an educated person;
- effectiveness of pedagogical influence, based on such pedagogical principles as: personality-oriented communication, collective interaction, role-based organisation of educational material and educational process, reliance on the personal experience of students, taking into account the context of professional activity, modeling communication situations;
- development of professionally significant communication skills.

Skills formed during classes will help in many ways in future job situations. Therefore, the development of communicative competence is one of the primary tasks of higher professional education.

The practical goal of learning foreign languages in higher education institutions is the further development of an individual's ability to communicate in a foreign language. The realization of this goal is connected with the formation of communication skills in students, namely:

- to understand and generate a foreign language utterance in accordance with the specific situation of communication, language task and communicative intention;
- to carry out their speech and non-speech behavior, taking into account the rules of communication and the national and cultural features of the country whose language is being studied;
- to use rational methods of mastering a foreign language and improve self-study effort.

Therefore, purposeful work on the formation of communicative competence is a holistic process based on the coordination of its leading components: a targeted component that reflects the requirements of the simultaneous participation of all students in the performance of individual tasks; meaningful, based on the selection of tasks that contribute to the successful formation of communicative competence; technological, which determines the conditions, methods and means of forming communicative competence; evaluation-resultative, based on the construction of



diagnostic methods for determining the formation of communicative competence.

Thus, the main goal of learning English is the formation of students' communicative competence, which means mastering the language as a means of intercultural communication, developing the ability to use a foreign language as a tool in the dialogue of cultures of the modern world, as well as the use of interactive learning methods. Interactive learning changes the usual forms of learning to dialogic ones which are based on interaction and mutual understanding. Using the techniques of interactive learning in practice, it can be argued that these forms, when applied systematically, really allow each student to be in the "context" of joint work, form communicative readiness for communication in English language classes.

The essence of communicative learning is to prepare the student to participate in foreign language communication in the conditions created in English classes. To organize the learning process as a model of the communication process means to model only the main, fundamentally important parameters of communication, such as:

- personal nature of the communicative activity of the subject of communication;
- relations and interaction of speech partners;
- situations as forms of communication functioning;
- content basis of the communication process;
- the system of speech means, which should be mastered to ensure communicative activity;
- the functional nature of learning and using speech media.

So, what are the main principles of communication? The category of communicativeness is the basis of the communicative approach in learning foreign languages. There are five principles of communication that are usually followed in teaching communication in a foreign language:

- speech and thinking activity;
- individualisation and the leading role of the personal aspect;
- functionality;
- situationality;
- novelty.



Let us consider them in more detail.

The first principle – speech and thinking activity – provides for the speech orientation of learning and means the use of conditional-speech exercises rather than speech exercises for the formation of speaking skills.

Speech orientation of the educational process is possible only in the presence of cognitive (mental) activity of students. So, the problem comes down to the organisation of speech partnership in educational communication, and speech partnership depends to a large extent on the communicative behavior of the teacher and is due to the active nature of communication.

Speech and thinking activity of students is the core of the communicative teaching and learning process. Constant practical use of language makes both teaching and learning attractive for students, because it is consistent with the final goal, and therefore ensures the mastery of speech as a means of communication.

The second principle – individualization – means taking into account all the features of the student as an individual. A person expresses his/her attitude to the environment with the help of speech. And since the attitude towards the environment is always individual, speech is also individual and personal.

The third principle of the communicative approach is the principle of functionality. It means that any language unit performs certain speech functions in the process of communication.

Situational teaching and learning are mandatory for the communicative approach. If not to follow the principle of situationality in teaching and learning a foreign language, then the situational nature of the action will not be recorded in the brain and there will be no transfer. It is for this reason that many learned words and automated grammatical structures remain unused when students try to maintain a conversation in a foreign language. Situationality is able to reproduce communicative reality and thus arousing interest in the reality of communication.

The process of communication is characterized by a constant change in the subject of conversation, circumstances, conditions, tasks, etc. There is no doubt that it is possible to prepare a student for heuristic communication only through the



development of his/her ability to respond adequately. That is why the fifth principle of teaching and learning language as a means of communication is the principle of novelty. Novelty ensures the development of speaking skills, in particular, its dynamism, the ability to paraphrase, the mechanism of combination and the initiative of expression.

These theories provide grounds for distinguishing the main stages of the formation of students' communicative skills: orientation and motivational, cognitive, transformational and reflective-evaluative.

At the orientation and motivational stage, the purpose is to orient students to study, to reveal existing knowledge in the relevant field and their expectations, to form positive motivation for learning a foreign language. The specified factors create optimal conditions for acquiring communicative experience in the future professional activities of students.

