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FORMATION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE WITHIN TRAINING HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS OF THE AGRICULTURAL FIELD

The article examines the formation of foreign language communicative competence among students of higher education institutions specializing in agriculture, highlighting its importance for professional and personal development. Given the global nature of modern agriculture and the increasing demand for international collaboration, mastering a foreign language, particularly English, is critical for future specialists. The study emphasizes the role of foreign language skills in professional communication, enabling students to access international resources, engage in intercultural dialogue, and participate in global agricultural projects.

The authors analyze the challenges in developing foreign language competence, noting systemic issues such as the low proficiency levels of students upon entering higher education and the insufficient integration of educational institutions with the production and research sectors. These issues hinder the effective implementation of foreign language curricula and the preparation of competitive professionals. The study highlights the need for an interdisciplinary approach to foreign language education, incorporating content from various fields like history, cultural studies, marketing, and management, to enhance students' communicative skills in professional contexts.

The article also explores effective teaching methods, advocating for a shift from passive to active learning strategies. Interactive platforms, multimedia tools, role-playing, and group projects are recommended to foster motivation and engagement. Teachings staff are encouraged to focus on practice-oriented and professionally relevant content, creating opportunities for students to apply their skills in real-world scenarios.

The authors conclude that addressing the identified challenges requires close collaboration between education, production, and research sectors to ensure a dynamic and effective training system. They call for further research on innovative teaching methods and the integration of various disciplines to improve the development of foreign language competence among agricultural students.

Key words: *higher education, foreign language communicative competence, agricultural education, professional communication, sociocultural competence, professional vocabulary.*

Problem formulation. Currently, significant attention in Ukraine is given to the quality of training specialists for the agrarian sector, as agriculture plays a key role in ensuring food security. Higher educational institutions with an agricultural focus actively implement policies aimed at developing international cooperation. This involves establishing intercultural dialogue, fostering professional communication within scientific and educational environments, and participating in international agricultural projects. One of the key aspects of professional communication for future agricultural specialists is mastery of foreign language communicative competence.

Foreign language communication encompasses various aspects of the professional activities in the agricultural sector, facilitating tasks such as exchange-

ing relevant information, establishing effective professional relationships, and ensuring all components of professional interaction.

Modern specialists must be well-versed in the regulatory framework governing international agricultural cooperation, possess skills in both general and professional foreign language communication, be able to work with professional information from international sources, and demonstrate competencies in interpersonal communication. Therefore, the development of foreign language communicative competence becomes a critical factor for successfully performing professional tasks in the agricultural sector, where high international mobility is driven by participation in global agricultural projects.

Research and publications analysis. The issues related to developing and improving foreign language competence of higher education students including non-philological specialties were studied by T. Fomenko, I. Forostiuk, L. Kharlamova, T. Kravchyna, H. Kytaihorodska, O. Leontiev, M. Liahovytskyi, S. Nasakina, I. Stavyska, E. Pasov, O. Pavlova, O. Piddubtseva, O. Tarnopolskyi, N. Tymoshchiuk, H. Shaharuddin, T. Sharhun, S. Sheralieva, E. Shubin, O. Stepanenko, V. Redko, and many other domestic and foreign scholars.

However, despite the substantial body of research dedicated to this issue, the formation of foreign language communicative competence in higher education institutions with an agricultural focus still requires comprehensive study, particularly considering the dynamic development of international cooperation in the agro-industrial sector.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the peculiarities of developing foreign language communicative competence in domestic higher education institutions with an agricultural focus, taking into account contemporary challenges.

Main part. The training of specialists in technical universities has undergone significant changes compared to Soviet times. Back then, the focus was largely on translating technical literature, and graduates often lacked the ability to communicate effectively in a foreign language. Today, the approach is markedly different, with most training programs incorporating a strong communicative component.

Typical foreign language curricula aim for a target proficiency level of B2 (independent user) for the first (bachelor's) level of higher education, as specified in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The lexical minimum is expected to include 1,000 words in the active vocabulary for communication and 2,500–3,000 words in the passive vocabulary for reading [1].

Meanwhile, practical experience and observations from working with future agricultural specialists indicate that the level of foreign language communicative competence necessary for professional interaction in this field remains insufficient under current conditions. This creates a significant barrier to preparing competitive staff for the agricultural sector.

The curricula for training specialists in higher education institutions assume that students possess substantial, in-depth knowledge acquired during their school education. However, the actual foreign language proficiency level of first-year students rarely exceeds A1 or A2, which hinders effective learning. Consequently, a significant portion of instructional time is spent by educators on reviewing material that should have been mastered in secondary school.

