

THE WOULD-BE MILITARY PROFESSIONALS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AS A LEARNING OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOME

In the article the author defines notion 'the would-be military professionals' foreign language communicative competence' in the context of foreign language training at the military academies both as the learning objective and outcome. It is the measure of military professionalism and part of would-be military professionals' competence. The author also provides its structure which includes language, communicative, linguosociocultural, discourse and strategic components operating as a whole, complex, integral, intellectual and personality formation developed in the process of professional training at the military academies and improved in professional activity as well as self work and professional development courses.

Key words: *would-be military professionals; foreign language communicative competence; learning objective; learning outcome; foreign language training; military academies.*

Introduction. Ukraine's ambitions to join EU and NATO lead to the whole transformation of the existing professional training system at the military academies. Along with acquiring knowledge about NATO command and control system and procedures, armaments and vehicles, tactical signs and many other professionally-related issues, also a key requirement for the military professionals of all trades is foreign language communication skills. It is because their functions in modern warfare and military exercises should be coordinated with foreign partners. This calls for a reliable foreign language training system at the military academies that should provide development of the cadets' or the would-be military professionals' foreign language communicative competence (FLCC) as the ability and readiness to perform foreign language communication not only in standard but also in unfavorable conditions caused by the service personnel's emotional stress. Military job is full of stress as the people in the military have to operate, often for a long time, in hostile environment under a constant enemy threat. Foreign language communication in such conditions is difficult. It requires special training and FLCC development at the military academies which the existing educational system is not able to offer.

Latest researches and publications. Recently, there have been conducted many researches on 'content-based instruction' (D. Brinton, M. Snow, M. Wesche, D. Coyle [2] and O. Tarnopolskyi [5]). Their main idea consists in integration of the job topics with the language learning objectives and outcomes. This approach is the most optimum for the military academies as it offers cadets an opportunity to learn a foreign language based on the conditions as close to their future military

trade as possible. Here, the main element of development is the would-be military professionals' FLCC.

There are also many researches on communicative competence (R. Allwright [1], M Canale [2], S Savignon [4]) but, unfortunately, they do not fully cover the aspects of the would-be military professionals' FLCC.

Purpose of this article is to define notion 'the would-be military professionals' FLCC' in the context of foreign language training at the military academies both as the learning objective and outcome.

Methods. In the article we have used such methods as studying the scientific literature, analysis and synthesis of the education documents as well as experience of pedagogical activity and professional functions of the military professionals.

Results. Analysis of researches and teaching practice allows having a look at cadet's FLCC as a component of their professional competence.

In other words, it is complex, integral, intellectual and personality formation developed in the process of professional training at the military academies and improved in professional activity as well as self work and professional development courses. It shows the degree of professionalism, including individual style of work which includes ability and preparedness (i.e. practical, personal, and psychological) for the professional foreign language communication (oral and written) as well as attitude towards future military profession. The attitude includes features and abilities necessary to do the professional activity.

We regard FLCC both as the objective and outcome of foreign language training at the military academies. It includes would-be military professionals' practical acquiring a foreign language i.e. it is the ability and readiness to perform professional duties in highly stressful foreign language environment.

Therefore, the FLCC can be divided according to the four comprehension skills into listening, speaking, reading and writing.

We define FLCC in listening as possession of skills, abilities and readiness to acquire the skills of receiving, processing and comprehending a foreign language authentic text through ear in standard (natural) conditions or unfavorable conditions of the foreign speaking environment at person-to-person speaking or through technical communication means.

In its turn, FLCC in reading includes skills abilities and readiness of the would-be military professional to receive, process and comprehend authentic foreign language text in standard and emotionally stressful conditions of the military service.

Above all, the most important component of the cadet's FLCC is speaking. It is defined as possession and ability to acquire skills and abilities to perform oral person-to-person communication (foreign language production) through appropriate communicative techniques including reactions to challenges, motivations, intentions behavioral strategies of oneself and those of communicative partners. This type of FLCC allows exploring foreign language speaking topics in professional way using acceptable communicative patterns, verbal and non-verbal means of person-to-person communication, elements of

sociocultural context required to generate and receive foreign language professional communication from the foreign language native speaker's viewpoint in normal and accelerated tempo both in standard and hostile environment.

FLCC in writing is the ability and readiness of the would-be military professionals to acquire skills of performing written production of communication through graphical code both in standard and dialect foreign language in normal and hostile environment.

All the FLCC types are subdivided into the following components. Let us have a closer look at them.

The FLCC *language component* envisages cadets' ability and preparedness to acquire and operate basic language means (phonetic or orthographic, lexical and grammatical) in order to receive, process and comprehend authentic foreign language communication visually and aurally as well as through its oral and written production. The basis of the language competence includes knowledge of the language system in the context of its use in the professional oral and written communication.

