

Assessment Criteria of Future Managers' Preparation for Cross-Cultural Communication

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ABSTRACT The research is based on a set of scientific approaches, incorporating generative features of communicative and activity-oriented, dialogue, personality-oriented, culture-oriented, technological ones.

The communication structure presented by the coherent aspects such as perceptive, communicating and interactive ones, along with the peculiarities of the process of cross-cultural communication (CCC) give grounds for defining the main components of the content of training future managers of foreign economic activity for CCC. They are motivating and orientating, conceptual and cognitive, communicating and activity-oriented. Within each component the basic criteria of evaluation of preparation of future managers of foreign economic activity for CCC are elaborated. Their availability is proved with the help of the definite indices.

The conceptual and cognitive component is defined by the cognitive criterion according to which the efficiency and quality of mastered by students knowledge are assessed. The indices worked out within the cognitive criterion are knowledge quality (i.e. fullness and flexibility) and ways of acquiring new knowledge in CCC. On the base of the motivating and orientating component a subjective criterion is elaborated to evaluate the necessary professional and personal qualities of future specialists. It is represented by the indices of motivation for CCC preparation and reflexivity of communicating activity. Within the communicative and activity-oriented component an operational criterion is developed with the index of communicative skills and the index of skills to manage cross-cultural conflicts. On the base of the assessment criteria and indices the levels of future managers' preparation for CCC are differentiated into low, satisfactory, sufficient, high. The level characteristics are worked out and generalized in descriptions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The modern state of social, economic and political changes in the society, intensification of cross-cultural cooperation, global innovative processes in the system of Ukrainian higher education stipulate reconsideration of demands for the level of a specialist's preparation. The pedagogic practice has shown that university teachers lack guidance for evaluating future managers' preparation for CCC and a clear description of CCC proficiency in their syllabus.

Elaborating reliable assessment criteria of a specialist's preparation is a valuable reference point for both a teacher and a learner. In the teaching activity it allows to assess students' results at any stage of the educative activity, get qualitative and quantitative characteristics of students' achievements, make the necessary corrections, compare the obtained results with the achievable and desirable ones. Assessment criteria is of vital importance for students as well as they provide practical recommendations and a useful resource, helping students to reveal their full potential in developing professional competences, enabling them to operate optimally in culturally diverse environments. The criteria relevance to professional CCC areas enhances university graduates' mobility and competitiveness in the job market.

The article is targeted at working out the assessment criteria and indices of preparation of future managers of foreign economic activity for CCC.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of scholars have dedicated their scientific works to the professional training of specialists for CCC (A. Bostanzhi, A. Kozak, O. Krychivska, O. Rezunova, O. Zelickovska and others). Along with this the theoretical analysis has proved that the assessment criteria of preparation of future managers of foreign economic activity for CCC has not been the subject of special research yet.

In comprehensive dictionaries a criterion is defined as a fact or standard by which one judges, decides about or deals with something [1]. In the pedagogic literature criteria and indices of the quality of the educative activity are characterized as a combination of indications for assessing conditions, processes and results that correspond to the definite goals [2]. An index as a specific manifestation of a criterion at a definite stage of forming a student's qualities is considered in works by A. Aleksiuć, Y. Babanskyi, V. Bepalko. On the base of the analyzed literature we apply to our research the definition of a criterion as an objective essential indication that serves to assess preparation of future managers for CCC.

3. METHODOLOGY

In the base of the research there is a combination of scientific approaches which reflect a national, cultural, social, economic, scientific and technical, humanist and other tendencies in development of the modern society. One of the approaches applied for organization of future managers' preparation for CCC is *communicative and activity-oriented* (M. Kagan, O. Leontiev, I. Lerner and others). A student's activity in the socio-cultural context is influenced by interconnected external (objective and subjective) and internal (personal and human) factors which serve as means of communication of an individual and the surrounding world (A. Petrushchik). This activity is directed due to a definite goal.

The dialogue approach stipulates the possibilities of future managers' preparation in forming their aptitude for dialogue in interactive behaviour, revealing their unique and responsible position. In the frame of the dialogue approach philosophers (V. Bibler, Ph. Lazarev, V. Lektorskyi) emphasize subject-to-subject relations of partners in the process of communication. Striving for self-perfection serve the grounds for empathy and tolerance that lead to recognition of equality for all cultures. Participants of the pedagogic process have to perceive the dialogue as exposure of free communication that results in peaceful co-existence and interaction of individuals. Thus, the dialogue approach has to define the essence and sense of knowledge, the aim along with the content and forms of the educative activity.

The personality-oriented approach (I. Bekh, N. Bibik, S. Podmazin, A. Khutorskyi, I. Yakimanska and others) emphasizes an individual's consciousness, life experience, creative potential. It presupposes subjective activity and autonomy as for the personal activity. This is based on the idea of self-development and self-realization of a student as a creative personality along with horizontal relations between participants of the pedagogic process.