This is to some extent confirmed by the results of a survey conducted among students of non-linguistic specialties in three higher education institutions

in Ukraine. In response to the question, "Is the level of English language proficiency acquired in school sufficient for continuing education at a technical higher education institution?" 58% of students provided a positive answer. However, the results of the initial diagnostic assessment revealed that only 43% demonstrated a sufficient level of knowledge [4].

When speaking about training specialists at an agricultural university, it is necessary to keep in mind that, along with basic mastery of commonly used vocabulary, knowledge of professionally significant terminology and vocabulary is necessary to ensure professional communication.

A foreign language serves not only as an object of study but also as a means of acquiring advanced professional knowledge and developing foreign language professional competence. The number of learners studying a foreign language solely for general communication purposes is decreasing. Educational institutions increasingly recognize the importance of teaching foreign languages with a focus on specific professional fields. The goal of foreign language instruction in higher education institutions is both to achieve proficiency in the language as a means of communication and to develop professionally oriented foreign language competence necessary for the successful execution of future professional activities [5].

The process of developing foreign language communicative competence necessitates a shift from traditional reliance on passive forms of learning to active forms and methods. In this context, it is essential to transition from a "school of reproduction" to a "school of understanding" and a "school of thinking". Naturally, this entails reconfiguring the educational process and employing productive educational technologies.

The teacher's task is to create conditions for the practical mastery of a foreign language and the development of positive motivation, as well as to select forms, methods, and teaching tools that enable each student to activate their cognitive activity [3].

The role of the instructor as a transmitter of knowledge shifts toward the role of creating pedagogical conditions for fostering a culture of self-education and developing students' subjectivity. This approach enables students to independently design their own educational trajectories in the process of mastering a foreign language. The specific characteristics of the discipline related to foreign language indicate that successful language acquisition can be achieved directly through students' independent research activities.

The student will not socialize, will not want to solve the problem if what he is offered to think about is not interesting or understandable to him. For this reason, the effectiveness of teaching a foreign language depends on the extent to which the student

shows interest in the activity that the teacher offers him. Therefore, it is important that the teacher speaks approximately 20% of the time in the lesson, and the students speak 80% of the time [7].

In this context, the motivation of students while learning a foreign language is of great importance.

Motivating future agrarians to study English is crucial for their academic and professional success, given the global nature of modern agriculture. Teachers play a vital role in sparking interest and demonstrating the value of English within the university program. Incorporating agriculture-specific content into English lessons can make learning more relevant and engaging. Teachers can use materials like research articles, case studies, and videos related to professional issues. This approach connects language skills with students' career aspirations.

Additionally, interactive activities can boost motivation. Role-playing simulations of international meetings, debates on global agricultural issues, or collaborative projects with peers from other countries can make learning dynamic and enjoyable.

It should be noted that the teacher has long ceased to be a relay of information. A modern teacher is first and foremost an organizer of the educational process. Its effectiveness in turn depends on innovations and modern methods that the teacher is able to apply.

The results of a survey conducted among students of non-specialized disciplines at three Ukrainian universities regarding the importance of acquiring foreign language communicative competencies are noteworthy. The respondents included 88 first- and second-year students aged 17–19, among whom 59.5% were female and 40.5% male. An analysis of the responses yielded the following results:

- Very important: 45%
- Important: 31%
- Neutral: 19%
- Not important: 5%

Thereby, 45% of respondents consider acquiring foreign language communicative competencies to be "very important" while 31% regard it as "important". This indicates a significant interest among students in learning foreign languages, potentially driven by their professional orientation, the desire to integrate into the international environment, and aspirations to enhance their career prospects. Only 5% of respondents considered acquiring foreign language communicative competencies to be "not important" [2].

A few decades ago, the situation was entirely different: the majority of students in non-linguistic specialties studied foreign languages primarily to pass a credit or exam and receive a positive grade. Foreign language courses were not considered as core disciplines, with all the consequences that entailed.

Today, as we can see, only a small percentage of students fail to recognize the direct benefits of study-

ing foreign languages for their professional activities. Overall, the survey results demonstrate that most students understand the importance of foreign language communicative competencies and are willing to work on their development.

Understanding the importance of mastering foreign languages (primarily English) is observed all over the world today. A set of questionnaire was distributed to 254 students enrolled in foreign language courses at University Technology Mara (UiTM) in Malaysia. This study provides valuable insights into the primary motivational factors influencing students' foreign language learning. The results show that the top motivators include:

- the desire to become global citizens,
- career and economic enhancement,
- the urge to communicate and affiliate with foreigners.

