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## FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AS A COMPONENT OF PERSONNEL TRAINING IN CORPORATE EDUCATION

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### *Abstract*

The article deals with fundamental issues of forming foreign language competence in the system of corporate education, which will improve the quality of professional training. The importance of developing foreign language competence of highly qualified personnel working in many areas of the economy and socio-cultural sphere where solving professional problems is mediated by instrumental function of a foreign language has been emphasized in the conclusion. The authors prove that foreign language competence, which is now called one of the most important competencies of a specialist, should become one of the main goals of vocational education, a tool for solving professional problems for specialists working in many areas of the economy and socio-cultural sphere. They attempt to create a goal and content component of the model of foreign language teaching in the system of corporate vocational education, integrating professional and language training by creating content and procedure environment modelling situations in which professional tasks are mediated by instrumental function of a foreign language.

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## **1. Introduction**

Turning to the recent years, graduates of educational institutions are not considered to be specialists in a certain field but as human resources. Large company and enterprise executives believe highly qualified specialists can only be trained during their professional work. Thus, training employees is to be a necessary function of a company. This process of intra-industrial training called corporate education has aims, objectives, functions, technologies and teaching content.

However, corporativity is a broader concept which is considered to be a principle determining the integrity of the quality improvement process, continuity, advanced nature, diversification and organization of scientific and industrial fields of modern specialist training (Malushko et al., 2016; Sorokina-Ispolatova, 2007).

## **2. Problem Statement**

The purpose of corporate education and of the current study is to form competencies, qualification standards, positions or professional activities, as well as the enterprise specifics based on the requirements of the speciality. It is no longer a secret that knowledge and experience of personnel are the most valuable business resources that require close attention and talented management. Solving the problems of personnel evaluation and improvement corporate education becomes not only a mean of professional development but also a basis for business development, managerial experience accumulation creating unique corporate culture. In this context the need to create various corporate structures aimed at the market regulation of educational services and knowledge consolidation becomes obvious (Loktyushina, 2010; Malushko et al., 2017).

## **3. Research Questions**

A number of researchers believe that the corporate education process is to be started from universities and consider it as future specialists professional training process in educational institutions as well as their further competence retraining and improvement at the enterprise through subjects multidimensional interaction, science and production of a single industry.

Thus, corporate education should be considered as a component of continuing education which starts from the university period. It is at university where the basis of professional readiness of the future specialist to adapt to modern production conditions is established, and forming professional and special competencies is becoming a key to its success (Korobova et al., 2017). Among general cultural competencies which must be formed in the process of specialists training at university, there is a competence that is formulated in the standard as "the ability to communicate orally and in writing in Russian and foreign languages to solve problems of interpersonal and intercultural interaction." It is obvious that knowledge of a foreign language is not supposed to solve professional problems since this competence is in the list of general cultural competencies and not among professional and special competencies. Meanwhile, Russia is expanding its presence in the international economic and social structures and knowledge of foreign languages is becoming a crucial factor not only of science and culture but also of the national economy and international industrial relations. In addition to that,

knowledge of foreign languages has become a necessary condition of professional career success and personal life.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

A modern specialist must be able to react quickly to changes in the market situation, cooperate and negotiate with partners. That is impossible without possessing foreign language skills as a tool for solving professional problems. Thus, foreign language competence should be the goal and result of professional education, a tool for solving professional problems for specialists working in many areas of the economy and socio-cultural sphere. Taking into consideration the idea of continuing education which implies a focus on the modern flexible unfinished educational trajectory of a person, the process of corporate education should be built based on formal, non-formal and informal education (Masalimova, 2012). Formal education is considered to be an education which is available to students in different types of educational institutions to obtain a certain type of document. The organization of informal education depends on the activity of an individual in the cultural and educational field. Non-formal education is carried out in the form of self-education, for example through the Internet, online courses, training programs of additional professional education; staff training in the workplace, etc. Therefore, foreign language training in the corporate education system should include characteristics of all types of models of formal, non-formal and informal education of future professionals.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The theory and methodology of higher education have accumulated considerable experience in the study of the professional development of a specialist including language education.

