Pedagogical Foundations of the Problem of Forming Communicative Competence of Future Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the problem of forming communicative competence of future elementary school teachers. The objectives of the study were to highlight the conceptual pedagogical foundations and components on which the process of forming communicative competence in future elementary school teachers is based. The task of scientific exploration was to conduct a pilot study to identify the level of understanding of the future elementary school teachers of the phenomenon of “communicative competence” and its importance for further professional activity. The organized research was based on theoretical (study, analysis, systematization, and generalization of scientific-pedagogical, psychological, and methodological literature on the problem under study) and empirical (diagnostic evaluation, questioning, monitoring and educational experiment) methods. The concepts of “competence”, “competence”, “communicative competence”, “communicative competence of a future elementary school teacher” were revealed. The problem of development of communicative competence as a professional value of a modern elementary school teacher is outlined. The results of the survey of students-future teachers of primary classes on the understanding of the essence and necessity of formation of communicative competence during professional training in higher educational institutions of Ukraine are presented.

Keywords

communicative; competence; education; elementary grades; future teachers;

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1 Introduction

At the current stage of formation and reform of the school education system the leading task is the development of the child’s personality. The recognition of the active role of the student in educational activity leads to a reorientation of the idea of the content of teacher-student interaction (Evans, 2008; Korthagen et al., 2006; Chick et al., 2020). Learning is no longer seen as purely a translation of knowledge by the teacher, but as cooperation, coordinated work of the teacher and students in the process of acquiring knowledge and solving communicative universal learning activities. At the same time, the process of individual formation as an individual occurs gradually and under the influence of very many factors. In this regard, there are higher requirements for the professional level of the future teacher, his professionalism, pedagogical skill, competence, erudition, intelligence, and general culture (Street Jr et al., 2009; Clark et al., 2012).

This is especially important for primary school teachers who prepare students for social adaptation in society. The high level of requirements for elementary school work dictated by today’s needs can be realized only when such an elementary school teacher is a highly qualified, competent specialist in his or her field. Such a specialist must not only have a fundamental competent training himself and possess professional knowledge and skills sufficient for the level of modern psychological and pedagogical science. He should be aware of the goals, objectives, and mission of his professional activity in an integrated system of continuous education, flexibly and instantly respond to changes in the social situation of students’ development, that is, be professionally mobile, pay attention to new psychological and pedagogical realities and consider the requirements for the teaching process, possess new pedagogical technologies. This means that a modern elementary school teacher is a creative subject of professional pedagogical activity (Jamshidifarsani et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2010).

The effectiveness of any activity carried out by a teacher in or out of a lesson is conditioned not only by a high level of knowledge and skills of a teacher, a balanced choice of subject technologies, a developed ability to project activity, but also by his ability to manage emotional contacts with students, creatively build a system of pedagogically expedient actions, constructively resolve contradictions and conflicts arising in the course of such activity.

The modern elementary school teacher can conduct the specified only having a high level of communicative culture. So, the communicative activity of an elementary school teacher is a complex and multifaceted process. Almost entirely the effectiveness of professionals of this profile depends on high-quality, balanced, persuasive communication with elementary school students, which mainly relies on the operation of special vocabulary and terminology, language constructions, speech clichés (Lesyk et al., 2022). In addition, when choosing communication tactics, the elementary school teacher should consider the individual age, psychological and behavioral characteristics of students. Consequently, we can say that the communicative competence of a modern elementary school teacher is one of the components of his/her professional competence (Koester & Lustig, 2015; Sanchez, 2004). That is why particular attention should be paid to issues related to the reorientation of goals, content, and principles of teaching, as well as the creation of favorable pedagogical conditions necessary for the formation of future teachers’ communicative competence during professional preparation for higher education in Ukraine, because communicative competence is part of the structure of professional competence and ensures the quality of future professional activity of a future teacher (Timmermans et al., 2011; Trumper, 2003).
Literature overview

Analysis of scientific and scientific-methodological literature indicates that attention to the problem of the formation of communicative competence among future primary school teachers as one of the most pressing problems of modern higher education is reflected in a number of domestic regulatory documents, European recommendations on language education, and also in the scientific-pedagogical and educational-methodical literature, since the maximum development of the skills of foreign language communication is a leading and promising, but not an easy task that is put forward for teachers of foreign languages.

