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PLURILINGUAL COMPETENCE OF A TEACHER-RESEARCHER IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

The article is devoted to the accentuation of the role of a school teacher and a teacher of a higher educational institution in the implementation of the research component of his professional activity due to modern trends in reforming of the education system. The teacher-researcher is seen as a facilitator of the educational process. Particular attention is paid to the development of plurilingual competence in the structure of the professional competence of a teacher-researcher.

Key words: terminological culture; teacher-researcher; plurilingual competence.

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ПЛУРИЛИНГВАЛЬНАЯ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТЬ УЧИТЕЛЯ-ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЯ В РЕСПУБЛИКЕ БЕЛАРУСЬ

Статья посвящена акцентуализации роли школьного учителя и преподавателя учреждения высшего образования в реализации научно-исследовательской составляющей его профессиональной деятельности, которая обусловлена современными тенденциями реформирования системы образования. Учитель-исследователь рассматривается как фасилитатор образовательного процесса. Особое внимание уделяется развитию плюрилингвальной компетенции в структуре профессиональной компетентности учителя-исследователя.

Ключевые слова: терминологическая культура; учитель-исследователь; плюрилингвальная компетентность.

Introduction. At the present stage of the development of pedagogical science, the need for a linguistic representation of a particular concept that contributes to the effective functioning of the language in a certain subject area of scientific knowledge emphasizes the importance of developing a terminological culture and increasing the professional communicative competence of specialists in various fields of knowledge.

Teachers and teacher trainers are at the heart of education and they express the need to develop their competences for teaching students with special needs, use of digital technologies, and teaching in multilingual and multicultural classrooms. Moreover, modern idea of higher education institutions is seen as the unity of education and research, innovation and service to society. Definitely, collaboration between education institutions promote joint international research and innovation projects lifting quality in education worldwide. Every teacher is being challenged by necessity to play an active role in facilitating and developing that “knowledge square” mentioned above and the Belarusian teachers are not exception.

One of the prominent Belarusian scholars I. V. Piniuta on describing the Belarusian policy in language education specifies: “There are plenty of studies in Belarus aimed to master university students’ research skills, e.g., through project work aimed to explore the reasons and symptoms of culture shock experienced in the target culture” [1, p. 122]. It proves the necessity of the plurilingual competence development of subject teachers as well as EFL teachers and professional teacher training curricula has to consider metalinguistic awareness as fundamental and helpful to the development of plurilingual competence.

Main part. Conceptual approaches to the development of the education system of the Republic of Belarus for 2020 and a perspective up to 2030 (alongside “The Concept of pedagogical education development for 2015—2020”) contain the main tasks as following:

– the transition to modular educational programmes in the training of teachers and the introduction of online learning;

– the development of mechanisms for improving the professional competence of teachers and instructors based on WorldSkills International standards and internships abroad [2]. To meet these requirements teachers are to reorganise their professional development towards enhancement of the research component and becoming teachers-researchers.

Teacher research as educational phenomenon has been studied for almost 30 years and among the investigators we can mention A. V. Barannikov, Ch. Helot, B. Henderson, J. E. McLean, D. R. Meier, I. V. Piniuta, V. A. Slastenin, E. T. Stringer, A. J. Stremmel and others. They describe teacher research as intentional process and systematic inquiry aimed at gaining insights into teaching and learning, in order to become more reflective practitioners, whose performance effects changes in the classroom and improves children lives. McLean identifies major components of teacher research as:

- conceptualization, in which teachers identify a significant problem or interest and determine relevant research questions;
- implementation, in which teachers collect and analyse data;
- interpretation, in which teachers examine findings for meaning and take appropriate actions [3].

Student-centred approach determines children to be at the forefront of teacher research and as Henderson emphasised they are not only the subjects of teacher research but participants and even co-researchers. “In this way teacher research is participatory, inclusive of differences, and democratic in nature” [4, p. 94]. As the main objective of plurilinguistic approach is to awaken students’ language awareness we consider teachers as advocates of change coming from expertise of their both theoretical and practical teaching performance: “The aim was to develop in students the capacity to reflect about how languages function consequently preparing them to live and work in a world that is multilingual, multicultural and globalized” [4, p. 94].

Educational reforms have to begin in the classroom of a local school and then shape the national strategy due to the needs of schoolchildren and their parents, other stakeholders at any level. Henderson, Meier, Zeichner stressed on many forms of teacher research which takes and serves a range of purposes, but it has to be conducted “by teachers, individually or collaboratively, with the

primary aim of understanding teaching and learning in context and from the perspectives of those who live and interact daily in the classroom” [5]. These studies thus provide *unique insider* perspectives on meaningful issues in early care and education settings. It might help to bring more autonomy to schools while manifesting diversity, inclusiveness and creativity of teaching profession.

