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**WORD AND UTTERANCE IN THE TEXTS OF FEDERAL STATE
EDUCATIONAL LINGUISTIC STANDARDS**

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Abstract

The article focuses on the problem of correspondence between pragmatic attitudes and communicative intentions declared in the texts of federal state educational standards of the so-called ‘third generation’, as well as in other official documents designed to explain these attitudes and intentions, on the one hand, and the forms of verbalization of the requirements imposed on the graduates of corresponding Bachelor’s and Master’s programs, on the other hand. It is argued that, being basic state educational documents, the mentioned above linguistic standards combine general pragmatic attitudes of educational discourse (such as description, normalization, accumulation and translation of knowledge) with special pragmatic attitudes of legal discourse (such as regulation of relations (between subjects of educational process) and prescription (of attitude to the educational process)), as well as those of political discourse (such as translation of ideas basic for the state language politics). On the basis of analysis of the requirements imposed on the graduates of the Bachelor’s and Master’s programs in the mentioned above texts the authors argue that the texts of federal educational linguistic standards do not fully realize the declared communicative intentions and demanded pragmatic attitudes: that they do not reflect all the major elements of the state language politics designed to keep and push forward the positions of the Russian language; that they, in their forms and formulas, demonstrate deviations from the norms of Russian academic (educational) discourse; that they comprise questionable teleological attitudes in the spheres of using the native and studying foreign languages.

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Keywords: Discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, educational discourse, legal discourse, pragmatic intentions, didactic correctness.



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1. Introduction

Since 2009 the Russian system of higher education has been regulated by new federal standards, the so-called standards of the third generation. For the first time in Russian educational tradition the major goal of teaching in the system of higher education has been verbalized as formation and perfection of cultural and professional competences. In other words, universities have been - for the first time in Russian educational history - demanded to replace the educational paradigm of knowledge (knowledge plus skill plus ability) by the paradigm of competence. The demand was fixed in key abbreviations used in the standards ('general competence' – GC ('OK') and 'professional competences' – PC ('ИК')), as well as in formulating the results of educational process in terms of 'competences', and in including the section 'Competence Approach' with a number of papers by authoritative Russian scholars (such as A. Verbitskii, V. Baidenko, I. Zimniaya) about the new competence paradigm of contemporary Russian education into the content of the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science ('Portal of federal state educational standards of higher education' is meant here (<http://fgosvo.ru/>)). At the same time, the standards of higher education of the third generation have continued the tradition of creating a system of requirements, legally fixed and politically correlated, and imposing them on universities and university educational programs, so that they make the whole educational process standardized and regulated.

2. Problem Statement

As a result of this situation, the communicative channel between the state (in the face of the Ministry of Education and Science) and universities has been intervened with a cognitive challenge. The challenge has been connected with aims and functions to transfer and receive information about the new 'competence' educational paradigm and the content of formed competences. An adequate answer to this challenge should have been accurate, unequivocal, comprehensive, standardized and didactically and politically correct encoding of this new information in the key texts created to regulate educational process, that is, in the texts of federal standards.

The requirements of accuracy, unambiguity and standard regularity are connected with the peculiar character of legal discourse. Speaking more precisely, they are connected with its pragmatic intentions (Chernyshev, 2016) to regulate relations (in this case – between the subjects of educational process, that is between students, teachers, administration, the Ministry, etc.) and to prescribe (in this case – the way to understand educational process, the new educational paradigm, the roles of the 'teacher' and the 'student', etc.).

It should be taken into account that in case of federal educational standards regulations and prescriptions refer to a big amount of diverse people. This sociocultural context presupposes the requirement of comprehensiveness to be applied to the texts, as well. The requirement, at the same time, is determined by pragmatic intentions of educational discourse (to which educational standards, certainly, belong): intentions to describe, standardize, save and transfer knowledge demand the quality of intelligibility from any text (Zakurdayeva, 2017). In case of standards of higher education 'intelligibility' (or 'comprehensiveness') should be understood as a relative characteristic determined by a certain level of education (the 'lower limit' of which can be identified with complete secondary education).