The works of domestic and foreign researchers are devoted to the study of this concept. Scientists paid attention to the structure, components, specificity of formation of communicative competence, which was understood as the ability to communicate, including foreign language communication in different situations of interaction with other participants of communication; ability to use language system competently, know language and speech norms, choose correct communicative behavior (Aspelin & Jonsson, 2019); a complex integrative whole, providing implementation of competent professional communication (Bulvinska, 2017). According to the state industry standards of higher education the concept “competence” is understood as a necessary and sufficient amount and level of knowledge; experience acquired in a certain type of activity. In the reference scientific literature, the concept “competence” is presented as follows: a number of knowledge and skills, significant for effective professional activity: ability of analysis, awareness of consequences of professional activity, use of information (García-Martínez et al., 2020); quality, connected with sufficient level of knowledge in a certain field (Ordu, 2019). In modern pedagogical literature, the concept of “competence” is defined as an integral quality of personality, which has a manifestation in the general readiness for certain activities and is based on the system of knowledge and experience gained throughout the training (Radojevic et al., 2019); integral characteristic of a person, which determines the ability to solve typical and atypical problem situations that arise in everyday and professional life (Radojevic et al., 2019).

According to the definition of Camus Ferri et al. (2019), communicative competence is understood as the ability to initiate and implement communication in situations of different types of interaction with other participants (communicators); the ability to use the language system correctly and logically, know the language and speech norms, choose the correct communicative behavior. In our study under the communicative competence of future elementary school teachers we will understand the integrative system holistic education of specific language knowledge and skills, value relationships, which determines the ability of the individual to conduct a certain communicative activity and manage it from the allocation of goals, means to evaluate. Researchers also draw attention to the importance of determining the pedagogical foundations needed to organize the process of forming communicative competence in future elementary school teachers Omar (2018) and note that properly structured communication is an effective means of professional and social orientation in future activities. The materials of the Council of Europe distinguish two types of competences in the structure of communicative competence: general and communicative. General competence combines the ability to learn, existential competence, declarative knowledge, abilities, and skills. Communicative competence proper includes linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competences (Common European Framework of reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR), n.d.). Systematizing the views of researchers on the component structure of communicative competence, we highlight the main components of this phenomenon, the formation of which depends on the process of forming communicative competence in general.

So, most scientists tend to identify four components in the structure of this concept: language or grammatical competence, which is responsible for the depth, strength and level of students’ assimilation of grammar norms, lexical composition, rules of spelling, pronunciation, intonation, as well as the system of word formation and sentence construction in a foreign language (Bilyanska, 2019); implies a system of knowledge, abilities and skills to communicate in the most typical situations of learning, professional and cultural spheres of communication, read and use texts of different genres and types with different degrees of understanding their content.

It should be noted that language competence as a part of communicative competence is responsible for language knowledge and contains a pragmatic and organizational component. The organizational component forms grammatical and textual competence, and the pragmatic component forms illocutionary and
Sociolinguistic. Sociolinguistic competence, designed to be responsible for the ability to appropriately and correctly apply and understand the linguistic and speech behavior of different communicators in different contexts in order to perform certain communicative functions (description, message, persuasion, information request, etc.) (Camus Ferri et al., 2019); covers background knowledge (a set of information about the socio-cultural characteristics of the communicative process participants and standards of communication behavior of these participants) accepted in this cultural community (Camus Ferri et al., 2019); discursive competence, producing the ability to combine isolated disparate phrases and word combinations into messages with a logical structure, using various syntactic, morphological, and semantic means; strategic competence, the task of which is to provide the ability to use verbal and nonverbal means in the process of carrying out a communicative act in accordance with the flow of the said process itself (Groff, 2013), linguistic and communicative material necessary to detail sociocultural information, realities, arbitrary and established word combinations and constructions, forms of speech etiquette; ability and skills to possess background knowledge, language and speech material of sociocultural orientation (Radojevic et al., 2019). Some researchers (Radojevic, Uso-Juan) believe that verbal-communicative competence should also be included in the structure of communicative competence (the ability to work out, group, memorize and, if necessary, mention existing knowledge, factual data of the communicative plan) (Radojevic et al., 2019); linguistic competence (the ability to understand, form an unlimited number of linguistic and speech units through understanding linguistic and extralinguistic signs and the rules for their combination (Radojevic et al., 2019); verbal-cognitive competence (the ability to take into account specific contextual relevance in the process of organizing and implementing communication) of cognitive and communicative functions), metacommunicative competence (the ability to master the conceptual apparatus necessary for the analysis and assessment of the means of verbal communication) (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006). In turn, each of these four competencies consists of smaller structural parts: speech or grammatical competence contains vocabulary, morphology, syntax, spelling, punctuation; textual consists of cohesion and rhetorical organization; illocutionary competence combines the ability to express thoughts and emotions with the manipulative, heuristic and creative capabilities of the subject of communication; sociolinguistic competence depicts sensitivity to dialectal and stylistic manifestations of language, naturalness (authentic use of language), understanding of cultural phenomena and rhetorical figures (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006)