A large group of studies on theory and methodology of foreign languages teaching in the system of vocational education are presented by the works of Berdichevskiy (1989), Galskova and Gez (2004), Mirolyubov (2002), Safonova (2011) etc. Language education in higher school is aimed to create conditions for foreign culture studies (E. Passov), to develop the ability of effective performing certain functions in different situations using the language under study (T. Astafurova), the ability to carry out communication with different linguacology and study it (N. Galskova, I. Bim), to educate a person who knows the rights and duties, and cognitive and affective development (O. Polyakov), to conduct communication based on the features of national mentality of communicants taking into account emotional, national peculiarities of characters (S. Ter-Minasova).

A number of thesis have been published on the problem of forming professional competence through language education, identifying approaches to goal setting and selection of the content of language education (by O. Vernikov, I. Galimzyanov, I. Ignatenko, M. Ilyazova, A. Krupchenko, I. Leushina, N. Maltseva, N. Popova, N. Sakharov, L. Sukhov, I. Tsaturova, N. Yankina).

However different results of research in the field of didactics of higher education and methods of foreign languages learning cannot be always effectively used in the system of corporate education designed to ensure the readiness of a specialist to work in global manufacturing systems. In higher educational institutions the traditional model of language education based on "professional orientation" is

still being implemented which is expressed in using texts with professional themes, studying appropriate vocabulary. Foreign language as a tool for solving professional problems, innovation and project activities, work with international databases and relevant experts is not discussed.

The main reason for the obvious difficulties in specialists training for effective foreign language communication in professional fields is the lack of unity in studies language experience in specialists' professional socialization.

It should be noted that in recent years some attempts have been made to combine the subject area of the profession under study and the simultaneous formation of the ability to present this field by means of the foreign language. We are talking about the approach which has been called CLIL content language integrated learning" and the prototype of which was the approach "Foreign language for special purposes (Coyle, 2008).

The basic concepts of "language" and "integration" are fundamental to the understanding of this term and learning using CLIL is based on four "C": content, communication, cognition and culture which are in continuous connection with each other. CLIL is conventionally divided into hard CLIL and soft CLIL. Hard CLIL means that any subject can be taught in a foreign language (if only it is L2 for learners) (Coyle, 2008). Mostly, foreign language teachers in educational institutions use soft CLIL. Their task is to teach a foreign language using content and materials from other subject areas.

It is difficult to overestimate the place and role of foreign language element at each level of education. "Foreign language" is the basic subject in the curriculum of primary, secondary and higher education, but in its teaching professional area is not always presented. However, one of the most important aspects of teaching a foreign language is goal setting. Based on this attitude, modern science has acknowledged the effectiveness and expediency of teaching "language for special purposes" - ESP. Teaching a foreign language involves updating the content of language education taking into account the professional and personality-oriented approach, strengthening the communicative orientation of language education, ensuring differentiation and individualization in teaching, the introduction of modern pedagogical technologies, as in a number of professions, language proficiency has become a necessary part of vocational training (Matvienko, 2014).

Accordingly, in order to prepare a highly qualified specialist in the system of corporate education, it is necessary not only to teach language as a general subject but also significantly increase the share of disciplines taught in a foreign language, which entails a lot of problems. They are poor knowledge of a foreign language received at school and the lack of teaching staff to carry out this kind of activity and the inefficiency of the foreign language teaching process in institutions as well as the inconsistency of educational standards with the requirements of employers.

Teaching a number of disciplines in a language allows to include a foreign language in the structure of professional activity which will help a specialist of a certain area to create an image of this activity which is presented with the help of a foreign language taking into account the specific mentality.

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. Model of professional activity with included language experience

The accumulated scientific potential in the field of foreign language education and personal experience of teaching a foreign language in corporate structures allow to formulate the initial position of the study, that is changing goals and content of corporate education with focusing on building a multidimensional model of professional activity with language experience included. Such a model of professional activity reflects its nature in terms of global information society when information support of managing the professional task, communicating with experts and databases are necessary conditions for professional activity.

