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**FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT
AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF STUDENTS'
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN CHINESE COLLEGES**

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**РОЗВИТОК ІНШОМОВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ ЯК СКЛАДОВА
ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ПІДГОТОВКИ СТУДЕНТІВ КОЛЕДЖІВ КИТАЮ**

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The paper treats the urgent problem of shaping and development foreign language competence (FLC) of college students in terms of current economic and social reforms in China. The need to focus on the revealing of the peculiarities of the foreign language competence formation at college level in China is substantiated. In accordance with its goals, in the work it is considered the essence of foreign language competence as an integral component of the professional training of college students in China. Based on the analysis of the fundamental psychological and pedagogical concepts of competence and foreign language competence, it was formulated the concept of foreign language competence of any specialist in its professional aspect as a complex of knowledge and skills of various linguistic and professional branches: lexical, grammatical, sociocultural, and pure professional ones. Minding the contemporary tasks of Chinese college education, current challenges of vocational training, and necessity to build proper model of the college students' FLC development, it was determined the structure of the competence which has to comprise some inter-connected components: content and language component, motivational component and activity-driven component. Each of the components was highlighted. Considering the development of FLC as an integral element of the professional training of college students in China, there were revealed some FLC peculiarities. There were also formulated exact tasks of college language training in the lines of current economic and socio-cultural challenges of contemporary Chinese society. It was concluded to apply more efficiently and wider digital means which have great potential in terms of FLC development. The prospects of the following up research are formulated in the lines of revealing the role of the ICT instruments for development of the college students' FLC and finding the benefits of their implementation with the aim of the said challenges overcoming.

Key words: foreign language competence, college students, professional training in Chinese colleges, language education at college level.

У статті розглядається актуальна проблема формування та розвитку іншомовної компетентності (ІК) студентів коледжу в умовах сучасних економічних і соціальних реформ у Китаї. Обґрунтовано необхідність зосередження уваги на розкритті особливостей формування іншомовної компетентності на рівні коледжу в Китаї. Відповідно до поставлених цілей, у роботі розглядається сутність іншомовної компетенції як невід'ємної складової професійної підготовки студентів коледжів Китаю. На основі аналізу фундаментальних психолого-педагогічних понять компетенції та іншомовної компетенції сформульовано поняття іншомовної компетенції будь-якого фахівця в її професійному аспекті як комплекс знань і вмінь різних мовних і професійних галузей: лексичних, граматичні, соціокультурних та суто

професійних. Враховуючи сучасні завдання китайської освіти, сучасні виклики професійної підготовки студентів коледжів, а також необхідність побудови належної моделі розвитку ІК студентів коледжу, визначено структуру компетенції, яка має містити декілька взаємопов'язаних компонентів: змістовно-мовний компонент, мотиваційний компонент і діяльнісний компонент. Схарактеризовано кожен із складових. Розглядаючи розвиток ІК як невід'ємної складової професійної підготовки студентів коледжів Китаю, виявлено деякі її особливості. Також були сформульовані конкретні завдання мовної підготовки в коледжах у руслі актуальних економічних і соціокультурних викликів сучасного китайського суспільства. Було зроблено висновок про необхідність ефективнішого та ширшого застосування цифрових засобів, які мають великий потенціал у розвитку ІК. Перспективи подальшого дослідження сформульовано в руслі виявлення ролі інструментів ІКТ для розвитку ІК студентів коледжу та визначення переваг їх впровадження з метою подолання зазначених проблем.

Ключові слова: іншомовна компетентність, студенти коледжу, професійна підготовка в коледжах Китаю, мовна освіта на рівні коледжу.

General formulation of the problem and its connection with important scientific or practical tasks. The process of modernization of the Chinese education system under the current terms of intensive development of social and economic relations in global society raises the importance of improving the quality of college education. This modernization should involve not only the volume and quality of professional knowledge, but also the ability of future graduates to apply it in the implementation of professional tasks, the ability to effectively communicate in a foreign language with specialists from other countries, as well as to perform professional activities in a foreign-language environment.

Contemporary economic situation in China opens new possibilities for potential specialists' self-realization, which can be carried out not only through individual cases of communication with foreign colleagues and partners, but also through the implementation of professional activities in terms of a foreign-speaking community. In this connection, it is necessary to direct the students' educational activities to the formation of abilities to implement professional activities and present their results by means of a foreign language, which expects the formation and development of the students' foreign language competence in the context of their vocation.

Analysis of the main studies and publications in which the solution to this problem was initiated. The issues of the formation of foreign language competence of potential specialists have been recently learnt and discussed in the works of M. Fedyna (2017), Z. Kornieva (2018), M. Long (2015), I. Zadorozhna (2012); X. Zhao (2018) and other researchers.

Their analysis testifies that the problems of foreign language learning in Chinese colleges must undertake special investigation due to the current curriculum reforms and challenges of college education in the country.

