

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION: THE APPLICATION OF COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH

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**Annotation.** The article explores the problem of professional development of foreign language teachers at higher education institutions. The professional competence of foreign language teachers requires not only knowledge of linguistics, but also of the methodology of teaching a foreign language, pedagogy and psychology, without which it is impossible to create a constructive educational environment favourable for the comprehensive development of the personality of the future specialist. Given the active scientific research in the field of professional development of foreign language teachers, scientific publications highlight the results of studying its various aspects, which is of particular significance for improving both the practice of organising professional development of scientific and pedagogical staff in a higher education institution, and the improvement of professional and pedagogical activities of foreign language teachers, which has a direct impact on the effectiveness of students' learning. It was found that the professional development of a teacher is one of those problems that does not lose its relevance for many years. The focus of the review is the issue of pedagogical personnel' professional development in the context of comparative pedagogy, in particular the relationship between professionalism, pedagogical mastery, the quality of educational activities and the effectiveness of professional development programs. The study describes the main methodological approaches on which the professional development of foreign language teachers in modern higher education institutions is based: systemic, axiological, andragogical, anthropological, intercultural, and competency-based. The characteristic of competency-based approach and its application in professional development of university foreign language teachers is provided.

**Keywords:** competency-based approach; foreign language teacher; higher education institution; knowledge, skills, and values and attitude; methodological approaches; professional development; pedagogical mastery.

### Професійний розвиток викладача іноземної мови у закладі вищої освіти: застосування компетентнісного підходу

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**Анотація.** Стаття присвячена проблемі професійного розвитку викладачів іноземних мов у закладах вищої освіти. Професійна компетентність викладачів іноземних мов охоплює не лише знання з мовознавства, але й методіку викладання іноземної мови, педагогіку та психологію, без яких неможливо створити конструктивне освітнє середовище, сприятливе для всебічного розвитку особистості майбутнього фахівця. Зважаючи на активні наукові дослідження у сфері професійного розвитку викладачів іноземних мов, наукові публікації висвітлюють результати вивчення різних аспектів цього процесу, що має особливе значення для вдосконалення як практики організації професійного розвитку науково-педагогічних працівників у закладах вищої освіти, так і професійної та педагогічної діяльності викладачів іноземних мов, що безпосередньо впливає на ефективність навчання здобувачів освіти. Встановлено, що професійний розвиток педагога належить до тих проблем, які зберігають свою актуальність упродовж багатьох років. Основну увагу в огляді приділено питанню професійного розвитку педагогічних кадрів у контексті порівняльної педагогіки, зокрема взаємозв'язку між професіоналізмом, професійною майстерністю, якістю освітньої діяльності та ефективністю програм професійного розвитку. У дослідженні окреслено основні методологічні підходи, що покладені в основу професійного розвитку викладачів іноземних мов у сучасних закладах вищої освіти, а саме: системний, аксіологічний, андрагогічний, антропологічний, міжкультурний та компетентнісний. Подано характеристику компетентнісного підходу та особливості його застосування у процесі професійного розвитку викладачів іноземних мов в університетах.

**Ключові слова:** компетентнісний підхід; викладач іноземної мови; заклад вищої освіти; знання, уміння, цінності та ставлення; методологічні підходи; професійний розвиток; педагогічна майстерність.

### Introduction

The professional development of teachers has been a topical issue for many years, which indicates the considerable attention of politicians, theorists, practitioners in the field of education, as well as the public. Particular importance is attached to the problem of professional development of foreign language teachers, who are called upon to form the foreign language competence of the future specialist, which is considered today in the labour market as a requirement and competitive advantage. The professional competence of foreign language teachers requires not only knowledge of linguistics, but also of the methodology of teaching a foreign language, pedagogy and psychology, without which it is impossible to create a constructive educational environment favourable for the comprehensive development of the personality of the future specialist.

Given the active scientific research in the field of professional development of foreign language teachers, scientific publications highlight the results of studying its various aspects, which is of particular significance for improving both the practice of organising professional development of scientific and pedagogical staff in a higher education institution, and the improvement of professional and pedagogical activities of foreign language teachers, which has a direct impact on the effectiveness of students' learning.