The main idea of the proposed concept is that professional experience which includes a subsystem of linguistic behavior in a professional field, is developed through sequential solution of the system of professional and communicative task-situations which include such tasks as: 1) establishing understanding with partners in terms of interpreting arising professional issues ("task on understanding"); 2) project development, requiring the coordination of economic interests and technological capabilities of partners ("task on design"); 3) mastering new technologies and principles of production in the form of training support from one of the partners ("the task on perception and transfer of experience"); 4) discussing criteria and procedures for assessing the effectiveness of production and quality of the product, its marketing parameters ("the task on identifying the marketing characteristics of the product"); 5) identifying and assessing cultural and business characteristics of partners, developing mutually acceptable standards of cooperation ("the task on dialogue of cultures").

Integrating foreign language experience into the structure of professional activity is achieved by assimilating professional and personal meanings of possessing foreign language communicative competence, the indicative basis for implementing various types of professional and communicative activities, the experience of this implementing in the process of solving a sequence of complex professional and communicative tasks. Foreign language competence integrated into the structure of professional activity is a fundamentally new type of competence, the essence of which is revealed in solving the above professional and language tasks.

1. The first task designated by us as "the task on understanding", is associated with establishing information and psychological understanding with partners in terms of interpretation of the professional problem. In this situation, the specialist is required not only communicative but also the actual professional competence: the ability to express the essence, scope and class of the problem, to find analogues of its manifestations in the organizational structures of the company represented by partners. It is also necessary to give your statements an adequate speech form in accordance with the accepted professional terminology, to simulate the process of understanding and possible interpretations.
2. The second task, designated as "the task on design" is associated with implementing the design, planning procedures, coordinating work regulations and resources, economic interests and technological capabilities of partners. Here a specialist must use professional speech constructions and definitions, reflect and formulate technical ideas. It is

impossible without professional knowledge expressed in the language. At the same time, he must actualize in his mind the traditions and norms of design activities adopted by his partners.

3. The third task is the task of perception and developing new technologies and principles of production in the form of training support from one of the partners. The largest modern corporations see their most important organizational and managerial function in training their employees according to the achievements of the world experience. Of course, it is impossible to implement this function without proficiency in international languages. It is not a matter of superficial or formal understanding but the ability to transform meaningful information into practical activity.
4. The fourth task, according to our model, is related to coordinating criteria and procedures for assessing the efficiency of production and the quality of the product, its marketing parameters ("the task on identifying product marketing characteristics"), in short, here the partners agree on the best conditions for implementing the jointly produced product. Only a specialist can act as a real expert of quality and it is now required to find the most convincing and effective ways to express verbally the market characteristics of the product. And not only to sell it but also to attract investment for its manufacturing.
5. And finally, the fifth task included in the basic communicative situations is the task on identifying and assessing cultural and business characteristics of partners, developing mutually acceptable norms of cooperation ("the task of the dialogue of cultures"). The practice of cooperation between specialists shows the importance of their cultural adaptation. The solution to this problem requires the highest level of language proficiency.

## **6.2. Possibility of realizing the presented model in the system of corporate education**

Guided by the tasks in the structure of the presented model, it can be assumed that this model can be implemented in a relatively recently appeared in the educational sphere a new type of university - electronic corporate university, as a form of corporate education. The main reason for creating corporate universities was the intention to combine the theoretical foundations of professional training with the needs of the business. The changes that began in Russia in the early 90s were so profound that they put forward fundamentally new requirements for business education. Other reasons that contributed to the renovation of the Russian system of vocational education were: the transition to the market economy, which caused an urgent need to change outdated methods of doing business, the lack of managerial and professional skills of the workforce of the 90s, the growing demand for a new type of specialists (Mechitov & Moshkovich, 2004).

The educational process at the corporate university includes a complex of information and communication technologies of software and technical, organizational and methodological nature. Foreign language teaching is becoming an integral part of a university program and involves organizing the teaching process based on the integration of foreign language experience in the structure of professional activity and has the form of group or individual training in line with special programs and

courses; testing students' knowledge; foreign language training in the form of various online courses, video conferences and forums in a foreign language, etc.