At the same time, these pragmatic intentions demand didactic correctness from the texts of educational standards, which means correspondence of the content of the texts, their wording and their terminology to the didactic guidance provided in the mentioned-above section ‘Competence Approach’ published on the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science.

Being texts of federal significance, the educational standards should also correspond to pragmatic intentions of political discourse (Sukhanov, 2018). First of all, educational standards must realize the pragmatic intention of transferring state educational policy. In case of standards of higher education in the sphere of linguistics the texts must transfer the basic ideas of state language policy. Thus, the requirement of political correctness, the texts of educational standards in the sphere of linguistics should correspond to, presupposes a systematic and unambiguous implementation of the principles of Russian state policy in the sphere of education (Federal Law, 29.12.2012, N 273) and in the sphere of the Russian language (Federal program ‘The Russian language’ (2011 – 2015 and 2016 - 2020)) (Government of Russian Federation, 2019).

Speaking about the standards of higher education in terms of ‘must’ and ‘should’ is based on the supposition that ‘what must be’ does not always coincide with ‘what really is’. The paper, therefore, is focused on the question of adequacy of the texts of Russian federal standards of higher education (in the sphere of linguistics) to the intentions and requirements formulated above. In other words, the paper explores the problem of correspondence between the content and language (style) of the standards, on the one hand, and the pragmatic intentions of relevant discourses and the requirements of accuracy, unambiguity, comprehensiveness, standard regularity and didactic and political correctness (connected with the mentioned-above intentions), on the other. The main focus of our attention inside this problem is the ways of encoding basic information about competences and the competence educational paradigm to be found in the new Russian standards of higher education (in the sphere of linguistics).

3. Research Questions

To solve the problem formulated above means to answer the following questions:

- 3.1.** Do the texts of the new federal standards of higher education in the sphere of linguistics meet the requirements of accuracy and unambiguity in their ways (forms) of encoding information about competences and the competence paradigm?
- 3.2.** Do these texts meet the requirements of comprehensiveness and standard regularity (especially in their encoding information concerning competences, etc.)?
- 3.3.** Do these texts meet the requirements of didactic and political correctness (especially in their encoding information concerning competences, etc.)?
- 3.4.** What is the level of these texts’ conformity with the mentioned-above requirements and what is the degree of realizing the intentions implied by their complicated discursive nature in them?

4. Purpose of the Study

The research aims to analyze texts of federal standards of higher education of the third generation (in the sphere of linguistics) from the perspective of their conformity with the requirements of accuracy, unambiguity, comprehensiveness, standard regularity and didactic and political correctness (in transferring information about competences and the competence educational paradigm), and from the perspective of realizing intentions implied by their complicated discursive nature, in these texts. The basic material of analysis is the texts of educational standards in the sphere of linguistics (Bachelor's and Master's programs, 2014 and 2016 respectively), part V (Ministry of Education and Science, 2014; Ministry of Education and Science, 2016 (further in the text – MES, 2014; MES, 2016)) where information concerning the new educational paradigm and formed competences is presented, in particular.

5. Research Methods

To analyze the texts of federal standards of higher education methods and ideas of discourse analysis in combination with methods and ideas of cognitive linguistics are applied. The analysis is basically concentrated on the problems of semantics - particularly, of the meaning of language and speech elements in the text; coincidence (or discrepancy) between what is declared or supposed by discourse characteristics and social and cultural context, on the one hand, and what is explicated in the text, on the other; consistency or incoherence in realizing basic pragmatic intentions and communicative strategies.

6. Findings

To answer these questions a systematic analysis of *words* and *utterances* referring to formed competences (part V of the texts) is to be carried out.

6.1. To answer the first question, concerning the texts' conformity with the requirements of accuracy and unambiguity (in transferring information about the new educational paradigm and formed competences), a number of expressions causing serious discrepancies are to be extracted and analyzed.