The essence of *the culture-oriented approach* (V. Serikov, I. Ziaziun and others) lies in understanding the educative process in the context of the culture appropriate environment. Communication is considered as culture of activity whereas future managers' culture of activity lies in professional communication. It is vital for future managers' preparation in realizing the objective processes happening in the world, understanding CCC role as one of the most important forms of interaction of different cultures representatives both on the interpersonal and international levels.

The application of *the technological approach* in future managers' preparation assumes the usage of the pedagogic technology in the educative process. The indications of the technological approach are precise goals formulation, system construction, science application, conceptual base, reproductivity, diagnostic nature, efficiency, motivation orientation, informativeness, optimality (N. Talyzina, T. Iliina, Y. Mashbits) and a phased procedure of its achievement (P. Galperin). The technological approach provides conformity of the activity results to the set goals.

4. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

On the grounds of the analyzed scientific literature we outline the criteria for assessment of future managers preparation for CCC. Their availability is determined with the help of the definite indices.

Basing on the fundamental theses and scientific elaborations as for the essence of the term “preparation” (M. Kagan, O. Leontiev), the notion “process of preparation” (T. Grushevitskaya, T. Kolbina, O. Leontovich), as well as the goals and principles of the educational activity, the notion “process of training future managers of foreign economic activity for CCC” is specified. It is aim-directed phased formation of a future specialist's CCC experience in the professional sphere. This presupposes a student's system knowledge mastering of peculiarities of the CCC process, formation of skills and habits of its realization and development of professionally significant qualities of a personality on the base of forming value orientations in the modern multicultural world. Preparation for CCC is a result of the professional training for CCC that is characterized by complete and flexible knowledge as for the peculiarities of the CCC process, operational skills to use it, a high level of reflexivity and motivation as well as developed professionally significant qualities necessary for successful CCC in the sphere of the future professional activity.

According to the communication structure that reveals the interconnected perceptive, communicating and interactive aspects, along with the peculiarities of the CCC process (a person's specific psychological and emotional state in CCC situations, differences in world outlook, value orientations, verbal and non-verbal means of communication, communicative strategies and styles, norms of behaviour), we define three components of the content of training future managers for CCC. They are motivating and orientating, conceptual and cognitive, communicating and activity-oriented [3].

Within each component we ascertain the basic criteria of assessment of future managers' preparation for CCC. According to I. Podlasyi, any criterion should meet the requirement of additivity [4]. Thus,

$$K(A) = K(A1) + K(A2) + K(A3)$$

where K is a criterion as the objective qualitative measure of a definite phenomenon or process A , whereas A stands for CCC, $A1$ is a motivating and orientating component of CCC, $A2$ is a conceptual and cognitive component of CCC, $A3$ is a communicating and activity-oriented component of CCC. Depending on displaying the sum total of the defined indices, preparation for CCC is determined by four levels: low, satisfactory, sufficient, high.

The conceptual and cognitive component directs managers-to-be for gaining knowledge of the CCC process on the basis of multifaceted studying of the object (its philosophical, socio-cultural, psychological, linguistic, economic aspects). This component is defined by *the cognitive criterion*. It presupposes the assessment of efficiency and quality of mastered by students knowledge: about CCC essence, structure and functions. The cognitive criterion is represented by indices of knowledge quality (fullness and flexibility) and ways of acquiring new knowledge in CCC.

The low level of preparation as for the cognitive criterion is characterized by:

- fragmentary non-systematic perception of CCC,
- inability to use knowledge in standard situations,
- absence of knowledge as for ways of its acquisition.

The satisfactory level is described by:

- incomplete knowledge of students about CCC in the professional sphere,
- identification of CCC notions and categories,
- fair skills to use them in standard situations, shallow ideas as for acquiring new knowledge in CCC.

Students with a sufficient level of preparation:

- use CCC categories freely enough,

- are able to make good use of the acquired knowledge in situations of cross-cultural conflicts,
- have sufficient skills of searching for information sources.

The high level of preparation for CCC is characterized by:

- full, flexible systematized knowledge as for CCC categories,
- skills to use the acquired knowledge in non-standard professional situations,
- a high level of selecting, systematizing and processing information with the aim of extending knowledge.

The corresponding level of students' preparation according to the cognitive criterion is measured with the help of a diagnostic test and a questionnaire for analysis of ways of acquiring knowledge in CCC.

In assessment of preparation results concerning the cognitive criterion, the method of V. Bepalko is used. According to it, the definite levels of mastering knowledge correspond to the following levels of activity: 0 – understanding, 1– reproductive identification, 3 – a productive heuristic action, 4 – productive creative action [5]. According to I. Podlasyi, outlining the information and content text elements (ICTE) is the most reliable and objective criterion of students' knowledge [4]. Thus,

$$P = Af / As \times 100\%$$

where P is doing an educative task, Af is quantity of ICTE used by a student, As is a standard solution to the task.

