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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHER AT UNIVERSITY: COMPETENCE AND CREATIVITY ASPECTS

The article deals with the issues of development of foreign language teachers' competences and creativity at university. The necessity to constantly develop professional competences of a foreign language teacher has been substantiated; the lack of research on a foreign language teacher's creativity in scientific literature has been stressed. The connection of creative teaching with emotions has been revealed. Emotions at foreign language lessons have been specified as a factor affecting students' academic outcomes, interest, commitment and personality development. The ability of emotions to affect the social atmosphere of a classroom and learning environments has been admitted. Teachers' creativity and teaching effectiveness have been defined as two essential elements of teaching. The article says that foreign language teachers' professional competences can be developed both in a formal way – through participation in improvement proposals offered by various institutions, and in an informal way: reading specialized literature or meetings with other teachers of a given training discipline for exchanging professional experience. A STRIDE technique has been suggested for leading a teacher through a process of reflection using a six-step focused analysis, which helps teachers to understand both their strengths and the problem areas as well as to make them notice potential ways of reaching their goals.

Keywords: *competence; creativity; development; professional development; teacher of foreign languages; university.*

Introduction. Profound socio-economic changes taking place in modern society put forward completely new requirements for the development of a teacher's personality, namely: the ability to navigate in new, often undefined situations, the ability to independently make decisions and determine immediate and prospective goals, to be socially active, creative and successful. In this regard, the tasks of creating psychological and pedagogical conditions for the development of the teacher's creative personality, his or her creative potential, etc., are of particular importance. In the conditions of the new educational paradigm, teachers' training is becoming the most important condition for the revival of not only education, but also the entire national culture, its integration into the human and European community. The question of the formation of the creative potential of foreign language teachers is particularly relevant, as it is related to the development trends of the world community: the socio-cultural context of learning foreign languages, which are part of the system of languages of international communication, is changing. Nevertheless, a comprehensive research of teachers' creativity, effectiveness combined with their

professional development has not been carried out yet. Thus, such study is necessary to bridge the gap in exploration of different horizons of teachers' creativity and effectiveness from professional development outlooks (Arifani et al., 2019, p. 128).

The purpose of the article is to study the possibilities of professional development of a foreign language teacher at university, to investigate its competence and creativity aspects.

The study of the scientific literature has shown that the development of a student's creativity has been studied through a variety of aspects, but there is still an insufficient amount of research on creativity in teachers' training. At the same time, the issue of professional development and development of a foreign language teacher's creativity been studied by M. Adams-Tukiendorf (2009), J. Appel (2000), S. Benesch (2018), J. Bielak, A. Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2020), M. Ganapathy (2022), S. Che Lah (2022), A. Kościńska (2020), J. Phan (2022), Z. B. Gaś (2001), E. Jastrzębska (2009), E. Kobytecka (2007), Y. Ma (2022), M.-H. Massie (2022), A. M. Sendur (2020), X. Sun, J. Li (2021), J. Targońska (2009) and others.

Research results. Education is a key factor in ensuring the improvement of life standards and quality, and students face various challenges in their learning, especially in terms of writing skills. Being able to communicate effectively in English is a valuable skill that brings advantages at work (Ganapathy et al., 2022, p. 29). Environmental, cultural, and social issues are becoming increasingly complex, and the educational context is no exception here. The importance and relevance of teachers' creativity «in examining situations from different angles, in imagining new approaches, in adapting to the varied needs of students, and in training them so that they too can hold the teeming complexity seems obvious» (Massie et al., 2022, p. 1). In any educational and learning context, students' academic results and achievement are the primary focus of educational officials, administrators and teachers, and the context of foreign language teaching is not an exception (Ma, 2022, p. 1). More specifically, language teachers' creativity deals with their ability to offer some opportunities to their students to use the language they have been educated in novel and innovative ways. Creative teaching is thought to improve language learners' interest, academic motivation, and academic achievement (Ma, 2022, p. 2). In this regard, teachers' creativity and teaching effectiveness are two essential elements of teaching, and the notion of teaching effectiveness is more commonly viewed from multi-dimensional perspectives such as professional, pedagogical, social and personal attributes (Arifani et al., 2019, p. 127). At the same time, teachers' creativity and the creativity of educational programs sometimes seem to be taken for granted and this makes a gap around this topic (Massie et al., 2022, p. 1).