- The descriptors of 'general competence 6' (Bachelor's program) and 'general competence 7' (Master's program) verbalize the requirements imposed on graduates in the following way: "a graduate <...> must have <...> possession of the inheritance of Russian scientific thought, focused on the solution of humanitarian and human problems" (MES, 2014, p. 14; MES, 2016, p. 9). Besides a case of inner tautology, caused by a junction of the semantics of the verb 'have' and the noun 'possession', in should be noted that the expression "possession of the inheritance of Russian scientific thought" leaves room for, at least, three interpretations: 1) 'acquaintance with this inheritance, possession of general knowledge of its achievements'; 2) 'profound understanding of all discoveries by Russian scholars and of all stated principals and processes'; 3) 'ability to use achievements of Russian science in one's own study and professional activities'.

- The descriptor of 'general competence 16' in Master's program imposes on the graduate the requirement to have "possession of high motivation to performance of professional activity" (MES, 2016, p. 10). Leaving aside the fact of incorrect word combination (motivation to performance), let us concentrate

on ambiguity of the requirement. It can be interpreted in three different ways: 1) that the graduate must have interest for his (future) profession; 2) that the graduate must form (either by himself or with professors' help) this very interest in himself in the process of educating; 3) that the graduate must realize his own interest for his future profession.

- In the descriptors of 'general competence 10' (Bachelor's program) and 'general competence 12' (Master's program), as well as 'professional competence 8' (Bachelor's program) and 'professional competence 24' (Master's program) comprise cases of semantic incompleteness. The first two competences are described as "readiness to use current law" (MES, 2014, p. 4; MES, 2016, p. 10). The third one – as "knowledge of basic peculiarities of scientific discourse in Russian sign language and in studied foreign languages" (MES, 2016, p. 11). Taking into account that laws can be used in different ways and with different purposes, including corrupt ones, it should be acknowledged that the case of semantic incompleteness in the fragment is a serious flaw. Semantic incompleteness in the second case is caused by a strange combination of the expressions 'scientific discourse' and 'sign language': it can hardly be understood what exactly is meant by the combination if neither 'sign language' is known to exist in 'scientific discourse', nor vice versa. The last of the descriptors under analysis here, 'PC 24', imposes the requirement to have "ability to develop innovative spheres and new methods of research independently" on the graduate (MES, 2016, p. 12). This leaves room for different interpretations, since 'innovative spheres' are limitless, and 'new methods' of research are numerous.

Thus, the analyzed fragments cannot be acknowledged cases of successful and effective transfer of information about the content of corresponding competences, because they are characterized by incompatibility with the requirements of accuracy in words usage, and unambiguity in their combination.

6.2. Answering the second of the posed-above questions – concerning the texts' conformity with the requirements of comprehensiveness and standard regularity - a number of expressions causing objective cognitive difficulties are to be extracted and analyzed.

- The descriptor 'professional competence 6' (Master's program) imposes the following requirements of the graduate: "the graduate <...> must have <...> possession of conventions of verbal communication in a foreign society" (MES, 2016, p. 11). The formulation comprises an occasional irregular usage of a borrowed word. In an authoritative Russian dictionary the following explanation is given to the word 'convention' ('конвенция'): this is "a treaty, a contract between states referring to a special question" ('международный договор, соглашение по специальному вопросу" (Kuznetsov, 2014a). It is obvious, though, that the descriptor does not transfer information about 'international treaties'. To understand the meaning of the word 'convention' reference to a dictionary is indispensable. An authoritative English dictionary gives three explanations of the word 'convention', one of them is "usage or custom especially in social matters" (Merriam-Webster, 2019). The word 'конвенции' meaning 'customs' of verbal communication, therefore, functions in the fragment with a borrowed meaning. Yet, whereas this meaning is not assigned in the Russian language to the word 'конвенция', and whereas the term 'verbal communication' is combined in the Russian language with a limited number of words, there are two possible variants of interpretation of its meaning in the context: 'etiquette formulas' (of verbal communication) and 'norms' (of verbal communication). Moreover, the verbalization of this requirement

can stay outside the reader's understanding and form a cognitive riddle: what might a 'treaty of verbal communication' mean?