In order to define the coefficient of fullness and flexibility of knowledge, the tasks are composed to allow checking knowledge of meanings of definite notions and categories and their interconnections: one point is given to each correct answer, a zero is given for an incorrect one.

On the base of the method of I. Podlasyi and G. Yelnikova [6], an individual level of knowledge of each student is identified by the formula:

$$K = n / N$$

where n is a quantity of ICTE done correctly by a student, N is a general quantity of ICTE applied in a test.

The coefficient of knowledge completeness is calculated by the formula:

$$Kc = x_1 / n_1$$

where x_1 is a quantity of task elements of the reproductive level done by a student, n_1 is a general quantity of elements of the reproductive level.

The coefficient of knowledge flexibility is calculated by the formula:

$$Kf = x_2 / n_2$$

where x_2 is a quantity of elements of the creative level, done by a student; n_2 is a general quantity of task elements of the creative level.

The acquired skills and habits in the frame of the motivating and orientating component make the grounds for forming the necessary professional and personal qualities of future specialists. According to this component a *subjective criterion* is elaborated. It is represented by such indices as motivation for CCC and reflexivity of communicating activity.

The low level of preparation as for the subjective criterion is defined by:

- absence of incentives,
- indifference for preparation in the sphere of CCC,
- inability to analyze communicative situations,
- absence of control of communicative behaviour,

- incapacity to control emotions.

The satisfactory level is characterized by:

- indifferent attitude to obtaining new experience in CCC,
- passive attitude to the analysis of communicative situations,
- lack of control of communicative behaviour,
- fair ability to control emotions.

Students with a sufficient level of preparation for CCC:

- realize the necessity to acquire a new experience in CCC,
- understand the significance of communicative situations analysis,
- have a sufficient level of communicative behaviour and emotions control.

The high level of preparation for CCC presupposes:

- extremely good self-direction of personal activity at preparation for CCC,
- the necessity to find self-realization in the sphere of professional cross-cultural activity,
- deep analysis of communicative situations, constant control of communicative behaviour,
- skillful control of emotions.

The level of future managers' preparation as for the subjective criterion is defined by the test-questionnaire "Motives Scale of Professional Activity" (methods proposed by K. Zamphir in modification by A. Rean) and questionnaires concerning self-observation of students as for being empathic.

The communicative and activity-oriented component of students' preparation makes it possible for them to acquire practical skills in CCC: from reproducing the well-known ways of activity according to the model to a creative search of knowledge and ways to solve problematic tasks in the professional activity. In the frame of the communicative and activity-oriented component *an operational criterion* is developed. Within this criterion the index of communicative skills and the index of skills to manage cross-cultural conflicts are defined. The typical characteristics of the low level of preparation for CCC as for the operational criterion are:

- frequent deviations from language norms,
- a low level of speech technique,
- ignorance of professional vocabulary (communicating exceptionally within everyday typical situations for exchanging information),
- disposition to conflict behaviour (emphasizing a business partner's errors, using an authoritarian style), breaking ethical norms.

The satisfactory level of preparation for CCC is characterized by:

- insufficient observance of language norms,
- the medium level of the speech technique,
- understanding speech patterns connected with professional activity but not in a way good enough to communicate with business partners from other cultures,
- shallow skills as for managing cross-cultural conflicts,
- absence of initiative,
- insufficient observance of ethical norms.

The sufficient level of CCC preparation is determined by:

- the basic level of speech culture (observance of language norms but making insignificant mistakes),
- grounded level of speech technique,
- ability to use professional wording in a customary context that is enough for negotiations;
- sufficient skills to manage cross-cultural conflicts,
- predominant keeping to ethical norms.

Students with a high level of preparation for CCC have:

- a well-developed level of speech culture (keeping to language norms, efficient logical structure of expressions),
- a high level of speech technique,

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- flexible and effective usage of professional vocabulary consistent with international standards in spontaneous situations, understanding gist, inferring ideas and attitudes,
 - differentiating among the subtlest shades of meaning,
 - ability to find the optimal means of managing cross-cultural conflicts (precise logical grounding of the individual opinion, admitting personal mistakes and proving a partner's case in a professional style, taking into account a partner's psychological peculiarities),
 - permanent keeping to the ethical norms.

Diagnostics as for the level of preparation in accordance with the communicative and activity-oriented component is proved with the help of in-house testing instruments such as methods of assessing reactions in conflicts and experts' observations.

5. CONCLUSION

The elaborated assessment criteria reflect the main essence of the components of preparation of future managers for CCC. Each criteria is directed at assessing a separate component that has corresponding indices differentiated by low, satisfactory, sufficient and high levels. The outlined criteria, indices and levels characteristics in line with the elaborated questionnaires, express-methods and other approved pedagogic tools allow to define students' preparation for CCC at the initial stage as well as to reveal the insufficiently developed or absent components in order to bridge the gap through extra training at the next stages of the educative activity. The indicated parameters correspond to the requirements of the professional preparation of specialists in higher educational establishments and provide the efficiency of the entire pedagogic process.

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