

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS  
IN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATIONПРОФЕСІЙНА КОМПЕТЕНТНІСТЬ ВИКЛАДАЧІВ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ  
У ВИЩИХ НАВЧАЛЬНИХ ЗАКЛАДАХ

*The article highlights the problem of professional competence of a foreign language teacher in higher education institutions, analyses its structural elements, defines the essence of the concepts "competence" and "competency". It is noted that scientists interpret and classify it differently, however, all of them believe that the acquisition of certain competencies allows foreign language teachers in higher education institutions to meet modern requirements of today, and to carry out sufficient educational process. We consider the professional competence of a foreign language teacher as his psychological, theoretical and practical training combined with the ability to successfully perform pedagogical activities in the process of teaching foreign languages. The authors proved that it is the result of acquired social experience (knowledge, skills, moral values) and includes a number of personal qualities. Some groups of special professional competencies (didactic, psychological, methodical), linguistic (philological), communicative, informational, sociocultural, project, reflective are singled out, substantiated and characterised in the paper. It is defined that the presence of a set of these competencies ensures the effectiveness of the professional activity of a foreign language teacher and meets the needs of today. A detailed analysis of the scientific literature related to the researched problem is carried out. The importance of the issues raised in the article is pointed out, their novelty and relevance in the light of reforming pedagogical education, its standardization on the basis of the competence approach are proved. Emphasis is placed on the role of foreign language teachers as a key figure in the formation of professional competence of students.*

**Key words:** competence, competency, efficient professional activity, foreign language teachers, institutions of higher education.

*У статті висвітлюється проблема професійної компетентності викладача іноземної мови у вищому навчальному закладі, аналізуються її складові компоненти, визначається сутність понять "компетентність" та "компетенція". Зазначено, що вчені*

*по-різному трактують поняття професійної компетентності та класифікують його, однак всі вони вважають, що набуття викладачами англійської мови вищих навчальних закладів певних компетенцій дає можливість відповідати сучасним вимогам сьогодення, а також успішно здійснювати навчально-виховний процес. Поняття "компетентність" трактується нами як сукупність якостей, що поєднують знання, досвід і цінності, здобуті у вищому навчальному закладі, з особистісними здібностями людини. Професійна компетентність викладача іноземної мови розглядається нами як його психологічна, теоретична і практична підготовка з поєднанні зі здатністю успішно виконувати педагогічну діяльність у процесі викладання іноземних мов. Доведено, що вона є результатом набутого соціального досвіду (знання, вміння, навички, моральні цінності) і включає ряд особистих якостей. Виокремлено, обґрунтовано й охарактеризовано групи спеціальнопрофесійних компетенцій, як: професійна (дидактична, психологічна, методична), лінгвістична (філологічна), комунікативна, інформаційна, соціокультурна, проектна, рефлексивна з огляду на особливості навчально-виховного процесу у вищих навчальних закладах. Встановлено, що наявність комплексу цих компетенцій забезпечує ефективність професійної діяльності викладача іноземної мови та відповідає потребам сьогодення. Здійснено детальний аналіз наукової літератури, дотичної до досліджуваної проблеми. Вказано на важливість питань, що піднімаються у статті, доведено їхню новизну та актуальність у світлі реформування педагогічної освіти, її стандартизації на основі компетентнісного підходу. Наголошується на ролі викладача іноземних мов як ключової фігури у формуванні професійної компетентності студентів.*

**Ключові слова:** компетентність, компетенція, ефективна професійна діяльність, викладачі іноземних мов, вищі навчальні заклади.

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**Introduction.** Rapid changes taking place in the political, economic, cultural and other spheres of our life influence the training of professionals in various fields. At present, young specialists must be ready for solving the problems of theoretical and practical significance, further professional and career growth to meet the strict demands of the labour market. The current stage of the development of higher education is characterized by cardinal changing the socio-cultural and educational context of learning a foreign language. First of all, this is due to the growing needs for intercultural communication and integration of all the spheres of our society. In its turn, this encourages modern scholars to rethink educational concepts, requires finding new alternatives in approaches to

teaching a foreign language, revising its purpose and content, introducing new technologies, improving teaching methods and techniques, using new, effective forms of learning. The expected effectiveness of the educational process is possible only with the high professional competence of foreign language teachers.

**Theoretical framework and research methods.**

The issues of further development of the theory of professional competence in general and its individual components, as well as its realization in relation to the representatives of different professions, are constantly in the center of attention of many scientists. Some aspects of the professional competence of a foreign language teacher have been studied by

such scholars as T. Astafurova, S. Averjjanova, T. Balykhina, O. Bighych, N. Ghaljskova, N. Ghez, O. Gholotjuk, L. Ivanova, S. Nikolajeva, O. Solovova, I. Zymnja and others.

**Novelty of research.** Despite the great interest of scientists in the issue of professional competence, a detailed analysis of the scientific literature has shown that the aspects of higher education that are focused on professional competence of a foreign language teacher remain insufficiently studied. Therefore, the above mentioned problem does not lose its relevance.

**The aim of this study** is to identify and analyse the components of higher education foreign language teachers' professional competence, necessary for their efficient work.