It is pointed out that nowadays in China, exactly English has got the focus in the educational plane. It is explained by the current situation when English plays a core role in international communication, and more English speaking professionals are in demand in different branches of modern society. According to studies (Jiang & Zhang, 2017; Sun & Lei, 2019; Youlong, 2020), English teaching in China at the

college level is divided into two separate sections: English for language majors and for non-language specialties, which are provided according to respective curriculum. Only about a third of universities and colleges in the country offer BA programs in English language and literature. Students who have chosen these programs, which is a minor share of the whole college enrollment, are referred to as English Majors. The priority of English teaching and learning has always been on the other major part, makes so called College English. It comprises English language courses delivered to non-English majors in the colleges all over China. It is underlined that these educational changes are a part of China's economic reform. English also secured its status as the core foreign language taught in Chinese schools.

Nowadays, college student's English level in China plays essential role in their potential career, often determines their job scope, and finally affects their salary. However, according to the surveys, in the course setting of college English, the training of students' professional application ability is neglected, which is out of touch with social reality in proper way. Apart from English majors, there are not enough college English courses for students to choose to raise their fluent use of foreign language in the plane of their vocation (Sun & Lei, 2019). There are offered only two basic and common English courses for non-English major students. Thus, now college students learn English only to pass the College English Test 4 and College English Test 6. The students can only enroll classes outside. So, the effect of college English teaching is insufficient, which makes a challenge in terms of successful realization of current economic initiatives in China.

On the other hand, some language educational theorists and researchers claim that methodology of English as a foreign language learning needs rebuilding to become more functionally oriented, practically driven, and culturally authentic at the same time. Current methodology seems to be strongly restricted by Western cultural approaches since the most models of second language mastering were developed in Europe and the USA. Thus, it does not take into account national peculiarities inherited in Chinese college education or its professional needs. Therefore, the specific methods of English teaching have to be adopted to the demands of the Chinese college vocational training. As well as new approaches to the shaping foreign language competence (FLC) for the college students in the professional plane must be elaborated.

The formation of the said competence in the process of professional training is investigated in the number of scientific works. In the most of works, FLC in professional plane is considered as the ability to communicate in a foreign language in accordance with the tasks of specific, but artificially created, situations of foreign language communication (Fedyna, 2017; Malynovs'ka & Mason, 2017; Mykytenko, 2007 and others). At the same time, education does not reproduce the integral content of professional activity involving foreign language communication.

In addition, current economic initiatives in China raise the demand for the specialists with advanced abilities to professional communication in foreign languages, which makes urgent upgrading the approaches to their acquisition by the potential specialists at college level.

Thus, it is necessary to focus on the revealing of the peculiarities of the foreign language competence formation at college level in China.

Formulation of the goals / objectives of the article. The purpose of the work is to analyze the essence and structure of foreign language competence as an integral component of the professional training of college students in China.

Presentation of the main material of the article. Analysis of the basic psychological and pedagogical concepts of competence and foreign language competence allowed scientists to formulate the concept of foreign language competence of any specialist in its professional aspect. In particular, professional FLC is defined as a set of knowledge and skills of various linguistic and professional orientations: lexical (established foreign language terminology and expressions of vocational nature); grammatical; sociocultural (peculiarities of moral and ethical values of various peoples and the global professional community); and professional ones. In complex, they make a necessary basis for the performance of specific functional duties in terms of foreign language communication in various professionally driven situations (Fedyna, 2017).

According to the European Recommendations on language education, language competence is ability that enable a person to act using specific linguistic means. Such a competence consists of the set of components, such as linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic. It is realized in the performance of different types of speech activities (reception, production, interaction or mediation) (Council of Europe, 2018; Gamanuk, 2020; Nikolaeva, 2019).

Researchers examine a specialist's FLC from the standpoint of various approaches. With regard to the personality approach, FLC is the actualization of foreign language competences as basic skills. It involves specialist's readiness to demonstrate language knowledge, understanding of the content of FLC, experience of demonstrating of language mastering in various standard and non-standard situations, relation to the content of the competence and the object of its application, emotional and volitional regulation of the process and result of competence application.

From the standpoint of the system and structural approach, specialist's FLC is considered as a system that includes the following components: communicative and cognitive abilities, cognitive activity, motivation, creativity and readiness for foreign language communication in vocational and non-vocational planes.

According to the acmeological approach, FLC in its professional aspect is understood as a multi-level complex personal quality that enables a person to set and effectively solve tasks and problems of various levels of complexity in the sphere of professional foreign language interaction.

Due to the analysis of contemporary scientific and normative sources that determine the directions of development of professional education, it was established that the competence approach to the professional training of a potential specialist in any branch is recognized as a priority approach, since the competence earned by the specialist exactly in the process of professional training allows him to implement their professional functions effectively. It is also underlined that professional training carried out in terms of the competence approach implementation, focuses on the

formation and development of the general competence of a specialist, which is an integrated characteristic of an individual as a set of his key competencies aimed at the effective fulfillment of professional functions. Researchers emphasize also the integrative nature of competence, which causes its complex structure and the interconnectedness of its components (Vyakhk, 2012; Mykytenko, 2007; Fedyna, 2017; Shmulya, 2019).

