

## Challenges and Opportunities for Developing Communicative Competence of Future Teachers

 Natalya V. Vershinina<sup>1</sup>,  Svetlana A. Babina<sup>2</sup>,  Elena V. Beloglazova<sup>3</sup> and  Svetlana I. Lugzaeva<sup>4</sup>

1.2.3.4. Department of Methods of Preschool and Primary Education, Mordovian State Pedagogical Institute named after M.E. Evseviev, Saransk, Russia.

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### ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the challenges of developing communicative competence representing a fundamental competence in the framework of future teacher professional training. The authors believe, that the above competence is underpinned by the speech mastery of a teacher and effective communication practice. The authors identified contradictions in the existing system of communicative training and outlined the way forward for developing communicative competence of students in pedagogical universities in the context of implementation of the new Federal State Standard of Higher Education. Communicative competence is viewed as a universal transprofessional meta-competence, which should be developed, first of all, through subject areas with philological focus, offering special assignments aimed at developing practical communicative skills: language, speech and rhetorical skills necessary for further professional activity of a teacher. The research carried out by the authors, supported by theoretical analysis, synthesis, classification and generalization, and method of pedagogical design, made it possible to refine and adjust the variable part of curricula, to make substantial changes in the design of programs and classes for students seeking Bachelor's degree in the field of training Pedagogical Education, specialties Primary Education; and Pre-school Education. Primary education. The presented methodological experience indicates possible ways to eliminate the identified contradictions in the context of raising a future teacher.

## 1. Introduction

The society constantly undergoing inevitable transformations dictates the same requirements for dynamic modifications in the modern educational paradigm: "Educational outcomes must meet the needs of the new society" [1, p. 8]. The teacher's skills in the current situation are assessed against the highest possible scale of knowledge, skills and abilities forming the foundation of professional competence. The leading component of professional competence of a pedagogical university graduate is the communicative competence, which allows to carry out effective in-class and out-of-class communication, implement tolerant behavior, personal self-fulfillment and group unity in professional activity and beyond it. Effective results of the system of upbringing and education of a person and a citizen fully depend on the level of communicative competence of a teacher. The foregoing points to the unconditional relevance of the development of communicative competence of future teachers. In addition, the development of

communicative competence of bachelor course students in the field of training "Pedagogical Education" is laid down in the Federal State Standard of Higher Education, approved by Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation N 125 dd February 22, 2018, registered with the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation under the number 50358 on March 15, 2018 and came into force on January 1, 2019 (FSES HE 3++) [2].

The Requirements to the outcomes of bachelor's degree program specifies the categories (groups) of universal competencies (UC), among which the developers have singled out "communication" and "universal competence UC-4. Ability to carry out business communication in verbal and written forms in the state language of the Russian Federation and foreign language(s)".

It is offered that the universities apply one of the developed tentative basic educational programs which analysis has revealed that almost all the program developers rely on UC-4 as an indication of achievement:

“UC-4.1. Uses various forms and types of oral and written communication in Russian, native and foreign language(s).

UC-4.2. Freely perceives, analyzes and critically evaluates oral and written business information in Russian, native and foreign language(s).

UC-4.3. Knows the framework of norms of Russian literary language, native language and norms of foreign language(s).

UC-4.4. Uses language means to achieve professional goals in Russian, native and foreign language(s).

UC-4.5. Develops a strategy of oral and written communication in Russian, native and foreign language(s) within the frames of interpersonal and intercultural communication" [3, pp. 9–10].

Thus, FSES HE 3++ recognizes the communication competence as universal (transprofessional) meta-competence) and includes it in the requirements to the completion results of the bachelor's program.

## 2. Literature Review

The communicative competence in modern scientific literature is reviewed by many scientists in their works. The concept of communicative competence was first introduced by D. Hymes as an inner knowledge of the situational appropriateness of language [4]. Some scholars note that communicative competence in a situation of real communication refers to both the knowledge and the skill, and highlight its multicomponent design, including grammatical, sociolinguistic, discursive and strategic competence [5].