Visualization not only contributes to such mental processes as information perception, memorization, thinking, but also helps to activate the mental activity of students, to deepen the penetration into the essence of the objects of study. The use of visual aids helps to involve all analyzers in the process of perception – auditory, visual, motor, etc. Therefore, at the orientation and motivational stage, the most effective is the explanatory and illustrative teaching method (achieving the goal through the production of ready-made information, explanation and illustration with words, images, and actions). Among the didactic tools, teachers usually use questionnaires, testing, discussion of the epigraph to the topic, watching a video on the topic, creating conceptual maps and associograms based on key concepts.

The outlined didactic tools help students to adapt to educational activities. The survey of future specialists is carried out in order to identify their general and boundary goals, expectations from practical classes, the level of awareness of the importance of the given problem, the degree of familiarization with the principles of intercultural literacy and international norms, etc. Student testing is conducted with the aim of identifying the level of practical knowledge, abilities and skills of future specialists, as well as gaps in certain aspects of the subject being studied. The obtained results of the



questionnaire and testing are a valuable reference point for the teacher and the student, as didactic tools are selected and adapted accordingly on their basis. Discussion of the epigraph and video, as well as elaboration of key terms, enable students to understand their own level of preparedness for studying the topic, its significance, the need to improve existing knowledge, and contribute to increasing students' interest in learning. The creation of conceptual maps and sociograms will contribute to the in-depth penetration of students into the essence of basic concepts, the formation of systemic thinking.

The goal of the cognitive stage is the formation of new knowledge about the objects of study for their further use in the process of solving communicative tasks, as well as the necessary professional qualities of future specialists. The cognitive stage is characterized by the construction of models regarding direct interaction (through personal contacts) and indirectly (through authentic sources in printed or electronic form (fiction, periodicals, dictionaries, movies, audio recordings, etc.)). At the beginning of the specified stage, students perceive information on a pragmatic level, aimed at expressing one's own and understanding other people's goals and intentions, providing adequate mime and mime support. In the process of mastering the material, future students receive information about the nature of communicative situations, the peculiarities of interpersonal interaction, and borrow from the sources of the cultural environment the means of analysing communicative situations in the verbal and non-verbal forms.

During the cognitive stage, teachers use explanatory-illustrative and reproductive teaching methods (the task of reproducing methods of action according to a model in variable situations), since repeated reproduction allows not only to apply, but also to deepen the knowledge underlying them and to expand and ensure their sustainable assimilation. Explanatory-illustrative and reproductive methods are a condition for the successful performance of students' creative activities. At this stage, students are asked to read professional texts: detailed (to obtain accurate information), overview (for general understanding), selective (to obtain specific information), indicative (to highlight the main supporting sentences); exercises to match concepts with



corresponding definitions or illustrations.

Doing exercises in groups, discussing answers in teamwork evoke positive feelings of empathy and approval, develop a humanistic approach to communication, readiness for communicative interaction. Successful assimilation of the material at the cognitive stage provides the basis for the implementation of acquired knowledge in practice during the transformational stage. The goal is to generalize and systematize self-acquired knowledge on the subject being studied; development of a strategy for creative application of acquired knowledge.

At the transformational stage, the method of problem-based learning prevails, which requires students to creatively search for new knowledge, methods and actions. The method of problem-based learning can be combined with the heuristic method, which involves assimilating the experience of creative activity, mastering individual stages of solving problem tasks (on the part of students) and partial clarification of new material together with problematic questions and cognitive tasks or experiments (on the part of the teacher).

Students independently analyse and work out the educational material using the acquired knowledge while performing the following tasks: definition of basic concepts using brainstorming; search and selection of information for presentation; holding debates, debriefings, heuristic conversations with the aim of gaining understanding and solving professional problems; debating using the "intentional error" technique; preparation of presentations, public speeches in order to substantiate one's own position on the given problem; writing business letters, resumes, abstracts, etc.

During the transformational stage of training future specialists, there is a transition from management of students' activities to co-management based on subject-subject relations, which allows future specialists to be more actively involved in the process of quality management of their own educational activities.

The final stage in the formation of students' communication skills is a reflexive evaluation, the purpose of which is to compare the obtained results with the goals set at the beginning of the educational activity. Analysis and assessment of one's own achievements and "gaps" involve further refinement and improvement of acquired



knowledge.