Promoting teacher research we come across the problem of initial definition for “a teacher-researcher” because there are no distinguishing differences between “research teaching fellow”, “high-research teacher”, “research instructor” and “trainee researcher” in the Russian and Belarusian studies, on-line dictionaries. Some investigators identify teachers-researchers as *university* teachers who have to investigate their area of expertise, analysing critically and systematically the practical activity, work to help students absorb their scientific knowledge and guide their education. Such teachers-researchers have sound knowledge in their field of scientific interest; have a solid basis with respect to training-learning processes and methodologies; use their knowledge to create connections, extend and present alternatives. Also teachers-researchers are flexible, open to new ideas to extend the theory and practice. They write articles, publications and books on their teaching experience and take part in encounters and seminaries to improve and validate their approaches. They know how to communicate their way of thinking, promoting different approaches that improve the understanding of proposals [5]. On the contrary, American scholars promote a great role of school teacher research and to be more precise try to describe the peculiarities of a *school* teacher-researcher:

1. A teacher-researcher uses methods and strategies to document the research process, identifies assumptions, collects and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data, and articulates theories, findings, and implications.

2. A teacher-researcher formulates theories in relation to their analysis. In these ways, a teacher-researcher systematically seeks to establish an accurate and full picture of a teaching and learning context that will lead to deeper understanding of that context.

3. A teacher-researcher chooses research questions that matter to them. Because they determine their own questions and the course of their research journey based on their own learning needs, their research is responsive to those needs [6].

The inquiry conducted by school teachers-researchers is unique by its nature because teachers may set out in one direction in their research, but their growing understanding of their teaching and their students' learning may lead them to change directions. As their research leads to improved understanding they may revise their plans for the data they collect, the methods they use, and the types of data analysis they conduct. While they cannot predict their research discoveries, they approach each step of the research process with the intention of finding out more about their teaching and their students' learning. Hairon Salleh describes the advantage of school teacher research is "that it brings teacher learning and teaching really close together" [7].

This process might be seen mesmerizing and meaningful, creative and challenging, full of methodological discoveries and scientific issues. It affects directly the status of a school or university as centers for research and innovations therefore increasing their reputation and competitiveness.

As we see the notion of communicative competence was developed within a context where the learner is not explicitly taken into account as a plurilingual subject but the teacher-researcher might foresee it. Besides, the authors of plurilingual and pluricultural approach also point out that communicative competence is also different from plurilingual competence whose function depends on the linguistic and cultural elements stored within the plurilinguistic repertoire, meaning language and its cultural dimension and related social knowledge should be part of the conceptualization of language, language use and language learning.

Coste, Moore and Zarate defined *plurilingual competence* as following: "a competence which refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social actor has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the social actor may draw. Thus the notion of *plurilingual competence* means that teachers-researchers have resources they can deploy to deal with linguistic and cultural diversity as well as otherness when they wish to communicate in

exolingual contexts, to adapt to a multicultural community or engage in an intercultural-interpersonal-relationship within teaching and research [8].

Plurilingual competence considered to be a “two-way competence”, which means that it not only enables an individual to communicate and to relate to others, but it also enables the individual to become more aware of the linguistic and cultural differences between others and him/her and to learn from the input he/she receives.

Conclusion. For any teacher-researcher there is a clear acknowledgement of languages spoken at home and different from those learnt at school. They are not only resource for inquiry of the methods and instructions, and technologies of teaching school languages but also investigation of students’ own space through socio-cognitive approach to language teaching. In response to teachers-researchers’ addressing to plurilingual approach in terms of their scientific performance: conferences and workshops, webinars activities and poster participation built up the multilinguistic awareness of multidisciplinary terms which gains more weight in their professional dossier.

The study of the specific pedagogical and linguistic terminology system can be considered as a condition for expanding the professional thesaurus of a teacher-researcher in the process of innovative, scientific and pedagogical activities. A professional thesaurus, in turn, is an important component in the process of forming the professional competence of a specialist, performing a number of functions. In addition to the communicative and cognitive function, it contributes to the most complete and conscious development of professionally significant information, and also updates the professionally relevant experience already available to a teacher-researcher.

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MEDIA LITERACY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN EFL CLASSROOMS

The article touches upon the issue of media literacy skills development in the context of education and society digitalization. The author describes the reasons and the ways media literacy skills may be incorporated into teaching practice at different