This component consists of

phonetic (orthographic) competence – abilities and readiness of the would-be military professionals to acquire and operate basic means of pronunciation, stress, intonation and orthography with the aim of receiving, processing and comprehension of the authentic foreign language text aurally (visually) as well as its oral and written production;

lexical competence is the ability and preparedness for acquirement and using basic vocabulary units with the aim of receiving, processing and comprehending aural (or visual) information as well as its oral and verbal production

grammatical competence – ability and readiness to use basic foreign language grammar rules in order to receive, process and comprehend orally (or visually) information as well as its oral and verbal production

An important component of FLCC in comprehension skills is *communicative competence* which is an ability and preparedness of the cadets to acquire basic means of making and formatting the thoughts by foreign language means and their use during receiving, processing and comprehension of the foreign language authentic information by visual and aural means and its oral and written production both in standard and hostile environment. The basis for the communicative competence is professional communicative activity which requires development and improvement of communicative listening (audition), reading, speaking and writing skills according to the learning objectives.

We regard listening comprehension as a complex communicative and thinking activity of the cadets allowing understanding information aurally, storing it in memory or in writing, selecting and evaluating it according to the appropriate tasks.

This skill can be performed internally and the result of its performance is the comprehension of what has been heard (inference) and cadets' verbal and non-

verbal behavior. The idea of listening comprehension is that the cadets can identify the subject and match it with the pattern stored in their long-term memory.

Like listening, reading is also a complex communicative and thinking activity of the cadets allowing perceiving and processing information visually. As a receptive skill, reading comprehension includes recognition of the graphic symbol and matching with possible pattern. This skill combines two issues: mechanical, performed unconsciously (automatically) and contextual, including comprehension and decoding the text leading simultaneously to its understanding. In general, considering common psychophysiological mechanism, these two skills should be regarded together.

Development of communicative competence in speaking should consider psychological and linguistic peculiarities of foreign language dialogue and monologue forms in professional activity. The foreign language dialogue form of speaking has such peculiarities as speaker's motivation and address; being situation based; unpreparedness and two-way format. These peculiarities require would-be military professionals speaking to be initiative. In this way, cadets should learn how to start, keep up and wind down the conversation, so that the conversationists would like to continue further communicative contacts. They also should learn using verbal and non-verbal means of communication naturally.

Unlike dialogue form, the monologue one envisages an address to one or a group of listeners. One – way nature of such form of communication defines the peculiarities of its structure and contents. It has the following features: openness, relative boundlessness (certain duration), wide use of body language. In monologue form of communication texts can be prepared in advance.

Besides speaking as a productive skill, writing includes cadets' ability to fix down the contents and phonetic form by means of graphic symbols. Therefore, the development of communicative competence in writing allows cadets to communicate through graphic means. The product of writing is a text for reading of different genres. Written communication has such features as openness, logics, and lack of direct connection with the writer. Technical side of writing includes orthographical and graphical skills. The writing skill is more difficult than speaking. But in oral unprepared (impromptu) speaking the generation of speech and its sound are simultaneous and require full automatism in operating lexical and grammatical material. Writing, though, has little advantage when a cadet can go back to his/her message/thought again, formulate it in more detail.

It was established while analyzing peculiarities of the conditions of communication activities and their influence on foreign language training, that all foreign language communication of the would-be military professionals occurs in stressful conditions. Such conditions are characterized by the range of unfavorable factors (tough conditions, lack of time, constant threat from the enemy, large flow of information, bad sounding (including technical means of communication, unclear accent). Stressful environment affects both receptive and productive skills. The affect can be clearly seen in oral speech in which they disorganize the whole speaking process. Hereby, the program of foreign language training includes

development of the communicative competence with obligatory resistance to its disruption in reception and production of the foreign language information in stressful conditions.

Besides, the FLCC includes *lingvosociocultural component*. We can define it as cadets' acquiring as well as readiness for acquiring ability to receive, comprehend, process and understand aurally (or visually) specific cultural features of the foreign language society through authentic foreign language text as well as its production according to the communicative behavior in standard and unfavorable (stressful) conditions of the foreign language society. Lingvosociocultural component includes cadets' ability to aurally (or visually) single out, comprehend and use culturally specific vocabulary units to construct their own oral and written messages, to efficiently use the background knowledge (historic, cultural, sociocultural, ethnic etc.) about foreign countries in order to comprehend and produce authentic texts. This component encompasses:

country studies knowledge which is the ability and readiness to acquire nationally colored language and communicative lexical units both in standard and stressful environment;

sociocultural aspect is the cadets' ability and readiness to receive, comprehend and produce foreign texts in sociocultural context i.e. to realize and consider general and specific patterns of verbal and non-verbal behavior, types of vocabulary which is difficult to understand for the non-native speakers; influence of ethnic and social information at the communication with native speakers;

Social aspect includes the would-be military professionals' ability and readiness to receive, process and comprehend a foreign language text, as well as the ability and readiness to open up a conversation, keep it going, and wind it down. It also includes the cadets' ability to find way out in the social situation and manage it as a leader.

