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LINGUISTIC / FOREIGN LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE CONCEPT SCOPE: BUILDING GENESIS

The article analyzes the genesis of creating the concept of foreign linguistic competence / competencies. The most actual beliefs about the scope of the mentioned concept are considered. The main trends and directions occurred in the interpretation of foreign linguistic competence meaning and structure are identified and substantiated. The historical / retrospective context of constructing the analyzed concept is noted as well as the prospects for expending it in content are outlined.

Key words: foreign linguistic competence, genesis, psycholinguistics, communicative competence / competency.

Articulation of Issue. A competency-based strategy for improving students' linguistic potential has been adopted in Ukraine as an educational dominant. On the one hand, the advantages of a competency-based approach used in language education are obvious: first, the accumulation, synthesis and application of didactically productive methods (polymorphism) and, second, orientation towards the result, which conforms to the parameters of the predetermined competencies / competences. On the other hand, competence-centered learning is not free from shortcomings, primarily as regards conceptual definitions, in particular, with respect to the history of creating a structural concept «foreign linguistic competence / competency».

Literature Review. Studying the genesis of foreign linguistic competence content and structure is a priority in a competence-centered linguistic discourse, which is confirmed by the works of L. Bachman, I. Bim, I. Zimnjaja, J. Cummins, M. Canale, M. Swain, G. Kitajgorodskaja, E Passov, S. Savignon, N. Chomsky, D. Hymes, J. Van Ek and others. The analysis of the undertaken researches demonstrates the evolution of building foreign linguistic competency / competence. However, considering the transformation of the designated concept is carried out, as a rule, within the framework of the 20th century [1], whereas the beliefs about linguistic competence significantly exceeded the limits of the 20th century and took place far back in the ancient times.

The aim of the research is to represent the genesis of creating a linguistic / foreign linguistic competence concept as a central notion in a competence-centered language education.

Statement of Basic Materials. As far as is known, initially – in a relatively close retrospective time – the concept of linguistic competence was restored and newly transcribed by N. Chomsky: «We thus make a fundamental distinction between competence (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and performance (the actual use of language in concrete situations). Only under the idealization set forth in the preceding paragraph is performance a direct reflection of competence» [2, p. 4]. According to N. Chomsky, linguistic competence has, in the idealized, «pure» representation, infinite operational possibilities to express language, a potentially infinite set of word combinations and sentences, which is individually performed in a speech act, in specific everyday conditions and circumstances. That is, in N. Chomsky, the idea of linguistic competence is segmented and divided into an idealized and realizable existence, or – language

is represented, on the one hand, as an unquenchable collection of verbal combinatorial set and, on the other hand, as a particular subjective verbal implementation of one variant from infinite aggregates of the other ones of linguistic / verbal expression [2, p. 4–5]. It is useful to highlight in this regard that in his views the American scholar, by his own admission, largely derived from W. von Humboldt's beliefs about language, in particular, from the terms on a «hidden» linguistic competence, the infinite range of the internal form of a word, on language as «the inner activity of the spirit» [3, p.118]. That is, the postulate of the competence of language in N. Chomsky directly goes back to W. von Humboldt's thoughts, who, according to M. Heidegger, was a successor to the ideas of ancient thinkers: «Though it had its beginnings in Greek antiquity, and though the quest for it took many forms, this view of language reaches its peak in Wilhelm von Humboldt's reflections on language» [3, p. 116].

Indeed, the analysis and interpretation of the concept of linguistic / foreign language competence inevitably lead to the heights of ancient thought, which raised a number of fundamentally important, but still irresolvable, questions in linguistics, among them the main one is: whether are names / words established by nature or as agreed by people? According to Socrates in Plato's «Cratylus»: «... if neither all things belong equally to all men at the same time and perpetually nor each thing to each man individually, it is clear that things have some fixed reality of their own, not in relation to us nor caused by us; they do not vary, swaying one way and another in accordance with our fancy, but exist of themselves in relation to their own reality imposed by nature [4, 386e]. At the same time, W. von Humboldt's linguistic doctrine basic ideas date back, in our opinion, to the position of Heraclitus, who believed that the essence of the language / speech / Logos was eternal and «corresponded to nature [= a true reality]» [5, p. 189].

Thus, N. Chomsky's linguistic ideas are intended by us to be the continuation of a number of linguistic concepts of antiquity, the linguistic theories of W. von Humboldt, R. Descartes and other thinkers; according to them, linguistic competence is deduced from the philosophy of nature, it determines the essence of being and man, which is congenitally endowed with linguistic forms and speech properties. Until now, this common global postulate has been the basis – suffice it to say – of the psycholinguistic trend in creating, interpreting and applying linguistic competency / competence.

