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**STRUCTURE OF COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE OF
TEACHERS OF PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

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Abstract

In modern socio-economic and political conditions of uncertainty, the problem of communicative competence is relevant for specialists of any profile. This competence is one of the key competencies of a modern specialist. The studies conducted by various authors around the world showed that in the professional activities of a teacher, communicative competence ensures the success of teaching and educating students, the formation of their communicative competence, satisfaction and success in fulfilling professional tasks. However, the communicative competence of teachers of preschool education remains little studied. Given the current trends of unpredictability and uncertainty in the development of structural components of society in general and education in particular, the issues of studying the structure of a communicative competence of teachers of preschool educational institutions gain special importance. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze scientific ideas on the structure of the communicative competence of teachers of preschool educational institutions. The main approaches to the conceptualization of this competence are considered: linguistic and socio-psychological. The authors point out that for teachers of preschool educational institutions the most relevant is the socio-psychological approach to understanding the communicative competence. They consider different models of the structure of the communicative competence in interpersonal communication and the criteria for its evaluation. The paper states that there are different grounds to analyze the structure of the communicative competence. It provides the models of the communicative competence, which are based on the ideas of situational, activity and socio-psychological approaches.

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Keywords: Communicative competence, structure, components of communicative competence



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1. Introduction

The processes of globalization, economic and technological changes around the world have led to changes in the requirements to specialists. The need to train a new generation of specialists in the conditions of uncertainty poses new challenges for continuous professional education. The increasing pace of scientific and technological development contributed to a new way of teaching and a new way of thinking. This approach is based on the formation of competencies, but not on the transfer of knowledge, which requires continuous expansion.

Competency-based approach in education is well known worldwide (Medintseva, 2012). It is aimed at developing basic competencies among students, which then allow independently acquiring the knowledge necessary for fulfilling their professional duties.

The competency-based approach in the system of professional education refers to a system that allows quite objectively assessing the suitability of each individual applicant for future activities. Besides, the competency-based approach provides clear criteria for the quality of this activity, thus allowing future employees to carry out targeted training to obtain the necessary certificate and receive recognition in this field.

Defining our position, following Zimnyaya (2003), we consider competence as an integral quality of a person, as a potential activity, readiness and desire for a certain type of activity (Vasilyeva & Nikitina, 2018; Zimnyaya, 2003). The formation of a competence is understood as the formation of a certain quality of a person, knowledge of the ways to perform the activity and the ability to perform it.

A lot of attention in the competency-based approach is paid to the definition of key competencies of the specialists of the future. They are designed to connect practice and education, to provide the necessary knowledge, skills and relationships that a person needs to function successfully in a rapidly changing world. They allow a person living and working adequately.

The communicative competence of a specialist is among the key competencies (Makhmetova, 2017). Together with leading researchers we consider it the main component of the professional qualification competence of a modern specialist (Filatova, 2012; Vasilyeva & Nikitina, 2017; Zimnyaya, 2004). The importance of this component in the training of future professionals is noted by many researchers around the world.

Brown (2015) points out that the degree of formation of the communicative competence affects the productivity of communication, the effectiveness of professional achievements, the process of self-realization, life self-determination, and socialization in general. It was found empirically that certain aspects of the competence of interpersonal communication make it possible to predict the leadership behavior of teachers (Filatova, 2012). Researchers propose different models for the formation of the communicative competence (Bissenbayeva et al., 2013, Nikitina, 2019; Popescu-Mitroi et al., 2015). Lopez et al. (2019) prove that communicative competencies are the intersection point of student requirements during training and labor market requirements. Poolsawad et al. (2015) devoted their work to the problem of qualitative feedback on the formation of the communicative competence in English among Thai schoolchildren.

The communicative competence plays a special role in the work of a teacher. It is the basis of the teacher's successful communication with students, parents and other participants in the educational process.