According to Y. Ma (2022), «... creativity is the use of imagination, inspiration, and innovative ideas to achieve a certain goal. Applied to the educational context, teacher's creativity pertains to individual teacher's use of innovative approaches, methods, and techniques to improve students' learning outcomes» (p. 2). The researchers state that creative teaching positively influences students' academic achievements, academic performance and learning outcomes, and «it enables teachers to become aware of their full potential as educators, but only if they have mastered the subject matter themselves» (Ma, 2022, p. 2).

Among the indicators of a teacher's creativity, the highest-ranking important indicators are independent learning, environment and materials. As for teaching effectiveness, the highest-ranking influential indicators are knowledge and subject matter. «Teachers should prepare, design and adapt their teaching materials to facilitate learners' learning needs and autonomy» (Arifani et al., 2019, p. 133).

Foreign language teachers with strong self-efficacy beliefs invest more effort in teaching course content, which enables them to improve their learners' language achievement. Creative teachers commonly employ

innovative methods, strategies, and materials that make the learning process more pleasant, and an enjoyable learning atmosphere will drive students toward higher academic outcomes (Ma, 2022, p. 3).

Creative teaching is believed to be closely related to emotions – «one of the pillars of all human beings which can play a vital role in providing education» (Sun et al., 2021, p. 1). Emotions can influence all aspects of educational process, and the feeling of creativity is one of the varieties of emotions. This feeling has a strong impact on the performance of education and the level of students' involvement, which, in turn, has different aspects: social, individual and emotional (Sun et al., 2021, p. 1). It is important to admit that teachers' and students' emotions can be positive or negative, motivating or demotivating, facilitating or limiting, and teachers can control students' positive and negative emotions by using techniques for boosting students' imaginations as well as relaxing practices at foreign language lessons at university (Sun et al., 2021, p. 2). Researches state that one of the most important characteristics of emotional creativity is the ability of students learning languages to recognize, understand, express, organize and use their own emotions and other people's emotions, and emotional creativity has four dimensions: *novelty*, *authenticity*, *effectiveness* and *preparedness* (Sun et al., 2021, p. 2). Researchers believe that emotional creativity can be employed as a predictor of learners' language creativity and language achievements. Different types of emotions affect learning process. On the one hand, emotions at foreign language lessons can affect students' academic outcomes as well as their interest, commitment and personality development. These emotions can also affect the social atmosphere of classrooms and learning environments. When pedagogical tasks at university evoke pleasure, joy, or hope, students become more motivated and more attentive before doing work. This motivation and attention will increase their engagement in classroom activities. On the other hand, experiencing negative emotions may lead to poor academic achievements. Those learners who possess emotional creativity can control positive and negative emotions and lead them to deep and effective learning. So, the students' emotions at foreign language lessons can predict their engagement level which evidences the importance of emotional engagement at foreign language lessons (Sun et al., 2021, p. 2).

As far as emotions are controllable to a certain degree, researchers believe that teachers have the potential to influence and help students' emotions and help them reach their full potential. To this end, teachers must create a safe environment in which the impact of negative emotions is even reduced (Benesch, 2018). They can use different methods to encourage students to use their imagination and reduce negative emotions (Bielak, Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2020).

Nevertheless, it is impossible to completely eliminate negative emotions. There are positive and negative emotions at lessons. Teachers should try to use the power of positive emotions to communicate and increase their participation. In fact, positive emotions such as satisfaction, joy, pride and interest in students allow them to learn a foreign language better. According to Sun et al. (2021), «...focusing on positive emotions and trying to use them allows students to reduce or eliminate negative emotions. Finally, positive emotions have a significant impact on students' flexibility, stubbornness, and engagement. Teachers should consider the social and emotional aspects of engagement in creating an effective and positive learning environment by focusing on teacher-student interpersonal factors such as confirmation, credibility, care, immediacy, rapport, etc.» (p. 3).