- Similarly, the descriptors 'professional competence 18' (Bachelor's program) and 'professional competence 28' (Master's program) (MES, 2014 p. 5; MES, 2016, p. 12) use a term in a borrowed occasional meaning: the word combination 'existential competence' ('экзистенциальная компетенция') is not a norm of Russian speech, since it is not generally used. The Russian word 'экзистенциальный', unlike the English word 'existential', is attached to the philosophical discourse, and its meaning, according to the authoritative dictionary 'Bolshoi tolkovyi slovar'', is "connected with ontology, existence of man" (Kuznetsov, 2014b). Development of the meaning of the word is therefore a complicated matter, as well as understanding of the word combination 'экзистенциальная компетенция' by readers of the standards.

- A whole number of the descriptors violate lexical or (and) grammar norms of Russian speech, and this fact impedes processes of both understanding the texts and perceiving them as serious legal documents. The formulations of 'general competence 6' and 'general competence 7' mentioned-above (MES, 2014, p. 4; MES, 2016, p. 9), comprise two cases of violating lexical compatibility: it is impossible, according to speech norms, to combine the words 'обладать' (possess/ have) and 'владение' (possession), as well as 'владение' (possession) and 'наследие' (inheritance). Likewise, the descriptor of 'general competence 16', imposing the requirement of "possessing high motivation to performance of professional activities" (MES, 2016, p. 10), violates speech norms twice: the word combination 'владение мотивацией' ('possessing motivation') violates the norm of lexical compatibility, while the word combination 'мотивация к выполнению' ('motivation to performance') violates grammar norms, since the word 'motivation' does not form of a noun (with or without a preposition).

- The descriptor of 'professional competence 32' (Master's program) demonstrates a case of displacement of syntactic construction. It has the following form of verbalization: "readiness to use terminology of philosophy, theoretic and applied linguistics, linguodidactics, theory of interpretation and intercultural communication, with the purpose to solve one's professional problems and to have the ability to use them creatively and to develop them in professional interrelations" (MES, 2016, p. 16). Here the object expressed by a noun in the form of the Instrumental case ('готовностью') composes a homogeneous construction with a part of a Compound Nominal Predicate which has the form of a word combination 'to possess an ability' ('обладать способностью'). Similarly, an object expressed by a noun in the form of the Instrumental case ('владением') composes one homogeneous construction with a part of a Compound Nominal Predicate expressed by the short form of an adjective, in the descriptor of 'professional competence 22' (Master's program): "possession of skills of synchronic interpretation from a foreign language into the state language of Russian Federation and from the state language of Russian Federation into a foreign language and [is] familiar with principals of organization of synchronic interpretation at international conferences" (Ibid., p. 15).

Thus, in the analyzed-above descriptors we come across cases of incompatibility with the requirements of comprehensiveness in transfer of information and standard regularity in using words.

6.3. Answering the third of the posed-above questions – concerning the texts' conformity with the requirements of didactic and political correctness - a number of expressions comprising information about

educational and political guidelines (first of all, about the new competence paradigm of education, the meaning of the term ‘competence’ and the system of competences, as well as about information referring to the language policy of the state) are to be extracted and analyzed.

- The descriptor of ‘general competence 5’ (both Bachelor’s and Master’s programs) imposes the following requirement on the graduate: “[the graduate has] ability of realizing the significance of humanitarian values for preservation and development of contemporary civilization” (MES, 2014, p. 4; MES, 2016, p. 9). The requirement has one and the same form in both Bachelor’s and Master’s programs. The fact implies the following message (it can be either perceived or not by the reader, but, anyway, didactic ambiguity is engendered by the text): “Bachelor’s and Master’s programs form the same competence(s), so there are no real levels of higher education”. Besides, the requirement expressed in this fragment comprises logical and didactic discrepancies: what is demanded from the graduate is some non-formable and uncontrollable “ability of realization <...>” but not ‘realization’ itself.