D. Hymes in his works adopts a pragmatic approach to the study of communicative competence and distinguishes four components in its structure: what is formally possible, what is feasible, what is the social meaning or value of a given statement, and what actually happens [4]. His ideas were continued in the works of N.V. Chernova, S.A. Zyryanova, E.A. Vukolova [6].

As a key competence that covers all aspects of human life and society and that is crucial for the successful self-fulfillment of the communication actor, it is presented in the works of D. Gordon, K. Andersen, G. Perez, E. Finengan [7], J. Figel [8], E.F. Zeer [9], I.A. Zimnyaya [10], V.I. Baydenko, B. Oskarsson [11], etc.

The American linguist S. Savignon schematically presented communicative competence as an "inverted pyramid", demonstrating that practice and experience build up grammatical, discursive, strategic and socio-cultural competence (facets of the pyramid) and generate communicative competence (the pyramid's foundation) [12].

Discussion and analysis of the current state of development of communicative competence via training are the focus of the works by S. Vargas-Diaz and-Apablaza [13], H. Basol and J. Inozu [14], the practical methods to develop

communicative competence were explored by L. Zhai [15], V. Schaefer, I. Darsi, L. Abe [16], M.B. Serpikova, N.V. Serpikova [17], T.I. Shukshina, P.V. Zamkin, O.P. Burkanova [18].

Such scientists as B.G. Ananiev, A.A. Bodalev, A.A. Brudnyi, B.F. Lomov, A.V. Mudrik, L.A. Petrovskaya, A.V. Khutorskoy, etc., when looking deep into the mechanisms responsible for the development of communicative competence, refer to it as a condition essential for improving the efficiency of education. The process of communication is viewed as the unity of three components, the communicative, the interactive and the perceptual ones.

Pedagogical psychology describes communicative competence as the ability to establish and maintain necessary contacts with people (Yu.N. Emelyanov, Yu.M. Zhukov, E.S. Kuzmin, L.A. Petrovskaya), as a moral and psychological category that regulates the entire system of relationships between a human and the world (I.A. Zimnyaya) [10], as a high level of communicative skills that ensure comfortable and unhindered interaction with others (V. V. Sokolova).

The communicative competence as the most important component of general professional and pedagogical training of pedagogical university students was explored by N.S. Shkitina, E.V. Gnatysheva, N.S. Kasatkina, E.Yu. Nemudraya, M.V. Tsiulina [19], who considered the constructs and conditions behind the effective functioning of the process model facilitating the development of empathic and communicative competence of pedagogical university students [20], the behavioral patterns of future teachers are presented in the publications of S. Shedrina, E.N. Tkach, V.A. Davydenko [21].

Scientists agree that communicative competence is the core component of a person's professional competence, which determines the efficiency of professional communication. Communicative competence is the pillar of a teacher's professionalism, since communication with children is the essence of pedagogical activity. It has a complex structure and represents a specific system of scientific knowledge and practical skills.

Speech activity is dominant in pedagogical communication. The teacher's speech is both the main instrument of professional activity and a gold standard, i.e. it requires good knowledge of speech communication culture. One cannot but agree with the point of view expressed by E.M. Kuzmina: "Communicative competence is a combination of two aspects: the purely linguistic aspect, ... that implies knowledge of the language system and the ability to use the language means in real situations of speech interaction abiding by the existing norms, and the aspect of communicative behavior of an individual engaged in a conversation, which creates conditions for a comfortable existence in society, among other people, fosters effective interpersonal interaction, teamwork in the atmosphere of cooperation and mutual understanding. Communicative competence acts as a phenomenon that has a complex ... structural design, and includes three components as its substructures: theoretical (knowledge in the field of interpersonal interaction), practical (communicative skills) and personal (a range of personal traits and qualities that facilitate the successful interpersonal interaction)" [22, p. 34]. E.N. Gorobets views language, linguistic and rhetorical competences as structural components of communicative competence [23].