Foreign language learning can contribute to person's social and emotional well-being which is reflected in good mental health, subjective high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose of life, and ability to reduce or manage stress efficiently. Therefore, foreign language learning plays an important role both for a personal and societal development (Durdas et al., 2022).

In this context it is important to consider the possibilities and conditions for a foreign language teacher's development. Even a very superficial review of the literature on the subject shows that for several decades a student has been the center of interest in foreign language teaching, while the teacher often plays a secondary role, and his main task is to ensure conditions in which language learning will be as effective as possible (Pawlak et al., 2009, p. 7). Hence, so much attention is paid to cognitive, affective and social individual factors, such as cognitive styles, types of intelligence, motivation or beliefs, the role of strategic training and development of autonomy, the use of open forms of work, the possibility of making the educational discourse similar to interaction in natural conditions, conducting analysis of students' needs, or the need to individualize language learning. On the other hand, it is impossible not to agree that for the vast majority of learners, the teacher is of key importance, as evidenced by the popularity of private language schools and the fact that even the best students usually prefer their actions to be directed in one way or another and there are few people who can learn a foreign language on their own (Pawlak et al., 2009, p. 7).

The researchers state that teaching profession requires from those who perform it constant actions to develop their own professional competences. They can be implemented both in a formal way – through participation in improvement proposals offered by various institutions, as well as in an informal way, for example, reading literature related to the field of teaching, or taking part at meetings aimed at exchanging experiences with other teachers of a foreign language

(Kościńska, Sendur, 2020; Bulvinska, Bulvinsky, 2018).

The widespread availability of the Internet made it possible to transfer a significant part of activities undertaken by teachers as part of their professional development to the network. Opportunities to participate in trainings, workshops, remote courses, etc., have appeared. Groups have been created on social networking sites for teachers, where they could share their experiences, exchange information and get advice (Kościńska, Sendur, 2020, p. 445). A teacher's professional development is conditioned not only by his or her individual needs, but also by the needs of students and other teachers employed at an educational institution. Therefore, emphasis is placed on a coherent strategy for professional development, taking into account the needs and expectations of all parties involved in the educational process. It also promotes the creation of learning communities, which enable the exchange of experiences and sharing good practices. These communities are perceived as key elements influencing the stimulation of teachers' activity, developing their curiosity and encouraging them to reflect on their own practice (Kościńska, Sendur, 2020, p. 447).

Self-education is conducted by the teacher in an independent and conscious way. In order to achieve professional goals, a teacher can use various sources, use the help of other people or institutions. Therefore, the teacher chooses the forms and content he or she considers necessary (Kościńska, Sendur, 2020, p. 448).

Preparing for classes often requires reading professional literature. Self-observation and reflection are important in self-education. Acting in subject teams, participating in support groups for foreign language teachers or organizations associating teachers with a similar profile are also effective ways of self-education. These activities serve to exchange experience, enable individual and group reflection, and provide an opportunity to participate at demonstrative lessons. As part of self-education, teachers can also create and publish teaching materials. Mentoring and coaching are other effective forms of self-education that have recently become widespread (Kościńska, Sendur, 2020, p. 448). Professional development does not only take place in isolation, but also in cooperation with other teachers. Therefore, the possibility of exchanging views and experiences plays an important role in it. by participating in demonstration lessons or lessons conducted as part of internship. Due to the possibility of creating and using various technological tools such as applications, websites that allow teachers to create exercises without incurring additional financial costs, sharing teaching materials is not currently a challenge. Moreover, international teachers' organizations are diversifying their area of activity creating more possibilities for teachers' professional self-development (Kościńska, Sendur, 2020, p. 448).