The high level of development of the communicative competence of the teacher is a condition for the formation of this competence among students. This feature is most pronounced in the system of preschool and primary school education. For preschoolers and younger schoolchildren, the teacher acts as an incontestable authority and a role model. However, there are very few studies of the communicative competence of teachers of preschool educational institutions in Russia. This is partly due to the lack of tools to measure it. This complex problem requires a clear understanding of the structure, diagnostic criteria and indicators of the level of development of the communicative competence.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to analyze the structure of the communicative competence of teachers of preschool educational institutions.

To achieve this purpose, we analyzed the approaches to the study of the communicative competence in modern studies.

2. Problem Statement

The communicative competence is a complex phenomenon. It includes such aspects as behavior, theoretical assumptions, relevance to context, or achievement of goals. Different authors conceptualize the communicative competence in different ways. The scientific literature demonstrates repeated attempts to describe the variety of definitions of the communicative competence (Lopez et al., 2019; Popescu-Mitroi et al., 2015).

The term “communicative competence” was considered in the studies of the American linguist Chomsky (1972) in connection with the study of linguistic competence.

Researchers from Romania note that the concept of the communicative competence is considered from at least two perspectives: linguistic and psychosocial (Popescu-Mitroi et al., 2015).

In the first case, this refers to the ability to communicate effectively in a certain language. Moreover, the ability to communicate in English is most often studied. This is due to the fact that English is the main language of global communication (Poolsawad et al., 2015). The communicative competence implies the ability to correctly use and interpret English depending on the context, to express appropriate behavior in the cultural context of communication.

In the second case, this concerns the ability to communicate, manage and manipulate people. In this case it is important to understand that the communication process itself is a complex phenomenon. Besides, it has recently undergone significant transformations related to technological development. As a result, researchers address the study of various types of the communicative psychosocial competence. In particular, researchers study the communicative competence in interpersonal communication and within the information and communication competence (Yahupov & Kyva, 2019).

A logical continuation of wider and extensive scientific research in the study of the communicative competence was the developments of Canale and Swain (1980), which continued to work on the development of the theory of communicative competence. The scientists identified 4 main types of the competence, which form communication in cooperation with the system of knowledge and skills: grammatical competence; sociolinguistic competence; discourse competence and strategic competence.

Researchers rely on social psychology in the study of the communicative competence within interpersonal communication. In particular, there are three levels of such communication: 1) “I-this” –

communication without physical contact (for example, communication with a waiter). Communication in this case takes place at the level of social roles; 2) “I-You” is communication with people without accepting their uniqueness and significance. At this level, the social role of another person is not important. But a person is open to communication. An example is a fellow traveler on a train; 3) “I-You” – is the level of communication where another person acts as a subject with his needs and desires. This is mutual, close communication between people.

Communication of a teacher in his professional activity takes place at the third level. Only in this case it is possible to achieve the maximum educational effect. The studies showed that interaction with all participants in the educational process is important for fulfilling the professional duties of a teacher. In particular, Doppenberg et al. (2013) showed that communication and cooperation of primary school teachers positively affect the learning outcomes of their students.

Kuzmina (1985) identifies the groups of competencies that make up the professional competence of a teacher. At the same time, considering the complex of communicative competencies, the author clarifies that each of them is necessary to establish contact with students and their parents, to transfer their own pedagogical experience to other teachers.

The communication competence in interpersonal communication plays the most important role in professional activities of teachers of preschool educational institutions. Therefore, in our study the communicative competence is understood as the integrative quality of the personality, which ensures the adequacy of the interaction of participants in the educational process, mediated by language and exposing the general and specific at the subject-object level and subject-subject relations (Vasilyeva & Nikitina, 2017).

Based on this definition it is possible to explain why and how important it is to choose the communicative competence of teachers of preschool education as the operational and methodological basis of analysis to solve the issues of child-rearing practices.

First, this definition reflects the dynamics of interaction between subjects, which should be aimed at solving a specific task – to achieve mutual understanding. Second, the inclusion of culture in communication aims at respectful attitude and equal dialogue between the participants in the educational process. Third, this definition denotes the position of an individual, his identification and self-identification in relation to the subject of communication. The latter indicates that the issues of linguistic and cultural education are critical in the pedagogical environment and put forward the “language-culture-personality” triunity as the basis of the communicative competence.