- Similarly, the descriptors of ‘general competence 10’ (‘OK-10’, Bachelor’s program) and of ‘general competence 11’ (Master’s program) in Bachelor’s and Master’s programs coincide. They, too, impose on the graduate the requirement of ‘ability’ – now, it is the “ability of realization of one’s own rights and obligations as a citizen of one’s country” (MES, 2014, p. 4; MES, 2016, p. 10). The descriptors of ‘general competence 12’ (Bachelor’s program) and ‘general competence 16 (Master’s program) also coincide; similarly, they demand another uncontrollable ‘ability’ to be formed; here, it is the “ability of understanding social significance of one’s own future profession” (Ibid.). The descriptor of ‘general competence 8’ (Master’s program) requires “ability of conceiving the peculiarity of a foreign scientific picture of the world” (MES, 2016, p. 11), ignoring the fact of didactic impossibility to form and control this ‘ability of conceiving’.

It must be acknowledged that, according to the results of the analyses, the requirements (formulated as a didactic guideline for universities, and for the system of higher education in general) coincide in their basic meaning with requirements of preschool education, since development of understanding, realization, interpretation as general abilities are to be formed at this initial level of education (Kozlova, 2017). In other words, the difference between levels of education, though declared and presupposed by the system of education, is not realized in requirements expressed in legal documents and is not effectively verbalized in competence descriptors (at least, in the competence descriptors analyzed-above). Moreover, comparing the analyzed-above fragments of the standards with corresponding material in the section ‘Competence Approach’ (to be found on the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science) makes it obvious that there is a certain contradiction between two major versions of what the word ‘competence’ means in these texts. The section transfers the following interpretation: ‘competence’ is a “dynamic combination of knowledge, understanding, mastery and skills” (Iriskhanova, 2003, p. 16). The analyzed-above descriptors explain the meaning of the word as ‘ability’ of realization, understanding, etc. This fact brings us to the conclusion that between the two major interpretations of the term ‘competence’ provided (on the one hand) in the standards and (on the other) on the website, there is a serious contradiction, or discrepancy.

- Some descriptions of competences in the standards, when compared to the material of the section ‘Competence Approach’ (official website), demonstrate didactic incorrectness, too. Thus, the descriptors

of ‘professional competences 5 – 8’ (Bachelor’s program) separate out different aspects of a competence which is interpreted as one integral competence in the material of the ‘Competence Approach’ section. The formula “capability of using verbal and non-verbal means and ways, adequate to the situation, of forming and formulating messages when receiving and sending them in the native and foreign languages” (Zimniaya, 2004, p. 29), - is distributed over four competences in the standards. As a result, their descriptions comprise significant semantic junction. The descriptor of ‘professional competence 7’ requires “ability to express one’s thoughts fluently, using diverse language elements adequately” (MES, 2014, p. 5), while ‘professional competence 5’ separates out “possession of basic discursive means to realize one’s communicative intentions” (Ibid.), including, of course, such ‘possession’ inside the “ability to express one’s thoughts”. At the same time, “possession of basic means of expressing <...> succession between parts of a saying” (Ibid.), is extracted as a separate competence (GC 6’). This extraction implies, then, that it is possible to “express one’s thoughts fluently” without communicative, structural and logical continuity, which is, of course, a paradox. The last competence of the distinguished set (GC 8), is described as “possession of peculiarities of official, neutral and unofficial registers of communication” (Ibid.) and therefore returns to the second part of the preceding descriptor, because ‘adequate’ usage of ‘diverse language elements’ presupposes ‘possession’ of registers of communication.

To conclude the analyses referring to didactic correctness (or incorrectness) of the standards in interpreting competences it should be stated that there is essential contradiction between the content of competences, formulated in documents of the section ‘Competence Approach’ (official website of the Ministry of Education and Science), on the one hand, and the descriptions of competences provided in the standards, on the other.