Researcher Korniyaka (2018), focusing on the fact that the success of professional activity depends on the level of communicative competence of specialists, offers her own concept of professional competence, into which it is necessary to add the foreign language component. According to her, the reliability and efficiency of specialists’ work depends on how adequately and deeply the professional foreign-language communicative component is integrated into the general structure of their professional competence (Korniyaka, 2018). Modern researchers emphasize that such structural features of communicative competence should be established and formed in the training of future specialists in this profile in higher education institutions. However, the most important for considering the structure of communicative competence, in our opinion, are the pan-European recommendations on language education, which internationally regulate this phenomenon and give a generalized typological structure of the concept (Common European Framework of reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR), n.d.).

Consequently, according to the provisions of the Recommendations, the structure of communicative competence should include linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic components. Each of these components should include certain knowledge, abilities, and skills. The linguistic component contains phonetic, phonological, lexical, syntactic knowledge and skills of a foreign language irrespective of the sociolinguistic meaning of their variants and pragmatic functions of their realization (Common European Framework of reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR), n.d.). The sociolinguistic component is responsible for socio-cultural conditions of language use and covers the process of communication between representatives of different cultures (Common European Framework of reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR), n.d.). The pragmatic component is connected with the functional use of linguistic means, implementation of communicative acts, discursive knowledge, etc. Thus, based on the data of scientific intelligence, lack of unity in the views of researchers and requirements for specialists, it became clear the need to study the concept of communicative competence, component structure and pedagogical foundations of its formation in modern conditions of training of future elementary school teachers in institutions of higher education in Ukraine.
2 Materials and Methods

The study was conducted during April-September 2021. The following methods were used in the study: theoretical: study, analysis, systematization, and synthesis of scientific and pedagogical, psychological, and methodological literature on the problem under study; empirical: diagnostic assessment using the methods of questioning, monitoring and pedagogical experiment. The experimental base of the study was the leading pedagogical universities from different regions of Ukraine. In the pilot experimental survey involved 100 students at these universities’ specialties “Primary Education”, “Pre-school Education”. The participants were asked to answer the questionnaire on the basis of anonymity in order to obtain the most accurate and truthful results of the answers.

3 Results and Discussions

As a result of the questionnaire and based on the analysis of the participants' answers, certain generalizations were made, namely:

1. The process of forming communicative competence of future elementary school teachers while learning in the universities should be considered as a holistic model-system, which should be distinguished by the unity of goals, objectives, principles, pedagogical conditions, methods and means of the developed model implementation. Such a process should be considered as a specially organized educational activity, in the course of which educational environment, approaches, methods and means of teaching communication make it a tool to improve the quality of professional training in general and language training in particular. In general, communicative competence of an elementary school teacher can be characterized as a certain level of formation of personal and professional experience of interaction with students, abilities, and social status, necessary for successful functioning in the professional environment and society.

2. Among the most important communicative qualities of the teacher are: the ability to communicate with students, openness to communication, the ability to effectively resolve conflict, fluency in verbal and nonverbal means of communication, logical and clear speech, tactfulness, sense of humor, politeness, etc. In addition, based on the answers of the participants in the experiment, a list of skills and abilities that an elementary school teacher should possess was formed. Among them are the following: correct perception and assessment of the communication situation, the ability to behave correctly with people; general assessment of a person as a person, usually formed after the first impression; assessment of individual personality traits, motives and intentions; assessment of the relationship between behavior and the inner world of a person; the ability to understand the meaning of gestures, facial expressions and pantomime; a person's knowledge of himself; assessment of their knowledge, abilities, character and other traits; the ability to correctly assess the situation of communication: observe the situation, choose the most informative signs and pay attention to them; correctly perceive and evaluate the socio-psychological content of the situation that has arisen. In accordance with the skills and abilities that must be possessed by an elementary school teacher, we can identify the criteria for the development of communicative competence, which should correspond to the main functions of professional activity of the teacher and give the opportunity to conduct a verbal and nonverbal exchange of information, choose the strategy, tactics, and techniques of interaction with students joint activities to achieve educational, training, and educational goals; identify themselves with the interlocutor, treat him with empathy.