It is natural that the problem of this study may be the identification of the structure of the communicative competence of teachers of preschool educational institutions in the context of modern requirements of the professional standard “Teacher (pedagogical activity in preschool, primary general, secondary general, general education)” on the one hand, and constantly changing aspects of the uncertainty of development of education in general and preschool and vocational education in particular on the other hand. Besides, the identification of the structure of the communicative competence, the specificity of its content, and its mastery by specialists in the future, will make teachers of preschool educational institutions competent in solving most professional tasks.

3. Research Questions

- 3.1.** What is the structure of the communicative competence of teachers of preschool educational institutions in the context of modern aspects of uncertainty of the development of society in general and professional and preschool education in particular?

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to identify the structural components of both the professional competence and the structure of the communicative competence, as well as its description on the basis of the analysis of scientific research on the problem of studying the communicative competence. This may serve as a starting point in organizing studies of the communicative competence of teachers of preschool education. The obtained data may be used to describe the criteria to measure the communicative competence and choose the necessary research methods.

5. Research Methods

This paper presents a particular research interest with the aim to study and highlight the structure of the communicative competence of teachers of preschool educational institutions. This is due to the fact that to date this area remains insufficiently studied.

To achieve the purpose of the study, the following methods were used: methods for analyzing the obtained data (analysis of scientific literature and the regulatory framework for professional and preschool education); diagnostic methods of data collection (conversation, questionnaire).

The study of the structure of the communicative competence of teachers of preschool educational institutions will make it possible to determine the main directions in the development of professional competencies taking into account requests and the level of preparation necessary to tackle professional problems.

6. Findings

The issue of determining the structure of the communicative competence is important for researchers. By highlighting the relevant components it is possible to operationalize and study the complex phenomenon based on empirical data.

In terms of describing the structure of the communicative competence, numerous foreign studies rely on the ideas provided by Spitzberg and Cupach (2012). The authors believed that the communicative competence is a construct of cognitive, affective and behavioral elements. From this perspective, it requires knowledge of effective and appropriate interpersonal communication, motivation to engage in social interaction, metacognitive communicative skills, and interpersonal communication skills necessary for interactive actions to be perceived as effective and adequate.

Russia implements the Order of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Russian Federation of No. 544n October 18, 2013 "On the introduction of the professional standard "Teacher (pedagogical activity in preschool, primary general, secondary general, general education) (tutor,

educator)” (The Order of the Ministry of Labor..., 2021). It defines the labor functions of teachers, which make it possible to highlight knowledge, skills and actions that teachers of preschool education shall possess to perform professional activities. It should be noted that the professional standard specifies skills, knowledge and actions that relate to the communicative competence of a teacher. In particular, the following skills are indicated: ability to communicate with children, recognize their dignity, understand and accept them; analyze the actual state of affairs in a training group, maintain a business-friendly atmosphere in a group of children; help children in conflict situations; build partnerships relations with parents (legal representatives) of children of early and preschool age to solve educational problems, use methods and means for their psychological and pedagogical education. Among the knowledge that the teacher of preschool education needs the following is noted: knowledge of the basics of multicultural education, patterns of behavior in social networks; basic principles of the activity approach. Actions within the structure of the communicative competence include the following actions indicated in the professional standard of a teacher of a preschool institution: design situations and events that develop the emotional and value sphere of a child; develop tolerance and behavioral skills in a changing multicultural environment; participate in the creation of a safe and psychologically comfortable educational environment; create a positive psychological climate in a group and conditions for friendly relations between children, including those belonging to different national-cultural, religious communities and social strata, as well as with various (including limited) health needs.

The scientific literature also presents authors' views on the structure of the communicative competence. Nikitina (2019) believes that the professional communicative competence consists of three blocks: basic communicative competence is responsible for a person's ability to successfully communicate in standard situations; professionally oriented communicative competence is responsible for the ability to successfully communicate in professional situations helping to carry out basic professional activities; professional and specialized communicative competence is responsible for the ability to successfully communicate in situations of a professional and specialized nature. This competence is necessary for the implementation of a specific type of professional activity.