As a result of the study of scientific and pedagogical literature, the task of compiling a source base for the study becomes obvious, which should include scientific works devoted to highlighting, analysing and substantiating theoretical, methodological, and organisational aspects of teachers' professional development. Among the scientific works that have attracted research attention, we highlight those that study and analyse various aspects of the professional development of educators working at different levels of the education system, in particular: general secondary education [7], vocational (vocational and technical) education [14], professional pre-higher, and higher education [4]. The source base of the study includes publications that analyse the specifics of professional development from the perspective of comparative pedagogy [11]. A large body of scientific research explores the relationship

between professional development, professionalism, and ensuring the quality of education and educational activities [26], the quality and effectiveness of professional development programs [20], as well as the professional development of teachers at different stages of their career development [9]. Important for the study are scientific works that study the theory, methodological approaches, and practice of professional development of teachers based on the competency-based approach, features of professional development of teachers in various specialities. Particularly valuable for the scientific study are publications devoted to highlighting the professional development of foreign language teachers [20], as well as types, forms, and methods of professional development of foreign language teachers [22, 23].

*The formulation of article purpose.* The purpose of this article is to conduct an analysis of scientific literature and on its ground substantiate the application of competency-based approach in foreign language teachers' professional development at higher education institutions.

### **Results**

The problem of improving the pedagogical mastery of university teaching staff has remained at the forefront of scientific and educational discussions for a long time. Its topicality is explained by a number of factors that can be classified into external and internal. The external factors include the dynamic progress of scientific thought, which is intensified due to the active introduction of information and communication technologies into scientific activities and knowledge transfer processes. Also significant is the influence of technological innovations, which determine the need to develop digital competencies of university teachers and their active use of ICT in the educational sphere. In addition, transformational shifts associated with the globalization and internationalization of education lead to a growing demand for foreign language proficiency and effective intercultural interaction. In the context of growing competition in the national market of educational services, higher education institutions focus their efforts on improving the quality of the educational process and educational activities in general. This includes aligning internal standards with the requirements of accreditation bodies, ensuring procedures for professional certification of teaching staff, and encouraging their participation in specialized communities, professional networks, and industry associations. These steps necessitate the modernization of the content and structure of educational programs, orientation toward innovative educational practices, and the introduction of various forms and methods of organizing learning.

Along with external factors, internal prerequisites also become vital, which, in our opinion, play a key role in the formation and professional development of scientific and pedagogical staff. These factors include the awareness of the teacher's personal responsibility for the effectiveness of the educational process and the achievement of educational results; the desire for self-realization as a manifestation of ambitions for professional success and improvement of pedagogical skills; as well as openness to the implementation of modern educational technologies and the willingness to experiment with innovative teaching methods.

Currently, higher education institutions are making efforts to create and develop their own professional development systems in order to organize continuous professional development of scientific and pedagogical staff. Such a system involves the organization of continuous professional training, which is a guarantee of improving the staff' pedagogical mastery, quality of teaching, scientific research, international activity, etc.

It is worth noting that the theory and practice of teachers' professional development is the subject of scientific studies by a number of domestic and foreign researchers. Considering the problem of professional development of teachers of secondary schools, researchers emphasize the importance of creating an appropriate environment for its organization. Its main components include the author's "conceptual and target (goal and objectives, methodological approaches, management patterns, management principles), organizational and managerial

(subjects of management, object of management, management functions (basic and specific)), content-technological, evaluation and results (technology of management of the educational environment of teachers' professional development, qualimetric model of evaluation of results of educational environment management) components" [7, p. 117].

The need to create an appropriate environment and system for the professional development of university teachers in a higher education institution is emphasized by Y. Yermak [1]. The author writes: "it is necessary to create an appropriate system for improving the professional level in a higher education institution, which would function in a mode of constant renewal and development, contributing to the training of scientific and pedagogical personnel for activity in new socio-economic conditions. At the same time, it is necessary to focus efforts on creating a scientifically based system of postgraduate training aimed at increasing the level of thoroughness of pedagogical knowledge and skills of each teacher, which will allow, in turn, the higher school teacher to more fully realize professional functions, to master modern technologies of influence on the student's personality for the purpose of its development" [1, p. 221].