3. Formation of communicative competence in elementary school teachers is a complex and comprehensive process aimed at activating internal resources and professionally significant communicative qualities that contribute to the accumulation, application and enrichment of knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary and sufficient for the practical use of language in future situations. This is evidenced by the results listed in Table 1.
Table 1
Survey data on students’ understanding of the factors on which the communicative competence of a future elementary school teacher is based

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, the communicative competence of an elementary school teacher is based on the following factors:</th>
<th>Number of answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>communicative skills</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>practical use of language</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional communication</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication with participants of educational process</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a set of knowledge, skills, and abilities to conduct communication</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: author’s development

In addition, the main sources of acquisition of communicative competence are cultural and socio-cultural experience, knowledge of the language of communication, experience of interpersonal interaction and interpersonal communication in business, everyday and ceremonial spheres; knowledge, general erudition, and scientific methods of teaching communication. On the basis of the designated sources is formed a complex set of communicative knowledge and skills that constitute the communicative competence of the individual.

4. The most important components of communicative competence of a future elementary school teacher are linguistic knowledge, i.e., linguistic competence, communicative skills, i.e., schematically the structure of communicative competence can be as follows:

![Figure 1. Structure of communicative competence of a future elementary school teacher](image)

Linguistic competence implies mastery of basic linguistic categories, meaning mastery of the proper level of orthographic, phonetic, lexical, and grammatical aspects of language, as well as the ability to operate linguistic means for the construction of logical statements. Linguistic competence consists of theoretical knowledge of the foreign language system and has phonetic, lexical, and grammatical aspects. A generalized list of basic knowledge further. Phonetic component: adequate and correct use (perception and production) of phonetic and phonological units in accordance with the context of communication; intonation. Lexical component: identification of lexical units in reading and listening; production of lexical units in oral and written communication according to the specified topic. Grammatical component: knowledge of spelling and grammatical norms; perceive and produce oral and written texts on general and professional topics.
The formation of the system of linguistic knowledge as the basis of linguistic competence becomes the basis for the formation of speech skills, and therefore, speech competence. Language skills also mean cognitive actions aimed at solving specific communicative tasks on the basis of the established knowledge of language activity. So, the basis of language competence of future teachers of primary classes are such foreign language skills: skills related to the actual subject of speech: description, argumentation, characterization, storytelling, explanation, summary, instruction; ability to conduct in oral/written speech appropriate communicative intentions in accordance with the goals and conditions of communicative interaction; the ability, on the basis of the functions and purposes of the speech genre: to formulate the goals of communication; to determine the main and additional purpose of communication according to a particular speech genre; skills related to the properties of language and the language means used; listening skills: understanding and responding to what the interlocutor is saying, giving a response and an adequate evaluation; ability to make a general analysis of the content, search, and retrieval of necessary information; dialogical and monological skills.

A generalized list of language skills is given in characterization, telling, explaining, summarizing, and giving instructions: ability to conduct in oral/written speech appropriate communicative intentions in accordance with the goals and conditions of communicative interaction; the ability, on the basis of the functions and purposes of the speech genre: to formulate the purposes of communication; to determine the main and additional purpose of communication according to a particular speech genre; the skills related to the properties of language and the language tools used; the skill of listening: to understand the statements of the interlocutor, to respond to them, give a response and an adequate assessment; the ability to make a general analysis of the content, to search for and retrieve necessary information; dialogical and monological skills. A generalized list of language skills on the components of speech competence is given in Tables 2-4.