According to Brown (2015), the communicative competence of a teacher is determined by the following main components: (a) motivational (teacher's readiness for professional development, need for professional development, desire for self-development and self-realization); (b) cognitive (what a person knows in a subject); (c) operational (the way in which a specialist implements his knowledge in practice); (d) position and value-based approach (attitude of a specialist to this area of activity).

Yahupov and Kyva (2019) identify 5 components of information and communicative competence: value-motivational, cognitive, technological, functional and reflexive.

The value-motivational component is the core, since it characterizes the values and motivation of a teacher as a subject of pedagogical being in pedagogical activity. They are directly reflected in their need to achieve success in scientific and pedagogical activities, feeling the social significance of their pedagogical activities and their awareness and perception, active conscious participation in solving scientific and pedagogical problems, self-approval as a subject of the society, strive for continuous development and self-development as a subject of pedagogical activity, strive for the active use and

systematic introduction of information and communication technologies in their pedagogical activities as an element of educational services provided in an educational institution.

The cognitive component is the informational basis of the teacher's communicative competence. It characterizes the possession of system, theoretical and, most importantly, practical or applied knowledge in such aspects: knowledge of concepts, knowledge of technology and knowledge of one's subject domain.

The technological component forms the behavioral foundation of the teacher's pedagogical existence in the society. It determines the formation/development of general practical abilities of teachers to use communicative technologies in everyday life and in their pedagogical activities. It reflects the practical experience of updating communication technologies in various standard and non-standard situations of pedagogical reality and teaching a specific academic discipline.

The reflexive component is extremely important and sometimes decisive. It makes it possible to diagnose the ability and psychological, personal and professional readiness of a teacher for the practical use of communicative technologies in scientific and pedagogical activities. The content of this criterion lies in the teacher's awareness of himself as a subject of scientific and pedagogical activity.

It can be noted that the authors use different bases for communicative components. Nikitina (2019) builds her model of the communicative competence on the basis of a situational approach. Brown (2015) considers the structure of the communicative competence from the point of view of the activity approach. Foreign researchers prefer to use an approach based on ideas about the structure of socio-psychological phenomena. It should also be noted that the differences between the proposed models are related to differences in theoretical approaches. They are not contradictory, but allow studying the phenomenon from different perspectives.

From our point of view, the models of the communicative competence presented in the literature have certain inaccuracies. They do not take into account the declamatory skills and linguistic abilities of a teacher. We assume that the structure of the communicative competence of teachers of preschool education includes gnoseological, practical, pragmatic, discursive, linguistic and sociocultural components.

Gnoseological component – knowledge of the basic laws of communication, methods and techniques for improving pedagogical communication skills; techniques of psychological and pedagogical influence; culture of pedagogical communication.

Axiological component – teacher's awareness of his leading role in a comprehensive experience of all stages of childhood and in enriching the development of a child; acceptance of value, moral, ethical, personal positions of each participant of the educational process and respect to them.

Practical component – teacher's ability to see the plan of events, ecologically affecting the participants in communication; ability to organize special communication between the participants in the educational process so that it determines the creation of favorable conditions for the development of children in accordance with their age and individual characteristics and inclinations, development of abilities and creative potential of each child as a subject of relations with himself, other children, adults and the world; knowledge of communicative tactics and communicative strategies aimed at adequate interaction.

Pragmatic component – knowledge of ways and skills to successfully achieve a communicative objective; understanding that all issues arising in communication may be adequately addressed; skills to

understand the context of a particular situation; ability to highlight hidden and explicit goals of utterance; knowledge of rules of conversation subject to the principle of cooperation; ability to assess the psychological state, character and understanding of the addressee.

Discursive component – ability to understand and create logical and coherent speech statements presented orally or in writing; qualitative use of language and speech skills; correctness of speaking and writing; logic and informational richness of statements; ability to logically build statements; ability to build communicative behavior in accordance with the main communication topic.