At the same time, some descriptors demonstrate cases of political incorrectness concerning transfer of principals of language and educational policy. Thus, the requirement imposed on the graduate by ‘general competence 2’ (Bachelor’s and Master’s programs), goes as follows: “to be guided by principals of cultural relativism” (MES, 2014, p. 4; MES, 2016, p. 9). This is a highly debatable requirement, especially if we take into account that the correct (accepted or generally used) term is ‘the principal of cultural relativism’ (not principals). However, even if what is meant here is the idea of cultural relativism formulated in cultural anthropology as a protest against Westernism in humanitarian researching to argue that value systems of different cultures should be judged only from perspectives of these particular cultures the requirement should still be acknowledged politically debatable, or even incorrect. What is stated here is that the graduate must not be guided by value system of his own (Russian) culture when judging value systems of other cultures. Yet, article 3 of ‘Basic Principals of the State Policy <...> in the Sphere of Education’ of the education federal law requires, besides “bringing up mutual respect”, bringing up ‘civic consciousness’ and ‘patriotism’ (Government of Russian Federation, 2019). As far as language policy is concerned, the basic document here – ‘The Russian Language’, argues the necessity “to promote the Russian language as the fundamental basis of civic identity, cultural and educational unity of multinational Russia” (Government of Russian Federation, 2016). The requirement ‘to be guided by principals of cultural relativism’ cognitively contradicts the commitment for ‘patriotism’, ‘civic consciousness’ and ‘civic identity’, fixed in basic political documents of the Russian federation.

7. Conclusion

Analysis of the selected fragments of the texts of federal standards of higher education (in the sphere of linguistics) and their comparison with didactic materials of the section ‘Competence Approach’ (official website of the Ministry of Education and Science), as well as with the texts of the federal education law and the federal program ‘The Russian Language’, from the perspective of discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics, leads to the following conclusion:

1. Federal educational standards have complicated discursive nature: according to their pragmatic intentions, they partly belong to political, legal and educational discourses.

2. Federal educational standards of the third generation received, in the sociocultural context, the peculiar function of answering a cognitive challenge caused by a shift of educational paradigm.

3. To respond to the challenge in an effective way, the texts of federal educational standards of the third generation must have: a) realized basic communicative strategies of the three relevant discourses: the strategy of prescribing interaction between the participants of the educational process (on the basis of regulating the ways of understanding educational paradigm); the strategy of transferring the principals of state educational policy (in case of standards in the sphere of linguistics, language policy is relevant, as well); the strategy of standardization of knowledge about the content of education (competences); and b) corresponded to the requirements of *accuracy, unambiguity, comprehensiveness, standard regularity* (from the point of view of choosing and using language and speech elements) and *didactic and political correctness*.

4. The texts of federal educational standards of higher education of the third generation (in the sphere of linguistics) do not fully meet the requirements of accuracy in using words and unambiguity in combining words and composing sayings.

5. In particular cases these texts do not meet the requirement of comprehensiveness in transferring information and the requirement of standard regularity in using words.

6. Descriptors of competences in these texts are characterized by a high degree of didactic incorrectness: in a number of cases the requirements comprised in them coincide with requirements of preschool education; there is a serious contradiction between interpretations of the term ‘competence’ given in didactic materials on the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science, on the one hand, and rendered in descriptors of competences in the standards, on the other; there is inconsistency in descriptions of the content of competences in the standards.

7. There are cases of political incorrectness in descriptors of competences provided in the standards.

The answer to the cognitive challenge given in the federal educational standards of higher education of the third generation cannot be acknowledged effective since they meet the requirements of accuracy, unambiguity, standard regularity, comprehensiveness and didactic and political correctness only partially. This partial conformity of the texts to the requirements provides basis for the following statement: basic strategies of relevant discourses are only partially realized in the texts. The strategy of *prescribing* interaction between participants of educational process cannot be fully realized without unambiguity and accuracy in defining major terms, content of requirements and principals of the educational paradigm; the strategy of *transferring* principals of educational and language policy – without political correctness and

comprehensiveness of verbalization ideas; standardization of knowledge about content of education – without didactic correctness and standard regularity of combining words.

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