

its study, contributed to the creation of appropriate typologies. In linguistics, from the very beginning (according to N. Chomsky's theory), competence meant an internal understanding of the language by the speaker<sup>8</sup>. In modern linguistics, there are many points of view regarding the notion of competence, and most researchers agree that the term implies a certain human-formed ability to perform linguistic / speech / communicative activities in any field.

At present, we can observe a considerable interest in the formation of foreign language communicative professional competence both abroad and in national pedagogical science.

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8 Хомский, Н. (1972) Язык и мышление. М.: Московский университет, 1972. 126 с.

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## FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING: THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT AND MODERN TENDENCIES

Problems of foreign language vocational education in the leading industrial countries of Europe and the USA began to develop most actively along the lines of competence-based education in the 1970s. By this time, the issues of foreign language training of students were considered first in the context of foreign language teaching and then in the context of bilingual education. At the beginning of the 21st century, the conceptual boundaries between the course of "foreign language" and the acquisition of such concepts as "linguistic consciousness", "linguoculture", "foreign language competence / competency" were expanded. Most actively, these processes occur in the USA vocational education. The content of the USA educational space is increasingly associated with the expansion of the "foreign language" subject to the level of "foreign language education", which characteristic feature is multicultural programs<sup>1</sup>. The concept of the tricyclic model

1 Шандрук С.І. Іншомовна освіта у США з позицій мультикультурності. Наукові записки Бердянського державного педагогічного університету. Серія : Філологічні науки. 2015. № 7. С. 62-65.

(political education, intercultural education and international education), developed by American specialists, shapes not only their personal educational space, but also resolves the same issues as the countries of Europe.

It should be noted at the outset, that the analysis of foreign experience of studying foreign language communicative competence makes it possible to establish the existence of independent approaches that are implemented in the USA and European countries. Thus, the American model is focused primarily on the willingness and ability of university graduates to apply the results of foreign language education in practice. In this case, the competence is considered to be authentic, practically oriented to the formation of skills, abilities, personal achievements in self-development based on the actualization of situations, as close as possible to the requirements of professional activity.

The American tradition of competences research is based on behaviour. American researchers study "people-in-work", and the concept of "competency" is deciphered through the individual characteristics inherent in behaviour: personal characteristics, motives, values, habits, self-concept, knowledge, skills. In fact, competencies in this approach are certain "repositories" filled with a variety of content.

Today we can say that the American approach to the study of competencies is simultaneously developing in two directions. The first area is focused on the study of individually presented competencies. Nowadays, they are more rated as functional rather than behavioural because they are aimed at a specific class of professional tasks. This area can be called psychological, as it is based on the work of psychologists. The second area is related to the systematic approach, which involves the view of the student as a particular subject of learning, while also bearing the characteristics of integrity and structure.

From this point of view, it is customary to speak of specific competences / competencies, which in the American context are called nuclear (central), and in the national literature are called key ones. The American model views competencies as a description of the subject's behaviour.

The European approach to the formation of students' competencies (in particular, in France and Germany) is related to the accentuation of two main areas: personal and collective, related to the assessment of linguistic behaviour, the formation of behavioural characteristics. In this regard, communication in a foreign language is considered as one of the universal signs of readiness for professional activity.

Besides the American tradition, there are other approaches that are fundamentally different in terms of both tasks and content. The most developed non-USA perspective on competence issues is the British approach, which is largely related to the development of the national education system. The UK Department for Education has taken into account a specific competence model. It is different from the basic American models and not just a set of competences, but also tries to determine their relationship. The

result is a special "tetrahedron of competences", which includes: cognitive competences (knowledge and understanding based on formal learning and experience), functional competences (abilities, specific skills that a person can demonstrate in his field), personal competences (understanding how to deal with specific situations, motivation to improve performance), ethical competences (values, points of view, on the basis of which decisions are made and actions taken), meta-competences (ability to respond to criticism positively, to cope with difficult situations). In the frames of this approach, some traces of the American model can be found, but there are differences. In particular, the British model is more clearly structured and provides equal opportunities for the development of each competence cluster.

