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PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE CONTEXT OF BRITISH EXPERIENCE

ABSTRACT

The article deals with revealing the peculiarities of language teachers' professional training in the context of British experience. The notions of philology, linguistics, philologist, linguist, language studies have been outlined and specified in the article. The titles of the curricula and their meanings in reference to language training have been analyzed. The reasons for an abundance of university curricula for language training have been justified. The content of Subject Benchmark Statement on Languages, Cultures and Societies has been defined. It has been stated that such processes as enhancing social values in the society, promoting integration processes and forming positive experience in the synthesis of classical and innovative approaches to training as well as the changes in the functions of training characterize the professional training of language teachers in Great Britain. On the example of De Montfort University the peculiarities of language teachers' professional training, in particular, ESL teachers, have been illustrated. It has been concluded that the methodological basis of future language teacher's professional training at British universities consists of personality-based, competency-based, integrative and differentiated approaches and is characterized by the orientation of the training content to forming and developing students' core professional competencies and rational combination of theoretical and practical components.

Key words: language teacher, language studies, professional training, curricula, Subject Benchmark Statement, QAA, British Experience.

INTRODUCTION

Lately, in Great Britain the role of language has been discussed in numerous reviews and reports. As a result, there has been a raise in the awareness of the economic value of languages to people and society. The ability to use a foreign language is highly regarded by employers. Thus, graduates in languages have the highest employability rates. Indeed, graduates in some modern languages have been second only to graduates in such vocational subjects as dentistry and veterinary medicine.

Based on the above, British experience is rather valuable as in modern conditions of Ukraine's integration into European educational space the problem of future language teachers' training is of particular significance. Thereby, scholars' attention is focused on the modernization of approaches to the forming of language teachers' professional competencies that enable specialists to effectively communicate within interlingual and interpersonal environment.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study consists in revealing the peculiarities of language teacher's professional training in the context of British experience.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

It has been found out that in the field of language teachers' training at British universities such scientists as G. Andreeva (theory and practice of teacher education in England); T. Grygoryeva (training of language teachers for teaching adults in the system of British continuing education); O. Melnykova (continuing professional development of language instructors in postgraduate education of Great Britain); T. Moyseyenko (teacher advancement training in English schools); O. Podolyanska (professional training of language teachers in Great Britain); L. Toryanyk (didactics of higher education in Great Britain at the present stage); A. Parinova (the causes, course and results of the reform of higher teacher education in England of the late 20th century); L. Puhovska (the system of teacher's professional training in England) and many others have contributed much to the problem raised.

However, the educational space is constantly undergoing significant changes due to globalization and integration processes, especially in the field of languages. That is why it is important to regularly update the data so that to keep up with the latest achievements thus enriching professional training of language teachers with modern technologies and techniques.

Research methods used in the paper are theoretical analysis, synthesis, generalization and systematization.

RESULTS

In Ukraine it is quite traditional to use the notion of philologist referring to person studying or teaching a language in combination with literature. According to Encyclopedia Britannica philology is the study of the history of language, including the historical study of literary texts (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016). Linguistics, in its turn, is the scientific study of language. The differences were and are largely matters of attitude, emphasis and purpose. The philologist is concerned primarily with the historical development of languages as it is manifested in written texts and in the context of the associated literature and culture. The linguist, though he may be interested in written texts and in the development of languages through time, tends to give priority to spoken languages and to the problems of analyzing them as they operate at a given point in time (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016).

Having studied educational offers provided by British universities we have concluded that the names of degree programmes usually include the terms "language" and "studies". For instance, at the University of Edinburgh there are programmes such as Asian studies, English language, Islamic Studies and Middle Eastern Studies, Modern European Languages (German, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian), Russian Studies, Scandinavian Studies, etc. All these programmes consist of modules based on the study of language in combination with literature (The University of Edinburgh, 2016). There are also degree programmes that are focused on languages but the programme name makes no clear reference to them. So, such variety of language provision proves the multidisciplinary nature of study in languages as well as its interdisciplinary potential.

Thereby, in our paper we will use the terms "languages studies" and "language teacher" in reference to the problem under study, as we believe they best fit to the context.

According to the results generated by Education UK, the British Council's official website for international students, 86 higher education institutions offer undergraduate language courses and 55 – postgraduate language courses (Education UK, 2016). Such an abundance of the courses prove the Kingdom's need for competent specialists in the field as well as applicants' interest in it.

N. Rozhak states that in Great Britain the fundamentals of language teachers' professional training changed in the context of enhancing social values in the society,



promoting integration processes and forming positive experience in the synthesis of classical and innovative approaches to training as well as the changes in the functions of training (Рожек, 2014).

Thus, in 2000 the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) first published the Subject Benchmark Statement on Languages and Related Studies as a reference for developers of undergraduate programmes. In 2007 and 2015 respectively it was reviewed and revised. The 2015 version of the Statement is called “Subject Benchmark Statement on Languages, Cultures and Societies” as it was necessary to specify changes occurring in the context of the study of languages in Great Britain and the conditions for the development of new areas of its provision (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), 2015).