### 3. Research Methodological Framework

The purpose of this study is a search for the most efficient ways to develop the communicative competence of pedagogical university students. The identified purpose allowed to determine a range of tasks to be addressed: 1) identify the reasons that have an impact on the level of the communicative competence of bachelor course students in the fields of training 44.03.01 Pedagogical Education, specialty Primary Education; and 44.03.05 Pedagogical

Education, specialty Preschool Education;2) introduce structural and substantial changes into the variable part of the curriculum in the fields of training referred to above; 3) supplement the work programs of subject areas by developing and testing communicatively oriented tasks aimed at increasing the level of communicative competence of future teachers; 4) experimentally check the obtained results.

The following research methods were chosen to address the above tasks: to conduct a theoretical analysis, to consolidate and interpret scientific data, to study and consolidate the existing pedagogical experience using a method of pedagogical design (planning, modeling and delivering the classes in the subject areas with philological focus for future primary school teachers under the curricula in the fields of training 44.03.01 Pedagogical Education, specialty Primary Education; and 44.03.05 Pedagogical Education, specialty Preschool education. Primary education); prove the value of the experiment.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

The primacy of communicative competence is verified by regulatory documents, scientific research findings and methodical developments. However, the analysis of teaching practice of university graduates and young teachers reveals that the level of their communicative competence often does not meet the required standards. The issue of speech development of students at school is still relevant: "A child has no model, since the teacher is not always able to communicate and speak properly, and not in all instances may express itself as a language personality. As a rule, the university does not set pursue this goal when training future teachers of non-philological majors, although there are ways to accomplish this goal" [1, pp. 8–13]. Thus, some contradictions are exposed between:

- Demands of the modern society, which insists on the training of teachers with a high level of communicative competence, and the existing design of the educational process in a higher education institution, which does not always ensure adequate quality;

- An urgent demand for a teacher with a high level of communicative competence and communicative culture in all areas of communication, possessing skills that ensure the efficiency of pedagogical and pre-professional communication and insufficient readiness of graduates to successfully handle these tasks.

The mentioned contradictions predetermine the purpose of this study which consists in ensuring the development of communicative competence of pedagogical university students through elaboration and implementation of communicative assignments in the subject areas with philological focus.

Communicative competence as an important component of the overall professional competence of a teacher is directly related to the efficiency of interaction and communication of a person in accordance with the requirements of pedagogical problematic situations to be addressed. In the center of pedagogical activity lies the communication activity, through which the teacher transfers knowledge, enables exchange of information, manages cognitive and practical activities of students, regulates the relationships between students.

The teacher's success in carrying out its professional duties is determined by the level of pedagogical excellence, ability to organize pedagogical communication with students, ability to manage the process of communication in the team, and establish contact with each student. Achievement of this goal largely depends on the quality of training delivered to university students and aimed at developing their communication skills. These are the poor communication skills of a teacher that make the entire educational process a failure, since communication is one of the most important means of solving educational tasks [24], which leads to disruption of the communication system.

Development of the communicative competence of a teacher means creating conditions for broadening their communicative perspective, thus giving rise to a need for communication, and impetus towards acquisition of communicative knowledge and practical communicative skills. This is a reason why a dedicated training to develop communication ability is required.

Thus, in our view, the communicative competence is based on a combination of certain knowledge, skills and abilities. In particular, knowledge about language as a linguistic system, which finds its implementation in speech activity. Proceeding from the above, the most important skills essential for communicative competence of future teachers are language/linguistic skills (lexical, grammatical, spelling, punctuation, etc.), speech skills (stylistic, genre, textual), rhetorical skills ("the ability to intentionally influence the audience by means of speech" [25], i.e., a combination of skills that form the pedagogical discourse in a broad sense.

The analysis of the existing problems made it possible to refine and adjust the variable part of the curricula, and make substantial changes in the design of programs and bachelor course in the field of training Pedagogical Education, specialty Primary Education; and Pedagogical Education, specialty Preschool education. Primary education.

The authors see the potential for developing the communicative competence of future teachers in the rational organization of classes in the subject areas with philological focus, taught at the Department of Pedagogical and Artistic Education in MSPI named after M.E. Evseviev within the bachelor course in the fields of training Pedagogical Education, specialty Primary Education; and Pedagogical Education, specialty Preschool education. Primary education.