Thus, according to the competence approach to the specialists' vocational training, the FLC is understood as a result of vocational training, readiness for foreign language activities in various professional spheres according to the priorities of the specialist's personality (Youlong, 2020). It is also emphasized that FLC is not just a set of knowledge, skills, and abilities, however, as a result of the educational process, it reflects the interaction of foreign language knowledge, skills, and personal values. As a process of development, FLC is characterized as a change in individual states in a multi-level educational system (Shandra, 2018).

FLC as a result of vocational training is also considered by the researchers as a combination of language skills, attitudes, values, initiatives, and communicative experience which is needed for comprehension of others, creating individual paths of foreign language communication behavior with achievement of interaction goals in professional domain (Bilousova & Gryzun, 2022; Thielgen, Schade & Niegisch, 2022).

Other scholars and practitioners interpret FLC as an integral personal and professional trait of a specialist with a certain level of language mastering, which is ready to be realized for successful, productive, and effective activity using communicative and informative skills (Vasilieva, 2020).

Summarizing the analysis of researchers' understanding of FLC in terms of different specialists' training, we can define FLC of college students' in the context of our work as a complex of knowledge and skills of various linguistic and professional branches: lexical, grammatical, sociocultural, and pure professional ones. They provide a necessary basis for the performance by the potential specialists of specific functional duties and professional problems on condition of foreign language communication in different professionally driven situations.

Minding the contemporary tasks of Chinese college education, current challenges of vocational training, and necessity to build proper model of the college students' FLC development, the structure of the competence has to comprise some inter-connected components: content and language component, motivational component and activity-driven component.

The content and language component includes knowledge of a foreign language as an instrument of acquiring vocational knowledge and as an efficient mean of communication in a professionally driven and sociocultural environment.

The motivational component of FLC comprises goals and value orientations that can encourage foreign language communication in the relevant professional subject domain.

The activity component of FLC involves the student's ability to apply foreign language skills in professional activities by participating in professionally oriented events (working meetings, projects, conferences, webinars, etc.).

Minding the development of FLC to be an integral component of the professional training of college students in China, we would like to reveal some FLC peculiarities and formulate exact tasks of college language training in the lines of current economic and socio-cultural challenges of Chinese society.

A number of aspects should be attributed to the features of the FLC of a modern specialist. First, it is characterized by integrative nature, which is determined by the interrelationship of all its components and their complex impact on the potential student's personality. Another FLC feature in its professional plane is the need for constant updating of its level by a specialist, which is associated with the rapid pace of updating the content of professional knowledge and, accordingly, vocabulary, terminology and subject-oriented foreign language knowledge in the specific subject and professional domain. This requires the college student's to be ready for continuous self-improvement, must be taken into account in the formation and development of FLC, and determines the third feature of this competence. Its full development is possible only in the process of the students' mastering not only language but also of professional disciplines, which requires the appropriate changes in the educational process of these disciplines and coordination of the whole curriculum.

In addition, nowadays, the FLC shaping and development at college level in China gets special importance due to current economic reforms. One of the leading initiatives is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Gong, 2016) based on the multilateral connections and collaboration between China and number of countries. The main targets and BRI mission are concentrated on the peaceful development and enhancing economic collaborative partnership among the countries. It is suggested to result in jointly created community of mutual interests, responsibility, political trust, and economic integration. Thus, BRI raises the urgency of the FLC forming for the Chinese specialists.

Based on the recent studies (Gong, 2016; Wang, 2016; Wang, 2020), we could analyze challenges which are faced by the college language education and formulate exact tasks of college language training in China.

In particular, the said challenges include: insufficient understanding of the urgency of FLC shaping at college level that leads to the absence of proper academic planning of foreign languages learning and poor reform measures with vague orientation on the professional goals of foreign language training; insufficient provision and irrelevant compilation of teaching materials; lack of relevant learning aids for Chinese colleges and universities; using of irrelevant teaching methods and training mechanisms which do not regard the national socio-cultural peculiarities; insufficiently trained teaching staff and others.

In addition, the most urgent problem of the foreign language mastering by the Chinese college students is seen the need for active implementation of the advanced techniques which could help transform pure theoretical language knowledge into productive communication skills of professional orientation. In this context, it is

recommended to apply more efficiently and wider network, multimedia and other digital means which have great potential in terms of FLC development. The analysis of the role of the ICT tools in the forming and development of the college students' FLC, and revealing the benefits of their implementation with the aim of the said challenges overcoming makes the prospects of the following up research.

Conclusions and prospects of further investigations in this area. In accordance with its goals, in the work it is considered the essence of foreign language competence as an integral component of the professional training of college students in China. Based on the analysis of the fundamental psychological and pedagogical concepts of competence and foreign language competence, it was formulated the concept of foreign language competence of any specialist in its professional aspect.

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