Understanding these motivations can guide both curriculum development and instructional strategies, ensuring that language education aligns more closely with students' aspirations and needs [6].

Without the ability to construct coherent, logical, and comprehensive statements or to understand the statements of an interlocutor, effective communication in the professional sphere cannot take place. Therefore, the communicative competence, as a component of professional competence, is a multifaceted concept which could be defined as the ability to engage in intercultural communication for professional purposes through the use of a foreign language in the field of agriculture.

In our view, the development of foreign language communicative competence among students in agricultural disciplines involves the following components:

- mastering professionally oriented vocabulary to articulate ideas on specialized topics;
- acquiring specialized terminology relevant to professional communication;
- building a sufficient lexical repertoire to understand word meanings in various professional contexts;
- learning grammar structures typical for texts in the agricultural field.

Professional content, located in the center of communication, serves as a means of:

- achievement of competence in four main types of their professional activity: planning, management, organization, control;
- expansion of differentiation and clarification of the categorical apparatus;
- development of cognitive interest and formation of professional orientation [8].

All the aforementioned components must be incorporated into foreign language communication and contribute to the formation of knowledge, skills, the development of professional motivation, and the expansion of experience in professional interaction.

The integration of these components ensures the successful execution of communicative tasks by future professionals in the agricultural sector.

The process of developing foreign language communicative competence involves mastering the sociocultural component of the language, which reflects the sociocultural knowledge and value orientations of members of a specific sociocultural community within the agricultural sphere. Sociocultural competence entails familiarizing learners with the culture of the country where the target language is spoken, including its customs and traditions relevant to professional communication contexts. It also involves cultivating the ability to represent one's own country effectively in foreign language intercultural interactions.

When addressing specific professional tasks, students need knowledge about English-speaking countries, differences in their cultures and mentalities, norms of professional communication, and the appropriate communication style for each situation. This includes formal style for business correspondence, scientific style with specialized professional terminology for conference presentations, and conversational style for personal interactions. A future agricultural specialist must understand the system of relationships within a specific sociocultural community and remain sensitive to differences in sociocultural phenomena.

The development of foreign language communicative competence in higher education students is an integral part of cognitive and intellectual learning. Firstly, it requires certain cognitive efforts from the student, aligning with the concept of "intellectual learning". Secondly, it enables the student to cultivate their own cultural awareness through language, enhancing their spirituality by studying the positive moral and intellectual values of the foreign-language society [2].

Practice-oriented learning becomes highly significant in the context of the issue under study. Educational activities are designed to align academic programs with the specificities of professional activities and projects that ensure effective solutions to professional challenges at the level of international cooperation. Throughout their studies, students are actively involved in academic and research work. A key prerequisite for their success is attaining an advanced level of proficiency in a foreign language. This necessitates a shift in the approach to foreign language instruction, requiring a fundamental update to the content and structure of foreign language education, along with new approaches to organizing training processes in non-linguistic higher education institutions.

The content of foreign language education involves the development of communicative skills necessary for successful professional interaction in a foreign language. A future specialist must acquire communicative abilities that enable them to address

tasks in the agricultural sector across the following types of activities:

– Educational and research activities: gathering and analyzing information; planning and conducting experiments; summarizing and analyzing results; participating in the implementation of research findings and innovations; preparing data for reports, reviews, and scientific publications; and engaging in activities related to the protection of intellectual property.

– Organizational and managerial activities: organizing team workflows (including the development of strategic and operational plans, budgets, supply requests, schedules, and instructions); making managerial decisions; calculating economic efficiency; conducting market research in agricultural sectors; and overseeing product quality during storage and distribution.

Together, these elements contribute to the formation of professional agricultural competence, which can only be achieved through the integration of academic, research, and independent activities under conditions that provide initial practical experience in the industry. Moreover, the professional component of training is closely interconnected with the foreign language component of professional competence.

Solving tasks associated with the aforementioned types of professional activities requires the development of lexical, grammatical, and phonetic skills in speaking, listening, writing, and reading. The academic content also includes mastering the rules of speech etiquette, developing communicative skills that facilitate the conveyance of core speech functions in professional communication within the agricultural sector, and enhancing discourse skills to ensure the coherence, cohesiveness, and logical structure of professional speech in a foreign language. It further involves the appropriate use of communication strategies, taking into account not only linguistic but also sociocultural norms.