Linguistic component – knowledge of the laws of vocabulary, grammar, phonetics, spelling; development of oral speech (including clarity, correctness), automated expressive and receptive vocabulary and grammar skills, speech and language skills in all types of speech activities, knowledge of the rules for using a language.

Sociocultural component – ability to observe ethics and etiquette of communication; presence of a culture of verbal and non-verbal interaction (possession of speech techniques, rhetorical techniques, argumentation and dispute management techniques, observance of vocational and pedagogical etiquette, expedient use of conceptual and categorical apparatus, observance of speech discipline and use of non-verbal means of communication), compliance with sociocultural norms.

It should be noted that differences in approaches do not prevent the authors from recognizing that all components of the communicative competence are interconnected. The high level of communicative competence of the teacher implies the comprehensive development of all its components and virtuosity in applying all communication techniques. The level of the communicative competence is assessed on the basis of its criteria.

Yahupov and Kyva (2019) identify the following criteria that help to diagnose the communicative competence: values of scientific and pedagogical activities using information and communication technologies; motivation to develop the information and communicative competence; knowledge of communication theory and how to apply it in teaching specific academic disciplines; knowledge of technologies for modeling processes (phenomena); ability of a teacher to systematically use communication technologies to solve various professional pedagogical tasks.

The authors believe that based on the analysis of the content component of each criterion it is possible to obtain data on the qualitative characteristic of the communicative competence.

Nikitina (2019) describes the following criteria for the level of development of professional communicative competence: personality-motivational (presence of motives, value orientations, attitudes and needs of a future employee in professional communicative competence); cognitive (formation of professional communicative knowledge, according to the FSES HE and qualification requirements); activity-reflexive (knowledge of practical skills and ability to carry out effective professional communication, self-assessment of personal qualities).

It should be noted that the authors attribute similar elements in other works to the structure of the communicative competence. This suggests that researchers lack an understanding of what are the components and what are the criteria for evaluating the communicative competence. Researchers do not always understand how the two components are related.

Given the specifics of the professional activities of teachers of preschool educational institutions, it is important to highlight the criteria of the communicative competence: maturity of a system of communicative knowledge in the field of pedagogy, psychology, communication, conflict science, logic, rhetoric and speech culture; maturity of a system of communication skills in professional activities in general and personal-significant in particular; maturity of experience of productive communication activities, management of own behavior and behavior of interaction participants; maturity of personal-value attitude to the improvement of the communicative competence.

7. Conclusion

The introduction of a competency-based approach into the educational system requires scientific justification to detect the key competencies of a specialist. They act as the learning outcome. The communicative competence is one of these competencies. It allows a teacher managing the psychological climate in a classroom, creating favorable relations with all participants in the educational process, increasing the level of student performance, and developing communication skills among students.

Considering modern approaches to the study of the communicative competence it should be noted that the communicative competence is analyzed from different perspectives. Differences in the positions of authors are displayed in the terms used by them: communicative competence in interpersonal communication, intercultural communicative competence, communicative competence in English, competence in relations, etc. This emphasizes the complexity of the studied phenomenon and requires a synthesis of knowledge on the structure of the communicative competence. This study considers the communicative competence in interpersonal communication. This competence is the closest to labor functions, actions, knowledge and skills identified in the professional standard of a teacher.

Modern research uses three-, four-, five- and six-component models of the communicative competence. However, we could not find a model of the structure of the communicative competence in interpersonal communication of a teacher of preschool education. Therefore, we proposed our own six-component model of this competence. Our model includes gnoseological, practical, pragmatic, discursive, linguistic and sociocultural components. This model represents a hypothetical construct. It may serve as a starting point in organizing studies of the communicative competence of teachers of preschool education. It may also be used to describe the criteria to measure the communicative competence and choose the necessary research methods.

In the future, we plan to consider the diagnostic methods applied to the communicative competence used by researchers around the world. We want to analyze which methods may be used to measure each of the six components of the communicative competence of teachers of preschool education.

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