In general, one can say that a distinctive feature of the British approach is the fact that competences are seen as requirements for a specialist for professional tasks<sup>2</sup>. It is based on professional standards containing a set of roles for each profession. These roles are divided into competences for which behavioural indicators are defined. It is believed that British models are more functional. They contain two clusters of competences – behavioural and functional (technical). The latter are more often specified as computer and Internet use (according to The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development – CIPD). Among the most commonly stated competences for different professions are: communication skills, people management skills, focus on outcomes, problem solving. An important aspect that fundamentally differentiates the British approach from the American one is that for British researchers, the starting point for the competency issues exploration is social problems. Such British interpretation of competences is fundamentally opposed to American models that are built from the standpoint of efficiency.

The difference between American and British approaches to competence research is complemented by specific features of the competency approach development in European countries. Thus, by analysing the development of the competences theory in France, it can be found out that at present it is impossible to speak of any form of approach that would clearly identify the French position in matters of competence. At the same time, one can speak of a certain peculiarity of French models.

French models represent something in-between American and British, as they use analogues of behavioural and functional competences. It is generally accepted, that the structure of French models always includes three elements: knowledge, experience and behavioural characteristics. German studies are even more complex than French ones. This is explained by the practice of using qualification standards. In Germany, they are based on a list of key knowledge related to the history of the craft communities' development.

2 Bautista, I. (2016) Generic competences acquisition through classroom activities in first-year agricultural engineering students. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*. 13 (29). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-016-0028-8>

The German educational model includes three clusters of competences: vocational or subject, personal and social. These competences are based on methodological competences (ability to extrapolate skills, problem solving, creativity) and educational competences (ability to learn, to develop learning skills). German models are slowly evolving and tend to standardize.

The national experience of research in the area of competence testifies a wide variety of thoughts. Actually, the research works, presented mainly by a selection of candidate and doctoral theses in pedagogy and psychology, form a compromise position (if it is determined through the opposition "American model – British model"). Researchers, as a rule, consider the competences to be a convenient taxonomy that allows combining heterogeneous characteristics, which are evaluated by different but well-established psychological methods. This approach allows you to break the boundary between the characteristics of a person as an individual and the subject of activity, to combine psychological and social characteristics.

Thus, the most developed of non-American views on the problem of competencies is the British approach, generally related to the development of the education system. It is based on professional standards that contain a set of roles for each professional position. These roles are divided into competences for which behavioural indicators are defined. For the British approach, it is important that a person can demonstrate specific skills in practice, he/she is able to do what is required by the standards, this approach compiles educational programs.

A distinctive feature of the British approach is the fact that competences are seen as requirements for the employee on the part of tasks, besides, for British researchers the starting point in the study of competence problems is the need to ensure socially responsible activities. German studies are even more complex than French ones. The German educational model includes three clusters of competences: vocational or subject, personal and social.

Foreign language learning in German universities is seen as an important element of professional socialization. The effectiveness of foreign language education policy implementation in Germany is subject to the introduction of several foreign languages and the introduction of different language learning programs. Vocational education functions as a coherent system, which guarantees the training of highly qualified competent specialists. As in the system of higher education in Germany and Canada, the sole principle of foreign language education is the use of a foreign language as a tool by which the content of the discipline is mastered. The private issues of this problem (the need for the preparatory phase, the length of study, the number of subjects taught in a foreign language, etc.) are solved differently in Germany and Canada. However, the general principle that unites them is the immersion principle. This term reflects the main feature of these training programs: the maximum possible contact with a

foreign language, a literal "immersion" in the language. Today, immersion programs function in all Canadian schools. Today several popular models of bilingual training exist in Germany. They differ in such aspects as the selection of subjects to be taught in foreign language, their number and the duration of study. According to German scholars, the use of a foreign language in teaching of professional disciplines does not affect the quality of teaching.