It must be noted that Subject Benchmark Statements describe the essence of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas and in respect of particular qualifications. They provide a picture of what graduates in a particular subject might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their programme of study. Subject Benchmark Statements are used for design, delivery and review of academic programmes. They provide general guidance for articulating the learning outcomes associated with the programme, but are not intended to represent a national curriculum in a subject or to prescribe set approaches to teaching, learning or assessment. Instead, they allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design within a framework agreed by the subject community.

Departments providing language programmes are increasingly taking steps to ensure that the value of their modules for employability is made clear to students. Departments also point out the rich and fascinating nature of language studies, which clearly resonates with students of language degrees.

University departments have been striving to review the content of language studies as well as the ways of its provision. Such reconsiderations are needed to adjust to changes in modern educational environment and the existing interests of students to make languages more attractive, accessible and relevant.

While French, German and Spanish have historically predominated in the study of modern and medieval languages, a growing number of applicants wish to study a wider range of languages and cultures. They include other European languages, namely, Italian, Portuguese, Russian; the Asian languages, especially Chinese, Japanese and Korean; the languages of the Middle East, particularly Arabic; ancient languages, for example, Latin and Greek, etc. Many higher education institutions now offer these and other languages as elective modules. Specialist degree programmes in the languages of the wider world tend, however, to be taught in a small number of providers. Recently, the learners’ interest in English as a second language has increased, as well as Celtic languages, British Sign Language and the languages of minority communities, such as Punjabi and Urdu.

For instance, the content of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers’ professional training is determined by the specificity of work with students for whom English is native. It provides for the analysis of such issues as the peculiarities of perception of a foreign language, native and foreign languages, lesson planning, teaching the aspects of language, especially phonetic and grammatical, the use of technical tools and learning materials, testing and control, etc. So, the basis of the generalized professionogram of English language teachers in today’s Great Britain includes human culture, pedagogical culture, personal aspect as well as psychological, educational, cultural and subject training.



The subject training complements a personal aspect of future teachers' training and encompasses educational and cognitive competence, informational competence, social competence, competence of personal improvement (Рожек, 2014).

To illustrate the peculiarities of language teachers' professional training in Great Britain we have analysed the experience of De Montfort University. The choice of the University was determined by the fact that the latter is a powerful higher education institution with a long history of enhancing the level of people's lives via education.

Thus, the BA in English with Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (Hons) provided by De Montfort University (DMU) is designed for those willing to develop their ability to teach English to non-native speakers as well as studying general and particular aspects of the English language. At the same time students have an opportunity to obtain a range of linguistic and analytical skills to become highly-skilled communicators. In the final year they are to apply their theoretical knowledge into practice during teacher placement.

During the first year of study students master so-called "Adventures in Languages" that are an introduction to grammar and linguistics (key tools, techniques and theories of linguistics and language study). The second module (Evolving Language) covers an introduction to the histories of languages. The third module (TESOL 1) encompasses crucial issues in the teaching and learning of English to and for non-native speakers. Modern Foreign Language 1 is a study of a foreign language. The second year of study includes 6 modules, namely, Sociolinguistics; Structure, Meaning and Language; Language in Context; Teaching English Language; Crossing Cultures; TESOL 2. So, students are taught social aspects of languages, the structure of the speech, pragmatics, English language teaching methodology at British schools, international relations and specificity of teaching a foreign language.

The third year of study has both theoretical and practical aspects. Thus, students are to write a dissertation on the chosen topic, predominantly in the field of the English language, and undergo teacher placement at school to gain valuable teaching experience in the multicultural environment. In addition, they are to master Psycholinguistics and Language, Power and Identity (De Montfort University, 2016).

So, on the example of De Montfort University we can state that methodological basis of future language teacher's professional training at British universities consists of personality-based, competency-based, integrative and differentiated approaches to professional training that is reflected in the organization of learning according to an individual educational trajectory; the orientation of the training content to forming and developing students' core professional competencies; rational combination of theoretical practical components; the emphasis on crucial role of language teacher placements for future teacher' professional activity; forming special communicative and psychological skills of future language teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

So, such processes as enhancing social values in the society, promoting integration processes and forming positive experience in the synthesis of classical and innovative approaches to training as well as the changes in the functions of training define the professional training of language teachers in Great Britain. British curricula in language training are based on the Subject Benchmark Statement on Languages, Cultures and Societies developed by Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. It describes the essence of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in language teaching and in respect of particular qualifications. Programme developers use it as a reference point designing the content of language training.



On the example of De Montfort University we have illustrated the peculiarities of language teachers' professional training, in particular, ESL teachers as the academic interest in English as a second language has increased. It has been concluded that the methodological basis of future language teachers' professional training at British universities consists of personality-based, competency-based, integrative and differentiated approaches and is characterized by the orientation of the training content to forming and developing students' core professional competencies and rational combination of theoretical and practical components.

Rather perspective we consider the detailed study of curricula for degree programmes in English with TESOL at Dutch universities as the English language plays an extremely important role in the multicultural development of the society there.

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