Actually, the specifics of professional development from the perspective of comparative pedagogy are highlighted by the publications of a cohort of researchers [11], which is important for the analysis of best practices and the study of the possibilities of adopting constructive ideas into domestic experience. Thus, studying the foreign experience of professional development of pedagogues, N. Mukan and I. Hrohodza argue that it is "oriented to the implementation of a set of tasks: promoting understanding of the new context of education at the beginning of the 21st century on the basis of previously mastered knowledge; familiarizing teachers with the new requirements of the general education school curriculum; familiarizing and testing the latest educational technologies for thorough professional development; promoting the exchange of experience between teachers, students of advanced training courses; identifying current problems of daily professional practice, etc." [9, p. 25].

O. Radkevych studies the problem of teachers' professional development in the field of vocational education in European countries. Based on the generalization of European experience, the author summarizes that Ukraine should adopt leading ideas and best practices regarding: "investing in flexible systems of training of pedagogical personnel; creating professional profiles for teachers, which include all information in the context of their educational activities; obtaining licenses for pedagogical activity by teachers; obtaining qualifications in the field of professional activity by teachers of professional subjects; introducing the concept of mentoring in companies, enterprises, educational institutions; creating conditions for internships and probationary periods for young teachers under the guidance of more experienced ones; creating an electronic environment for teachers' professional development and exchanging their experience; involving practicing professionals from production in teaching, especially those who have completed pedagogical mastery courses; recognizing the results of informal learning, the so-called "independent learning", as a form of professional development of pedagogical personnel; motivating teachers and trainers of vocational education institutions to continue professional development through bonuses and salary increases" [13, p. 138].

N. Mukan and I. Hrohodza emphasize that at the beginning of the 21st century globalization contributes to the formation of a single international educational space, which, despite integration processes, preserves the originality and identity of national educational systems. Modern educational transformations in the global dimension lead to the development of such an educational model that guarantees a high level of educational services quality, regardless of geographical location and time limits. In the realities of the knowledge society, the need for highly qualified specialists is growing, able to flexibly respond to the challenges of the new century and work effectively in different sectors of the economy [12]. Therefore, a large array of scientific research explores the relationship between professional development,

professionalism, pedagogical mastery and ensuring the quality of education and educational activities [16, 19]; the quality and effectiveness of professional development programs [20], as well as the professional development of teachers at different stages of their career development [21].

We agree with I. Khorzhevska that “professional development of the individual is associated with the development of the individual in general, with the acquisition of new experience, knowledge, skills and with the transformation of motivation and interests of a particular person” [16, p. 113]. Therefore, significant for our study are scientific publications that directly study the theory, methodological approaches, practice of teachers’ professional development, which is based on the application of the competency-based approach [24].

According to M. Ilyakhova, “continuous professional development of scientific and pedagogical employees is possible in the systemic unity of formal, non-formal and informal education. Education obtained in accordance with the programs, levels, fields of knowledge, specialties defined by law is formal, since it involves the achievement by students of learning outcomes determined by state standards, the appropriate level of education and the acquisition of qualifications recognized by the state” [2, p. 57]. The author is convinced that teachers’ professional development is “institutionalized, purposeful, planned education with the participation of state and recognized private organizations. Non-formal education is obtained, as a rule, according to educational programs and does not provide for the award of state-recognized educational qualifications at the education levels, but may end with the award of professional and/or partial educational qualifications. This education is institutionalized, purposeful and planned by a postgraduate education institution without providing educational programs and qualifications, and is additional, alternative and/or complementary to formal education in the process of lifelong learning” [2, p. 57].

Particularly valuable for our study are publications devoted to the coverage of foreign language teachers’ professional development [22], as well as types, forms and methods of foreign language teachers’ professional development [23, 25].

S. Miroshnyk emphasizes that the basis of a modern teacher professional development should be a number of methodological approaches, among which the author distinguishes personally oriented, andragogical, acmeological, competency-based, noting that “the analysed approaches and, accordingly, the concepts of organizing the professional development of teachers are an attempt to respond to the challenges of modernity in the need for a professional teacher as the main driving force of education in society. ... We see a positive in the optimal combination of all these approaches, which largely complement each other and which are characterized by common features: when implementing all the considered conceptual principles of organizing a teacher’s professional development, his experience is involved (taken into account and used); the individual is the subject of learning and development; this process has a professional context” [8, p. 17].