The development of foreign language communicative competence significantly relies on information that can be obtained from various sources, including academic disciplines incorporated into the curriculum for future agrarians, such as history, cultural studies, marketing, and management. Therefore, foreign language education is carried out on an interdisciplinary basis, enriching the language learning with regional content and thereby fostering intercultural communication.

The prospects for implementing scientific research, for which the future specialist must be prepared should also be taken into account. We assign a special place to the organization of independent scientific research activities. It is a link between educational and research components ensuring a strong connection with specific agricultural production. Research activities are aimed at developing the readiness to study contemporary international and domestic advancements, ensuring the ability to adopt scientific research meth-

ods in accordance with proposed methodologies, and fostering the capacity for synthesizing and statistically processing obtained results.

Conclusions. The analysis revealed that the development of foreign language communicative competence among higher education students is a critical aspect of modern educational practice, significantly influencing their professional and personal prospects. Students acquire essential professional knowledge, develop relevant skills, and enhance their abilities not only in the realm of foreign language communication but also in various areas of their professional activities. Additionally, they adopt a system of values that fosters a responsible approach to professional activities in the agricultural sector and broaden their professional horizons by using a foreign language as a tool for accessing global expertise. In the process of developing foreign language communicative competence, students master the foreign language not only as a means of communication but also as a crucial instrument for addressing professional tasks.

At the same time, an analysis of the current state of the training system for the agricultural sector highlights the following systemic problems:

- A low level of foreign language proficiency among most students upon completing secondary school, which hampers effective engagement with the curriculum outlined in the academic program.

- Insufficient interaction between educational institutions and the production and research sectors, leading to limited integration within the “education–science–production” system.

Addressing these challenges requires close practical collaboration between education, production, and the research sectors to ensure the necessary openness, dynamism, manageability, and economic feasibility of the entire system for preparing future specialists.

Further research on the development of foreign language competence should focus on examining the effectiveness of various language teaching methods, such as the use of interactive platforms, multimedia tools, role-playing activities, and group projects. Additionally, attention should be given to enhancing the integration of different disciplines and areas of activity, including educational, research, and practical domains.

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Маєв А., Романенко Т., Петров І. Формування іншомовної компетентності при підготовці здобувачів вищої освіти аграрного профілю

Стаття досліджує формування іншомовної комунікативної компетентності серед здобувачів закладів вищої освіти, які спеціалізуються в галузі сільського господарства, підкреслюючи її важливість для професійного та особистісного розвитку. З огляду на глобальний характер сучасного сільського господарства та зростаючу потребу в міжнародній співпраці, опанування іноземною мовою, особливо англійською, є критично важливим для майбутніх фахівців.

У дослідженні наголошується на ролі іншомовних навичок у професійному спілкуванні, що дозволяє отримувати доступ до міжнародних ресурсів, брати участь у міжкультурному діалозі та долучатися до глобальних сільськогосподарських проєктів.

Автори аналізують проблеми розвитку іншомовної компетентності, відзначаючи системні труднощі, такі як низький рівень володіння іноземною мовою у здобувачів при вступі до закладів вищої освіти та недостатня інтеграція закладів освіти з виробничою та науково-дослідною сферами. Ці проблеми перешкоджають ефективному впровадженню іншомовних навчальних програм та підготовці конкурентоспроможних фахівців.

У статті підкреслюється необхідність міждисциплінарного підходу до викладання іноземних мов, який передбачає включення змісту з різних галузей, таких як історія, культурологія, маркетинг та менеджмент, для покращення комунікативних навичок здобувачів у професійному контексті.

Також у статті досліджуються ефективні методи навчання, акцентуючи увагу на необхідності переходу від пасивних до активних освітніх стратегій. Рекомендується використання інтерактивних платформ, мультимедійних засобів, рольових ігор та групових проєктів для підвищення мотивації здобувачів. Викладачам пропонується зосередитися на практично орієнтованому та професійно релевантному змісті, створюючи можливості для застосування здобувачами своїх навичок у реальних умовах.

Автори роблять висновок, що вирішення зазначених проблем вимагає тісної інтеграції освітньої, виробничої та науково-дослідної складових для забезпечення динамічної та ефективної системи підготовки. Вони визначають такі напрями подальших досліджень як: інноваційні методи навчання та інтеграція різних дисциплін як складові для вдосконалення розвитку іншомовної компетентності серед здобувачів сільськогосподарських спеціальностей.

Ключові слова: вища освіта, іншомовна комунікативна компетентність, аграрна освіта, професійне спілкування, соціокультурна компетентність, професійна лексика.