Also, within the framework of industry orientation, and taking into account the typological characteristics of formal, informal and non-formal education, the proposed model can be implemented as a component of corporate formal, informal and non-formal education. There are already the first attempts to implement this model of foreign language training in the system of corporate education of technical specialists, and its application for training employees of various industries, for example, the oil and gas industry. Short-term compulsory training of employees is carried out both at the enterprise and in specialized educational institutions and is based on solving problems specific to a particular organization with the involvement of internal or external teachers. Depending on peculiarities of the professional environment, the model is supplemented by the whole system of educational, certification and certification activities, among which a significant place is given to the integration of a foreign language into the professional environment using business strategies of foreign language communication. These are only the first steps towards the modernization of corporate education. Basically, such a system is in the process of testing in line with theoretical developments and is an actual topic for discussions and seminars.

### **6.3. Status and prospects of development of corporate education in the Volgograd region**

In Volgograd region, there are many problems in the field of vocational education, among which one of the most crucial is the mismatch of the structure of vocational education to the needs of the regional labour market. More than half of students in vocational educational institutions are university students, while there is a sharp shortage of skilled workers and employees with secondary technical education, able to work with modern technologies. Even the small number of workers and employees, who graduate from secondary technical institutions of Volgograd and Volgograd region, do not demonstrate high-quality training. Among the educational programs of such institutions, there is only a small number of programs that provide applied qualifications. Students who seem to get fundamental knowledge in a particular subject area are not qualified enough to work with complex technologies. Correspondence and part-time (evening) form do not solve these problems. Besides, in the region, there is a low level of participation of the adult population in additional vocational education. The reason for this fact is a lack of a coherent system of continuing education. A special place among the unsolved problems is occupied by the almost complete absence of programs aimed at foreign language training of qualified personnel. All these problems can be solved by forming an integrated system of corporate education, the purpose of which is to adapt the staff to the working process and obtain a set of professional skills and competencies necessary to improve their professional level.

At the same time, there are enterprises in the region that pay considerable attention to the continuous process of retraining existing personnel and training new ones. Among them FGAU "National medical research center" Interdisciplinary scientific and technical complex "Microsurgery" of "Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation (Volgograd branch); JSC "CAUSTIC" Volgograd; Sberbank Corporate University ("Sberbank of Russia»); Volzhsky pipe plant (VTZ), RUSHYDRO Corporate hydropower University (Branch of JSC "RusHydro" - "Volga hydroelectric power station" etc. These

companies are closely associated with universities, colleges, vocational schools of Volgograd and other regions of Russia. As a rule, they provide the organization of introductory, production and pre-diploma practice according to the specification of an enterprise, providing students with bases for writing term papers and theses. Among other areas of cooperation, it should be also noted joint events in the form of meetings and round tables, in which issues of cooperation development are discussed, and the provision of opportunities for teachers of educational institutions to undergo training at the enterprise, to get acquainted with technologies and equipment.

However, as surveys show, only Volzhsky pipe plant (VTZ), a part of the Pipe Metallurgical Company (TMK) has organized a special training course on the basis of the Volga Polytechnic Institute (branch) VSTU "Business and technical English". The educational process is organized in the way that learners will be able to study a foreign language and to get skills of free reading technical literature in the foreign language. Unfortunately, it should be noted that not always foreign language training in such courses is effective, because often foreign language teachers not being specialists in a particular production area, have difficulties in presenting this area by means of a foreign language, as a result, the educational process is not filled with situational and communicative content necessary to achieve the desired result. The proposed model of five professional language tasks can help to solve this problem.

## 7. Conclusion

The study proves that foreign language competence which is now called by the vast majority of employers among the most important competencies of a specialist should become one of the main goals of vocational education, a tool for solving professional problems for specialists working in many areas of the economy and socio-cultural sphere.

The obtained data prove the urgent need to build a system of corporate education in Volgograd, aimed at forming professional competencies, including a foreign language competence that will help to create a new generation of professionals who meet the requirements of the highest qualification in the world.

In our study we attempt to create a goal and content component of the model of foreign language teaching in the system of corporate vocational education, integrating professional and language training by creating content and procedure environment modelling situations in which professional tasks are mediated by instrumental function of a foreign language.

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