Y. Yampol notes that today the use of personality-activity, competence-based, acmeological, systemic and complex approaches to the professional development of teachers is inherent [19]. N. Mukan and I. Hrohodza distinguish and characterize the systemic, structural-functional, axiological, andragogical, anthropological, intercultural, functional, methodological, and competence-based approaches [12].

Let us characterize those methodological approaches that, according to experts – experienced researchers in the field of education – are the most relevant in professional development of foreign language teachers working in higher education institutions: systemic, axiological, andragogical, anthropological, intercultural, and competency-based [14].

According to the systemic approach, professional development is considered as a system of interconnected components between which functional connections are implemented. The components of the professional development system are the goal and objectives, subjects of professional development, the content of professional development, the pedagogical arsenal of

possible types of training (formal, non-formal, informal), forms of training organization (for example, full-time, blended, distance), technologies and methods of training, resource provision, professional development assessment system, etc. [14].

According to the axiological approach, for the formation of foreign language teachers, their professional development, self-improvement and increasing the level of pedagogical mastery, not only knowledge, skills and abilities are important, but also such components of their professional competence as values and professional attitude. Axiology, as a science of values, forms methodological principles for organizing the professional development of university staff. We agree that “axiology clarifies and investigates the qualities and properties of objects, phenomena, processes that are able to satisfy the needs, interests and desires of people. The function of axiology as a philosophical discipline is to clarify values as certain meaning-forming principles of human existence, which determine the direction and motivation of the individual’s life activity – value orientations, with the help of which a worldview is formed” [3, p. 90]. In the context of our study, this statement needs to be supplemented with a professional component that reflects the professional values and attitudes of university teachers, who perform an important function in the development of society – they directly form a future specialist with appropriate personal, cultural, philosophical and civic values and attitudes, on whose activities the further development of the local community, country, its culture, economy, politics, etc. depends.

According to the principles of andragogy, an adult clearly understands the need for lifelong learning, is able to analyse his own strengths and weaknesses, understands his needs, shows interest in the new and demonstrates a desire to learn it. This is confirmed in the monograph “Professional Education: An Andragogy Approach”, which notes that “the educational need of both philosophers and psychologists and teachers is directly related to the phenomenon of culture, and it becomes in demand for the transformation of natural abilities into potential opportunities” [5, p. 50]. Therefore, in our study we proceed from the position that foreign language teachers in higher education institutions are aware of the need for continuous professional development and are interested in their own personal improvement and improvement of their pedagogical mastery, and their independence and subjectivity, life and professional experience serve as the basis for further mastering of knowledge and cultivating professional activity.

Using an anthropological approach, our study adheres to the idea that a foreign language teacher working in a higher education institution is a holistic personality, the main qualities of which are harmonious development, spirituality and intelligence, self-awareness, freedom and originality, and a humanistic orientation. These qualities are fundamental in professional and pedagogical activities aimed at using the potential of a personality-oriented approach, providing psychological and pedagogical support to students, etc. Therefore, the professional development of foreign language teachers should be based on an anthropological approach in order to provide opportunities for self-knowledge and the development of relevant personal qualities, which together form the uniqueness of the teacher’s personality from the perspective of emotionality, intellectuality, and spirituality. We agree with the statement that “to build a concept of education focused on the person, it is necessary to create conditions for revealing a holistic image of the personality in the flow of life manifestations and, with its help, explaining the surrounding reality and understanding one’s own nature” [17, p. 76].