In the context of professional development of a foreign

language teacher it is necessary to explain the concept of competence and to consider the relationship between competence and knowledge. The concept of competence is very aptly defined by E. Zawadzka (2004, p. 110), who defines it as the ability to effectively use knowledge, taking into account its critical interpretation and justification of the choice. Already from this definition it follows that this concept is a concept broader than knowledge. In order to be able to speak of competence, a person must have knowledge in some field and must be able to use this knowledge in practice. In addition, competence also includes a person's personal experience (Zawadzka, 2004, p. 109). In order to answer the question of what skills and competences foreign language teachers need and what knowledge can help them acquire these competences, it is necessary to start with the function of a foreign language teacher. Summing up, it can be said that foreign language teachers, as well as teachers of other subjects, perform the three functions mentioned above, while the didactic function is not limited only to imparting knowledge. Rather, in the case of «linguists» it will be about developing skills, in which the extensive knowledge and numerous competences of the teacher play a huge role. The performance of the educational function will require knowledge and psycho-pedagogical and intercultural competence from the teacher. On the other hand, in order to perform subsequent functions, teachers need many different competencies (Targońska, 2009, p. 15). A foreign language teacher should, first of all, have linguistic knowledge, i.e. he or she should know not only the language itself, but also the structure of the language. It is about both the knowledge of grammatical structures and their functions. In the era of cognitive teaching, many learners, regardless of age, want to know where a given grammatical form comes from, what it can be associated with. In the case of teachers of foreign languages taught as a second and subsequent language, it would also be advisable to have basic knowledge of the first language of their students, as this knowledge could be helpful in developing diagnostic competence. The knowledge of other fields that are somehow included in external linguistics, such as sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, pragmatics and others, is really significant (Targońska, 2009, p. 17).

Teaching foreign languages is a field related to general didactics, however, it is a set of knowledge that could be called interdisciplinary knowledge, because it is based on the achievements of many other reference sciences that provide theoretical content regarding lessons and accompanying factors. Therefore, in teaching foreign languages the knowledge of such fields is necessary: linguistics, psychology, psychology of learning, psycholinguistics, pedagogy, sociolinguistics, theory of learning, literary studies, cultural studies and sightseeing (Appel, 2000, p. 258).

Teacher's innovative competence is the ability to introduce such changes in educational practice, the

aim of which is to improve the results of pedagogical activity in a given field. Here we can speak about innovative competences when a teacher is able to adjust the concept of working with a student to a pedagogical and psychological diagnosis, when he or she is able to differentiate educational projects, teaching methods and techniques depending on the student's ability to work, and when he or she performs an in-depth critical analysis of his or her own activity (Zawadzka, 2004, p. 290). Teachers' readiness to undertake innovative activities depends on their knowledge, on individual personality traits (openness, flexibility, originality of thinking, intellectual independence), the level of creativity and motivation to act (Zawadzka, 2004, p. 289). The basic skill of the teacher should be the ability to deal with instability, the uniqueness of teaching situations, and the way to this will be reflection. Thus, the teacher should be a reflective practitioner, which is related to the ability of self-reflection and self-control (Targońska, 2009, p. 22).

The literature on the subject expresses the view that it is not enough for a teacher to have knowledge or competences developed on its basis and based on experience and reflection. These two should be combined with certain character traits, necessary in didactic work. They include: a creative attitude, responsibility, commitment, understanding oneself, understanding other people and understanding the world (Kobyłecka, 2007, p. 156). In addition, the teacher should also have a subjective approach to learners. Gaś (2001, p. 20–21) points to five main variables that underlie the subjectivity of the teacher-student relationship. These include: the empathy of the helper, the warmth and caring of the teacher regarding emotional response, openness of the teacher, concreteness and authenticity, especially in social communication. In addition, intelligence is essential for the development of all competencies. According to Kobyłecka (2007, p. 157), the teacher's competence is based on three types of intelligence: rational, emotional and spiritual. Thus, it should be stated that a good teacher is not enough just to know a given foreign language. He or she will need extensive knowledge and numerous competences, which should be reflected in the training of future foreign language teachers (Targońska, 2009, p. 24).