Besides, the important part of FLCC is a *discourse component*. It has been established that it provides the would-be military professionals the ability to employ a certain strategy for understanding authentic foreign language texts and building own oral and written patterns of speech in standard and stressful conditions of the foreign language environment. This component of FLCC enables cadets understanding logics and connectedness of thoughts in oral and written communicative patterns of different functional styles at different topic areas. It also gives them an ability to build their own connected and logic oral and written speech patterns.

Strategic component has a special place within FLCC. We define it as ability and readiness of cadets to compensate with special means the lack of language speaking as well as speaking and social experience (ability to find one's way in case of lack of language means in standard and unfavorable conditions during receiving and transmission of foreign language text. Such component allows cadets to combine verbal and non-verbal means, requesting for more information, rereading phrases and sentences with the aim of their better comprehension

All FLCC components are regarded as unified and integral professional formation.

Originality. The novelty of the research results is that the author has developed a completely new idea of the would-be military professionals' FLCC as the learning objective and outcome in the context of foreign language training at the military academies reflected in its definition and structure.

Conclusion. The research that we have conducted shows us that FLCC as a learning objective and outcome is a significant component of the would-be military professionals' foreign language training. The research has established the FLCC having many components according to the receptive and productive skills. Also, it falls into such types as language, communicative, linguosociocultural, discourse and strategic components. All these components establish conditions facilitating the would-be military professionals to resist stress in using foreign language caused by some negative factors such as nervous breakdown, fear, tiredness etc. that, in its turn, enables them to direct the foreign language training at the military academies to provide efficient performance of their future military functions.

Prospects of further research include experimental verification of the cadets' FLCC at the military academies.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

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Иноязычная коммуникативная компетентность будущих военных специалистов как цель и результат обучения

Аннотация. В статье автор анализирует понятие «иноязычная коммуникативная компетентность будущих военных специалистов» как цель и результат обучения в контексте иноязычной подготовки в высших военных учебных заведениях. Такая компетентность показывает степень военного профессионализма и является частью профессиональной компетентности будущих военных специалистов. Автором также представлена ее структура, включающая в себя языковой, речевой, лингвосоциокультурный, дискурсивный и стратегический компоненты, которые рассматриваются как единое, комплексное, интегральное, интеллектуальное и личностное образование, которое развивается в ходе профессиональной подготовки в

высших военных учебных заведениях и совершенствуется в профессиональной деятельности, а также в ходе самостоятельной работы и курсах повышения квалификации.

Ключевые слова: будущие военные специалисты; иноязычная коммуникативная компетентность; цель обучения; результат обучения; иноязычная подготовка; высшие военные учебные заведения.

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Іншомовна комунікативна компетентність майбутніх військових фахівців як мета і результат навчання

Постановка проблеми. В умовах зближення України з ЄС та НАТО стає необхідним володіння військовими фахівцями іноземною мовою на рівні, достатньому для здійснення взаємодії зі своїми зарубіжними колегами й партнерами. Це, в свою чергу, вимагає трансформації змісту вищої військової освіти. Іншомовна підготовка як частина професійної підготовки військовослужбовців має бути адаптована до найкращих світових стандартів. У цьому зв'язку, актуальним є дослідження іншомовної комунікативної компетентності майбутніх військових фахівців як мети і результату навчання у вищих військових навчальних закладах.

Мета статті. Дати визначення поняття “іншомовна комунікативна компетентність майбутніх військових фахівців” у контексті іншомовної підготовки.

Результати дослідження. Проаналізовано поняття “іншомовна комунікативна компетентність майбутніх військових фахівців” як мету і результат навчання у контексті іншомовної підготовки у вищих військових навчальних закладах. Така компетентність показує ступінь розвиненості військового професіоналізму та є частиною професійної компетентності майбутніх військових фахівців. Також представлена її структура, яка включає в себе мовний, мовленнєвий, лінгвосоціокультурний, дискурсивний та стратегічний компоненти, що розглядаються як єдине, комплексне, інтегральне, інтелектуальне та особистісне утворення, яке розвивається ході професійної підготовки у вищих військових навчальних закладах та удосконалюється у професійній діяльності, і в ході самостійної роботи та курсах підвищення кваліфікації.

Новизна дослідження. Розроблена і представлена повністю нова ідея поняття “іншомовна комунікативна компетентність майбутніх військових фахівців”. Вона розглядається як мета і результат навчання у контексті іншомовної підготовки у вищих військових навчальних закладах, що відображено у її визначенні та структурі.

Висновки. Досліджено, що іншомовна комунікативна компетентність майбутніх військових фахівців складається із компонентів, які визначені відповідно до рецептивних і продуктивних видів іншомовної мовленнєвої діяльності. Вони забезпечують можливості виконання професійних завдань майбутніми військовими фахівцями в умовах, наближених до реальних.

Ключові слова: майбутні військові фахівці; іншомовна комунікативна компетентність; мета навчання; результат навчання; іншомовна підготовка; вищі військові навчальні заклади.