**Results.** There are different interpretations of the concept of professional competence. However, almost all the definitions clarify and supplement each other. According to J. Raven, a well-known British psychologist, competence is a specific ability to implement a certain action into a particular subject area successfully. This ability includes specialized knowledge, subject skills, ways of thinking, as well as awareness of personal responsibility [6]. M. A. Holodnaya [9] defines competence as a special way of subject-specific knowledge organization that enables effective decision making in the relevant field of activities. The author states that this knowledge should correlate strongly with the following characteristics: diversity, structure, categoricalness, constructiveness, flexibility, adaptability, reflectivity, efficiency, and accessibility. V. M. Vvedenskiy [1] believes that professional competence is the ability to perform a job effectively, to master modern methods and techniques rapidly and use them efficiently in this job. In accordance with Yu. Tatour [7], higher school teachers' competence is expressed through capabilities to realise their potential in successful creative professional activities, awareness of social significance and personal responsibility for the results of these activities, and the need for continuous improvement of these activities. In keeping with S. Vitvytska, "competency" is a set of qualities, that combine knowledge, experience, and values, gained in a higher education institution, with personal abilities. The author identifies the following competencies: social, multicultural, communicative, informational, competencies of self-development and self-education, and the ability to act rationally, productively, and creatively [2, p. 192]. N. Uysimbayeva believes that the structure of professional competence of any specialist consists of design, information, organizational, communicative and analytical components. They are the result of the development of professional qualities of the individual (memory, logical thinking, emotional stability, attention, determination) combined with a stable system of moral values. Thus, "professional competence is formed through a

complex transformation of interests, motives, needs, on practice, in the processes of awareness and rethinking" [8, p. 19].

Professional competence is systemic in nature and covers certain competencies that are implemented in the specific activities of the teacher [11]. We consider competency as a predetermined requirement for professional training, and competence as already formed personal quality (characteristic) [10, p. 1]. Therefore, competence is formed from individual competencies, but in no case it is reduced to them. So we can state that competence cannot be taught, because it is the product of a certain social experience.

Competence is one of the main conditions for the development and understanding of the motives of professional activity, the focus on self-affirmation in the professional sphere, the realization of creative and scientific potential, the growth of authority.

We define a foreign language teacher's professional competence as his psychological, theoretical and practical readiness and ability to carry out successful pedagogical activities in teaching foreign languages. There are four blocks of competencies that form the competence of a foreign language teacher:

- foreign language communicative competency, which includes language, speech and socio-cultural competencies;
- professional competency that combines philological, psychological, pedagogical and methodological competencies;
- foreign language professional and communicative competency, which consists of language professionally oriented competency, speech professionally oriented competency and sociocultural professionally focused competencies.
- general competency, which combines instrumental, interpersonal and systemic competencies [4, p. 15].

We consider these competencies to be basic for foreign language teachers at higher education institutions too. But their list should be supplemented and expanded, taking into account the peculiarities of the educational process in this group of schools.

A detailed analysis of the literature on this issue showed that most of the works were devoted to the problem of the communicative competency. Based on the research results we can assume that foreign language teachers' communicative competency includes language, speech and linguistic competencies [5]. It involves the ability to perform a speech act, which implements communicative-speech behaviour based on phonological, lexicogrammatical, sociolinguistic knowledge and skills in accordance with the tasks, problems and situations. However, this competency implies not only the mastery of all types of speaking activities, but also the culture of written and oral speech.

In the period of globalization of modern society and the expansion of intercultural contacts, the socio-cultural competency of a foreign language teacher comes to the fore. After all, the task of a modern teacher is to motivate his students for mastering a foreign language as a means of communication, as well as teach them to interact productively with the representatives of other languages and cultures in the socio-cultural space. In this context, the concept of "culture" contains information about: one's social environment, the cultural stereotype of the society, the content and internal hierarchy of its social memory (value system, national heroes), practical semiotics (rules of behaviour), ethnopsychological characteristics of the people, their spiritual culture (worldview, religious and moral features), paremiology, connotations [3].

In fact, professional competence of a foreign language teacher involves an organic combination of didactic knowledge, psychology and general methods of teaching a foreign language and its separate functional registers. This competence also provides in-depth knowledge of the problems of innovation in the field of specific teaching methods, the use of various modern educational technologies, teaching aids, forms and methods of working with students.

The professional competence of a foreign language teacher in higher education largely depends on his ability to communicate with students, which in turn affects the speed and degree of students' mastery of the necessary skills. Only highly qualified and competent teacher understands his social responsibility well, successfully plans and constantly develops his professional activities. He is a key figure in students' professional competence formation.

Information competency is an integral component in the structure of professional competence of a higher education teacher. We consider it as:

- the ability to search and process the information necessary for high-quality performance of professional tasks;
- the ability to work in groups and cooperate with the use of communication technologies to achieve professionally significant goals;
- teachers' readiness for self-development in the field of information technologies and understanding of the need for continuous training and self-realisation in the process of professional activity.

The peculiarity of the professional activity of a higher school teacher is the combination of scientific and educational components which include students' participation in scientific research. The project competence is the ability to design the educational process, predict its results, design and forecast the scientific activities of both teachers and students.

Effective and fruitful research activities can be carried out under the conditions of the well-formed cognitive, intellectual and research competencies. The first one covers a set of theoretical knowledge, practical skills, attitudes, experience, personal

qualities that allow to conduct search and heuristic activities, acquire new knowledge and make decisions independently. The second one involves scientific thinking, the ability to observe and analyze, hypothesize, research work performance, and scientific literature analysis.

Teachers' reflective competence includes the following components:

- analysis of the results of their activities,
- formation of individual pedagogical style,
- achieving adequate professional and personal self-esteem,
- designing personal efforts in the field of professional growth and continuous self-improvement.

**Conclusions.** Thus, the professional competence of a foreign language teacher, being an integral quality of the individual, is manifested in a set of the following competencies: professional (didactic, psychological, methodological), linguistic (philological), communicative, informational, sociocultural, project, and reflective. The combination of these competencies ensures the effectiveness of foreign language teachers' professional activities and meets the needs of the time.

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