The primary school teacher should learn the theoretical features along with practical and personal aspects of communication training. Linguistic subject areas cover both theoretical training, which allows "students to obtain knowledge of general rules of the Russian language, concepts and theories of language education", and training to "solve pedagogical problems in the conditions close to the real-life professional activity" [26, pp. 27–34].

Thus, an ability to use various forms and types of verbal and written communication is developed in the process of completing the assignments on the interpretation, production and implementation of texts representing different genres and styles (using non-verbal means of communication) as part of such academic subject areas as Russian Language, Russian Language and Speech Culture, Speech Practices (FSES HE 3++ starting from 2019-2020 academic year), elective subject area with philological focus.

The ability to freely perceive, analyze and critically evaluate verbal and written business information is developed with the help of assignments aimed at the creation and analysis of communicative and speech situations, detailed analysis of ready/ primary texts, as well as the analysis and creation of own (both primary and secondary) texts of different genres and styles, for example, during the classes in the following subject areas and elective courses: Russian Language and Speech Culture, Speech Practice, Use of Text Genre and Stylistic Varieties to Develop Communicative Competence of Primary School Students, Basics of Speech Etiquette for Primary School Students.

The ability to apply the framework of standards of the Russian literary language becomes relevant when students write dictations, complete creative assignments in the Russian language and literary reading, do tests and perform multi-dimensional analysis of texts. This skill springs up at the classes in such subject areas as Russian Language and Speech Culture, Russian Language, Russian Spelling Workshop, Variability and Changeability of modern Russian Literary Language Standards, Use of Tests in Teaching Russian Language at Primary School.

Development of the ability to use language tools to achieve professional goals is aimed at mastering the



communicative qualities of speech, different layers of vocabulary, visual and expressive means, the fundamentals of argumentation in the selective subject areas “Study of Words with Gradual Meaning within the Initial Course of the Russian Language”, “Development of Language Competence of Junior Schoolchildren” [27, 28].

The ability to build a strategy of oral and written communication in Russian within the framework of interpersonal and intercultural communication is practiced in the process of modeling and analyzing the educational speech situations, writing essays and narratives (subject areas Russian Language and Speech Culture, Speech Practice, elective courses Development of Communicative Skills of Junior Schoolchildren, Organization of Extra-Curricular Research Activities of Junior Schoolchildren in the Russian language, Development of Creative Abilities of Junior Schoolchildren by Means of Literature, Development of Universal Learning Activities of Junior Schoolchildren at Russian Language Classes).

While each lesson should include both individual and group forms of work, implemented with the use of interactive technologies (design and research activities, clusters, cinquains, role-play games, bouts-rimes, etc.).

During the classes in the above mentioned subject areas, students analyze and critically evaluate research information in Russian language on the given topic (UC-4.2) obtained from various sources (explanatory speech, textbooks, Internet, extracts from electronic library systems).

During the practical part (projects, discussions, role-play games, simulation of speech situations, answers, text construction), they build a strategy of oral communication using verbal and non-verbal means (UC-4.5), demonstrate the level of knowledge of the system of modern Russian literary language standards (UC-4.3).

Listeners perceive, analyze and critically assess the presented information, conduct discussions (UK-4.2) and demonstrate their ability to clearly and coherently articulate questions and defend their standpoint.

## 5. Conclusion

These are the subject areas with philological focus that are intended to develop communicative competence, primarily by using the means of the studied Russian language.

The results of the undertaken monitoring of these subject areas, the positive feedback from educational organizations enrolling students for practical training, high level of answers at the state exams and the defense of final qualification papers, noted by the chairmen of the state certification commissions, allow us to draw conclusions about the proven effectiveness of the developed system of teaching in the subject areas with philological focus at the Department of Pedagogical and Artistic Education in MSPI named after M.E. Evseviev.

Based on the experience in the development of communicative competence of future primary school teachers, we may assume that the proposed forms and technologies of work with students will be effective for the development of universal competence (UC-4) following the adoption of FSES HE 3++ in 2019-2020 academic year, and will be geared towards improving the quality of education in the pedagogical university and will contribute to the development of competencies needed for bachelor degree holders in their future professional activities.

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### Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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