Table 2

Components of speech competence in the structure of communicative competence of a future elementary school teacher

- The ability to understand written (printed) texts;
- The ability to master effective professional reading techniques in order to;
- The ability to identify the main idea and subject matter in texts of professional genres;
- The ability to single out key words and the information containing the main content;
- The ability to make cause-and-effect connections and find the necessary detailed information in texts.
- The ability to find and analyze intercultural phenomena in texts

Source: author’s development

Table 3

Components of speech competence in the structure of communicative competence of a future elementary school teacher

- Ability to recognize and understand speech that sounds, and to apply special concepts during communication;
- Skills related to the perception and analysis of professional information, mastering which is necessary for the organization of the educational process.

Source: author’s development

Table 4  
Components of speech competence in the structure of communicative competence of a future elementary school teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components of speech competence</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in speaking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The ability to produce a monologue and engage in dialogue;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The ability to clearly express their views, using words and expressions of professional topics according to the situation of communication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: author’s development

The intercultural aspect of communication becomes the basis of socio-cultural competence, the content of which is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5  
Components of socio-cultural competence in the structure of communicative competence of a future elementary school teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociocultural competence</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>country and language study</td>
<td>sociolinguistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The ability to perceive and produce information reflecting the specific features of the cultural life of the country where the learning process takes place;</td>
<td>the ability to perceive and reproduce speech activities in accordance with the social conditions of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The ability to apply linguistic and speech units in different communicative situations in accordance with the specific organization of communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: author’s development

Consequently, due to the component structure of communicative competence and peculiarities of professional specificity of future elementary school teachers, the topics of training sessions should cover the general (basic) block and the block due to the gradual introduction to the future professional sphere. Linguistic, speech and communicative material should be selected considering the context and directed to further practical application. In addition, attention should be focused on the gradual expansion of the volume of professional vocabulary and terminological units of the future specialty, thanks to which it will be possible to become a better and more effective formation of professional and communicative skills and abilities.

According to the scientific community, the process of forming communicative competence of future elementary school teachers should be understood as a holistic system model, defined by a competent combination of goals, objectives, methods and means. Among particular importance are the conditions and principles of the organization of this process. In general, communicative competence of an elementary school teacher can be described as a certain level of formation of personal and professional experience of interaction with students, abilities, and social status necessary for successful functioning in the professional environment and society.

In accordance with the skills and abilities that must be possessed by an elementary school teacher, we can identify the criteria for the development of communicative competence, which should correspond to the main functions of the professional activity of the teacher and allow for verbal and nonverbal exchange of information, choose strategies, tactics, and techniques for interaction with students joint activities to achieve educational, training, and educational goals; identify themselves with the interlocutor, treat them with empathy. In view of the undoubted relevance of the phenomenon under study, the primary task of higher education is the choice of methods of formation of communicative competence in future teachers. However, the influence of certain didactic circumstances, the educational environment should be considered. Consequently, a combination and synthesis of basic key (traditional) and additional (innovative) teaching methods will be considered appropriate.
4 Conclusion

Thus, communicative competence is a fundamental component of the professional competence of a primary school teacher. It contains a high level of speech development, which allows the teacher in the process of communication to freely and freely perceive, understand and transmit information; the ability to come into contact with people, taking into account their age, socio-cultural, status characteristics; skill of active listening, building feedback; possession of the communication situation, flexibility, willingness to take initiative in communication or transfer it to the interlocutor; understanding of non-verbal means of communication; the ability to correctly assess the interlocutor as a person and, in accordance with this, choose their own communication strategy; the ability to behave adequately and in accordance with the situation and use its specifics to achieve their own communication goals, to promote a positive perception of the interlocutor.

Based on the analysis of the answers of the participants of the survey to determine the pedagogical foundations for the formation of communicative competence, we note that the implementation of this process should be based on the formation of the basic components of communicative competence. We can make certain generalizations that the structure of communicative competence of future teachers of linguistic competence, which has a manifestation in a number of established language knowledge, speech competence, which provides the formation of language skills, socio-cultural competence, which contains the basics of socio-cultural knowledge. The formation of these components will allow the future specialists to conduct further professional activity at a high level. In addition, we can also talk about motivational component, which, besides motivation itself, also contains value and professionally significant personal qualities, educational and strategic competence, which are formed in parallel with the main components. We believe that increasing the level of communicative competence of elementary school teachers is one of the most important tasks of modern schools, because the teacher is a translator of knowledge, tutor the formation of general cultural and professional competencies of students.

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