At the reflexive-evaluative stage, the main methods that can be used here are heuristic and research ones, e.g., problematic situation or difficulty, overcoming which creative search, new knowledge, and methods of action are required. The research method involves encouraging students to independently work on collecting facts, their systematization and analysis. Didactic tools at this stage provide for students' self-management of educational activities, which includes: analysis of models of all types of communication; role-playing; project work; Senken writing; self-assessment of educational activity; summing up information in the form of charts, tables, etc.

On the basis of the specified didactic tools, students formulate hypotheses, use analogies, analyse in detail the completed work, correct errors, discuss other possible options for solving tasks. The positive result of passing through the previous stages of educational activity is evidenced by the ability to construct models of adequate behavior in problem situations, giving preference to a compromise strategy and cooperation in conflicts, the ability to evoke a sense of humanity, tolerance and empathy.

During these stages, the role of the teacher varies within the limits of coordinator, facilitator, consultant, assistant, observer, equal partner. When moving from one stage to another, depending on the difficulty of the material and the needs of students, individual stages can be more or less developed.

Therefore, the application of a set of stages of educational activity (orientation and motivational, cognitive, transformational and reflective-evaluative) optimizes the formation and development of students' communication skills, models the conditions for achieving the planned educational goal, creates an environment of creative cooperation and competition in the process teaching and learning. The step-by-step formation of students' communication skills ensures consistency, variability and individualization of the pedagogical process.

Ways of forming communicative skills when learning a foreign language include performing various activities. The first step to mastering communicative skills is working with vocabulary. Exercises of this level are mainly reproductive in nature,



although there are also elements of productivity.

Exercises of the reverse type are also suitable for use – to determine the puzzled word based on the given lexical meaning.

Tasks of the second level are of a reproductive-productive nature and are aimed at consolidating the learned vocabulary in speech models and schemes – this is work with speech models and substitution tables, as well as model transformation.

Oral situational works allow students to create their own model of solving this or that situation. So, a certain instruction inviting students to talk can be given: "What would you do if...". When doing this exercise, a personal approach is clearly applied, since each student offers his/her own version of the solution, refracting the situation through the prism of his/her own "I", getting the opportunity to create an unrealistic model – a model of behavior that is based on the ideal – on fantasy. Interactive techniques can be widely used to avoid monotony in class and boost students' interest.

Thus, dialogues, polylogues and discussions help to reveal the personality more vividly, to express students' thoughts and beliefs about the problems, and provide better opportunities for direct communication. At the same time, the interest and level of motivation increases, every student has the opportunity to express his/her opinion, to argue, to compare his/her opinion with the opinion of their opponent.

Interviewing is a methodical technique that is extremely effective when preparing for creative writing. This is a specific type of conversation during which the student receives information, acquires listening, speaking and reading practice. To increase motivation, it is advisable to ensure the practical application of messages prepared on the basis of interviews. It can be an exhibition of the best works and a presentation of oral messages. Therefore, the results of the interview can become part of further work on the project.

It also helps to use the project method in teaching English. During the implementation of the project, communication in English is organically combined with intellectual and emotional activity in the form of games, interviews, etc. Mastering the project activity, the student learns to think creatively, independently plan actions, aesthetically design the project, as well as improve the culture of interpersonal



communication.

Preparation and defense of creative projects involves group communication of students. Teachers also can use different effective and accessible forms of group communication, such as dramatization and role-playing. Role-playing games can be divided into several types:

- 1) role-playing games depicting a basic communicative act (buying, greeting, getting to know each other, etc.);
- 2) those depicting a complex communicative act consisting of a number of elementary ones (choosing a travel route - at a travel agency - at the railway ticket office);
- 3) role-playing games, the participants of which play different roles that act in standard life situations;
- 4) role-playing games in which participants play the roles of fictional characters, having all the personal characteristics of a specific person (gender, age, position, profession, personal qualities).

Each student chooses a role that is convenient for him/her and speaks on behalf of this chosen character. The content of such discussions is the problems of real life. For example: choosing a profession, plans for the future, a job interview.

Conclusions.

Foreign language communication is possible provided that the subjects of foreign language communication possess the language as a means of communication. The level of formation of students' foreign language communicative competence is a determining factor that defines the level of effectiveness of the communicative process as a whole. The process of forming foreign language communicative competence should be aimed not only at equipping future specialists with a system of knowledge, abilities and skills necessary for effective foreign language communication, but also at forming a deeply thought-out, communicatively competent position of the future economist, which will give the future specialist the opportunity to self-determine and self-develop in the single European educational space and participate in its evolution and improvement.



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