Today, bilingual training is the most popular tendency in the countries of America and Europe. Undoubtedly, the use of foreign language in vocational training is a didactic reserve, through which it is possible to increase the level of communicative professional competence of students<sup>3</sup>. Studies of language and vocational education in the United States, Germany, Canada are used by specialists from other countries. For example, Austrian researchers have developed and implemented four models of bilingual education (identificational, integrational, monocultural and multicultural) into the educational process.

The achievement of foreign language education in the given sphere is also remarkable in the higher technical educational institutions of Great Britain, where significant structural and substantive transformations in the country's education system in order to form a European-wide educational space have taken place in recent years.

The history of different approaches to competence / competency in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Canada shows that the emphasis was different depending on the period. More than that, each of the approaches (behavioural, functional, multidimensional, holistic, activity, competent, etc.) has its own peculiarities.

The traditional American approach emphasizes the role of individual characteristics and the use of behavioural standards to evaluate the so-called "best work". The British approach confirms the value of functional competencies and their use in professional activity. The approach followed in France and Germany demonstrates the potential of a multidimensional / holistic view of the problem. In addition, signs of convergence to the formation of competencies of different types are becoming more prominent in national approaches.

Currently, different approaches to the study of competences: cultural-speech, linguistic, psycholinguistic, linguistic-cognitive, linguistic-oratorical and others exist. Thus, the cultural-speech approach puts the task of forming a speech culture of the linguistic personality. Within this approach, theories of linguistic culture (V. E. Goldin) are developed, and the description of linguistic personality types in accordance with any level is made. Within the framework of the linguistic-didactic approach, the concept of competence is developed in relation to the theory and practice of teaching native and foreign languages (G. I. Bogin). The psycholinguistic approach addresses the problems of ontogeny: the formation of a child's language / speech ability, his/her speech thinking. (K. F. Sedov), linguocognitive approach in the study of language /

meta-language awareness of native speakers (V. V. Krasnykh) is associated with this approach. Sociolinguistic approach considers the problem of competence of linguistic personality formation in the process of his/her socialization (V. I. Karasyk). Within the framework of the linguistic-oratorical approach (L.A. Golyskin), the competence of the native speaker is explored from the standpoint of rhetorical text formation, classified according to the stages of the rhetorical canon.

This list is far from final. New approaches to the study of the problem of foreign language competence in professional activity continue to emerge.

According to Z. N. Korneva, due to the socio-cultural concept of teaching foreign languages, deviations from the absolutization of the communicative approach and the formation of communicative competence of future specialists in pure form have been recently observed<sup>4</sup>. The purpose of teaching a foreign language is the need to develop an intercultural, professionally oriented foreign language communication competence. Along with this point of view, there are other, one might say, alternative ones. According to them, at the present stage not only the competent approach prevails, but the general "competence" of education takes place, so, the priority of this area is indisputable. However, it must be too early to draw conclusions of this the problem discussion. We can say that the essence of the "competence" concept, its *differentia specifica* (characteristic features, specific peculiarities) still remains at an intuitive level of understanding.

Thus, our analysis of national and foreign experience in considering the problem of forming a foreign language communicative competence allowed us to draw the following conclusions. The concept under consideration has its own history of formation. At present, many questions regarding the terminology of this concept remain open. However, it might be still early to summarize the discussion. Various aspects of foreign language communicative competence are being explored by representatives of pedagogy, linguistics, psychology, and philosophy. In this regard, there are approaches that address the problem in accordance with the subject and the scope of a particular scientific area. In foreign and national science different models of foreign language communicative competence formation are developed. They are oriented on the specificity of the relevant approaches, which require further thorough research.

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<sup>4</sup> Корнева З. Компонентний склад іншомовної професійно орієнтованої комунікативної компетентності студентів ВТНЗ. Молодь і ринок. 2014. № 6 (113). С. 36-41.