In the context of the study, we can suggest a STRIDE technique, encouraging reflective teaching. STRIDE is a technique derived from a British trend of training and coaching. Its main purpose is to lead a teacher through a process of reflection using a six-step focused analysis. As a result, teachers become aware of both their strengths and the problem areas. This technique also makes them find out potential ways of reaching the goals they set for themselves. «STRIDE is an acronym of six words that represent the six steps in the technique. *Strengths* are those aspects of own life (personal and professional) that support the teacher. *Target* is what the teacher

wants to achieve – their goal. *Reality* is the current situation. *Ideas* are possible ways of reaching own goal, of changing the situation. *Decision* is choosing one possible way of making a difference while *Evaluation* is establishing the level of dedication to pursue that way and assessing the effectiveness of own conduct. The advantage of the technique lies in its simplicity and clear structure which makes it easy to use it in the process of self-reflection» (Adams-Tukiendorf, 2009, p. 117).

Conclusions. A foreign language teacher at university should constantly develop his or her professional competences and creativity. Creative teaching of a foreign language at university is closely connected with emotions which affect students' academic outcomes, interest, commitment and personality development as well as social atmosphere of a classroom and of a learning environment. Teachers' creativity and teaching effectiveness are two essential elements of teaching, and creative teachers commonly employ innovative methods, strategies, and materials that make the learning process more enjoyable which drives students toward

higher academic outcomes. Self-education is one of the possibilities of professional development of a foreign language teacher, and self-observation and reflection are essential actors in self-education. A competence as the ability to effectively use knowledge, taking into account its critical interpretation and justification of the choice. Teacher's innovative competence is the ability to introduce such changes in educational practice, the aim of which is to improve the results of pedagogical activity in a given field. Teachers' readiness to undertake innovative activities depends on their knowledge, individual personality traits, the level of creativity and motivation to act. A STRIDE technique can be used for leading a foreign language teacher at university through a process of reflection using a six-step focused analysis, which makes teachers aware of both their strengths and the problem areas as well as making them discover potential ways of reaching their goals. The future research will be dedicated to the issues of interrelation between creativity and competences of a foreign language teacher at university.

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ПРОФЕСІЙНИЙ РОЗВИТОК ВИКЛАДАЧА ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ В УНІВЕРСИТЕТІ: КОМПЕТЕНТІСНИЙ ТА КРЕАТИВНИЙ АСПЕКТИ

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У статті розглядаються питання розвитку креативності та компетентностей викладачів іноземних мов в університеті. Креативність викладача та ефективність викладання визначено як два важливі елементи навчання; зазначено вимоги до розвитку особистості викладача іноземних мов в університеті: уміння орієнтуватися в нових, часто невизначених ситуаціях, уміння самостійно приймати рішення та визначати найближчі та перспективні цілі, бути соціально активним, творчим та успішним. У статті зауважено, що професійні компетентності викладачів іноземних мов можна розвивати як у формальний спосіб – через участь у пропозиціях стосовно підвищення кваліфікації від різних установ, так і в неформальний спосіб – через читання літератури, пов'язаної зі сферою викладання, або зустрічі з іншими викладачами іноземної мови для обміну досвідом. Широку доступність Інтернету зазначено як можливість перенесення в мережу значної частини викладацької діяльності в рамках професійного розвитку, а також як можливість брати участь у тренінгах, майстер-класах, дистанційних курсах тощо. Підкреслено роль самоосвіти як можливості професійного розвитку викладача іноземної мови в університеті; при цьому самопостереження та рефлексія означено як важливі чинники самоосвіти. Як один із способів професійного розвитку викладача іноземної мови запропоновано співпрацю з іншими викладачами, зокрема, участь у показових заняттях або у заняттях, які проводяться в рамках педагогічної практики та підвищення кваліфікації. Охарактеризовано інноваційну компетентність викладача як здатність впроваджувати в освітню практику такі зміни, метою яких є покращення результатів педагогічної діяльності в певній галузі, що передбачає готовність викладача до інноваційної діяльності та залежить від його знань, індивідуальних особливостей його особистості, рівня креативності та мотивації до педагогічної діяльності. Запропоновано техніку STRIDE, яка веде викладача через процес рефлексії з використанням шестиетапного цілеспрямованого аналізу, в результаті якого викладачі усвідомлюють свої сильні сторони та проблемні моменти, а також спонукає до відкриття потенційних шляхів досягнення поставлених цілей.

Ключові слова: викладач іноземних мов; компетентність; креативність; професійний розвиток; розвиток; університет.