We find confirmation of these considerations in the scientific work of V. Yagupov [18]. The researcher proposes to consider the problem of professional development of a modern specialist through the prism of personality, which the author interprets as “a socially determined system of leading human qualities, which includes the most significant social and professionally important qualities, traits and manifestations that form the subject of professional activity, determine the unique culture of his professional behaviour, professional interaction, individual style of professional activity as a subject of individual, social and

professional existence in a socio-professional environment” [18, p. 22]. On this basis, the author proposes to interpret professional development as follows: “this is the goal, meaning and value of the professional culture of a specialist as an individual and as a specific specialist; it is a complex, contradictory and multifaceted process, which consists of personal, and professional development, usually determined by social, professional-technological, age, personal, leading individual-psychic, professionally important qualities and traits, has an open, uneven and heterochronous character; it is the result of a constant search for an answer to the essence of contradictions (external and intrapersonal), which constantly arise in professional activity, and the specialist’s efforts to resolve or remove them; it is a condition for the successful professional activity of a specialist; it is a condition for the personal and professional self-actualization of a specialist in professional activity; the personal professional development of a specialist has its limit and is associated with overcoming certain external and internal psychological barriers” [18, p. 27].

We consider it appropriate to characterize the intercultural approach to the professional development of foreign language teachers in higher education institutions. According to N. Mukan and K. Istomina, “globalization trends in the modern world determine the need to master a certain amount of knowledge, the formation and development of skills and abilities necessary for working in a multicultural society and community” [10, p. 471].

Taking into account the subject of our scientific research, it is logical to substantiate its essence, role and significance for organizing the professional development of foreign language teachers. Currently, the competency-based approach is very popular in the educational field, as evidenced by scientific publications in which the main emphasis is shifted from the knowledge paradigm of education to the competency one. The point is that mastering knowledge is not enough for full-fledged functioning in society or a professional environment. Much more important is the formation of the ability, the components of which are knowledge, skills and abilities to use them, taking into account universal, professional values and attitudes. We are talking about the formation of competence, which represents a system of knowledge, skills and abilities, values and attitudes, which together represent a person’s ability to adapt to life in society and self-realization.

In this context, it is worth referring to the scientific research of O. Kholodnyak, who notes that “the conditions and procedure of teaching activity are changing, transgeographical and multicultural processes in education and science actualize the needs of new requirements for scientific and pedagogical employees” [15, p. 119]. The author concludes that “the basic aspects of the professional development of teaching skills of a specialist in the field of the humanities and social sciences involve rethinking the concepts of competencies as defining qualities necessary for the organizational, content and procedural aspects of the educational process in an educational institution, when the teacher proceeds from the understanding of the relevant trends by students and employers in the appropriateness of the methods of educational communication used. The competitiveness of a teacher at a higher education institution primarily depends on his readiness and ability in pedagogical partnership to implement the systemic challenges of creating an innovative digital educational and cultural environment for the progress of the student, the ability to provide him with psychological comfort, take into account cultural differences and mentality, and the need to tolerate intercultural differences” [15, p. 120].

Having studied the use of the competency-based approach in teachers’ professional development, V. Lunyachek notes that “further development of the competency-based approach as a methodology of professional training in higher education and the system of postgraduate pedagogical education involves a transition from the traditional consideration of the structure of competencies and their content to the study of the processes of professional development individualization of each individual on a competency-based origin based on modelling. This will allow us to form an individual competency-based model of each individual

development throughout life” [6, p. 44]. Based on the study of scientific and pedagogical literature, we summarize that the competency-based approach is one of the methodological approaches according to which the professional development of foreign language teachers is aimed at the formation of general and professional competencies necessary for full functioning in the academic environment of a higher education institution, the local community, at the regional and national levels of the education system, as well as in the international space of higher education.

### Conclusions

According to the study of the research source base, analysis and synthesis of scientific and pedagogical literature, it was found that the professional development of a teacher is one of those problems that does not lose its relevance for many years. Scientific studies outline various aspects of teachers' professional development, the results of which are covered in scientific publications: on the professional development of teachers of general secondary education, vocational (vocational and technical) education, professional pre-higher, higher education. The focus of the review is the issue of pedagogical personnel' professional development in the context of comparative pedagogy, in particular the relationship between professionalism, pedagogical mastery, the quality of educational activities and the effectiveness of professional development programs. The study describes the main methodological approaches on which the professional development of foreign language teachers in modern higher education institutions is based: systemic, axiological, andragogical, anthropological, intercultural, and competency-based. The characteristic of competency-based approach and its application in professional development of university foreign language teachers is provided.

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