One more trend, which should be roughly designated as pragmatic / practical, was formed in ancient times. Many ancient thinkers started up the pragmatic trend. Aristotle should be considered as the scholar, who was one of the originators of the pragmatic and psycholinguistic approaches to determining linguistic competence. In his «The "Art" of Rhetoric», reflecting on the peculiarities and perfection of speech style, Aristotle paid much attention to using foreign words and word combinations, thereby indicating foreign speech terms of reference, highlighting special, peculiar to a foreign language, qualities and potential: «Wherefore we should give our language a "foreign air"; for men admire what is remote, and that which excites admiration is pleasant» [6, p. 351].

In the last third of the 20th century the social and pragmatic trend was articulated by D. Hymes, who proposed expanding and specifying N. Chomsky's theoretical discourse through defining the forms of linguistic competence. In particular, to develop the concept of linguistic competence, proposed by N. Chomsky, in 1966 D. Hymes coined the notion of communicative competence as the ability of an intuitive and conscious / controlling (reflexive) use and expression of a linguistic / grammatical repertoire. As D. Hymes noted «...a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others» [7, p. 277].

Subsequently, on the basis of Hymes' beliefs about communicative competence and its social induced significance, it was suggested differentiating the definition, distinguishing some subtypes. In the early 1980's M. Canale and M. Swain, speaking about a communicative approach, expanded Hymes' notion, as follows: «A communicative approach must be based on and respond to the learner's communication needs. These needs must be specified with respect to grammatical competence (e. g. the levels of grammatical accuracy that are required in oral and written communication), sociolinguistic competence (e. g. needs relating to setting, topic, communicative functions) and strategic competence (e. g. the compensatory communication strategies to be used when there is a breakdown in one of the other competencies» [8, p. 27].

Therefore, following D. Hymes, such scientists as H. G. Widdowson, M. Canale, M. Swain, S. Savignon, J. Cummins and others presented array of definitions for the concept / term and structure of linguistic competency / competence.

In particular, in 1970's H.G. Widdowson amplified the concept of communicative competence by inserting a thesis about the distinction in the meanings of «use» and «usage»: «By focusing on usage (...) the language teacher directs the attention of the learner to those features of performance which normal use of language requires him to ignore. (...) The way he is required to learn the foreign language conflicts with the way he knows language actually works and this necessarily impedes any transfer (of knowledge of language use) which might otherwise take place» [9, p. 17–18].

In 1979, J. Cummins proposed the BICS / CALM dichotomy for consideration. The essence of the presented dichotomous controversy is that quite often people can communicate in a foreign language in social situations, but they cannot use the language for academic purposes. J. Cummins refers to two types of linguistic competence: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) [10].

S. Savignon applied the so-called interactive approach to defining communicative competence, proceeding from the premise that a person, while communicating, interacted with other people or interrelated with a verbal or printed text [11].

In the early 1990's L. Bachman [12] substituted two separate pragmatic categories for sociolinguistic competence: operational aspects of language and the sociolinguistic ones. L. Bachman considered strategic competence to be an entirely separate item.

Some other researchers, for example, N. Hornberger [13], consider socio-cultural competence to be part of the linguistic one or correlate these concepts.

Thus, the formulated in modern times beliefs about linguistic / foreign linguistic competence are established to originate from two different, but integral, traditions of linguistic and didactic thought. Having compared the traditions ratio in language education, we considered the pragmatic tradition to be prevalent over the theoretical, or psycholinguistic, one. In our opinion, this is due to the nature of the modern social systems structure, arranged for getting optimum results, expanding the world of work and performance, etc.

Conclusions and Directions For Future Research. Analyzing the presented approaches, their content features and differences demonstrates the original genesis of foreign linguistic competence / competency category development, discovers its conceptual polymorphism and terminological ambiguity. At the same time, one may state that nowadays the scientific and expert international community has already formed the internally polyvariant conceptual core of foreign linguistic competence. This center forms the mainstay of various modifications of foreign linguistic competence structure, offered by foreign and national researchers – the framework, which is segmented, as a rule, in three or four basic directions: properly linguistic, social (both in a broad and narrow sense of social processes) and communicative applied. For example, according to I. Kukhta, the concept of foreign linguistic competence includes a) linguistic, b) social and c) communicative competences; each consists of the respective subcomponents: a) cognitive and grammatical, b) socio-cultural, sociolinguistic and professional, c) pragmatic (strategic), discursive and informative. As we see, in this construction and the similar ones there is kept a general tendency to focus on the linguistic, social and practical basis of the concept and the process of building foreign linguistic competency [14].

Prospects for expanding beliefs about the scope of the concept of foreign linguistic competence, in our opinion, consists in introducing the principle of modularity into the theory and practice of foreign language training. The module in the socio-didactic process of building language knowledge and skills is a 1) software-based, 2) built-in / replaceable, 3) labile / transformable scope of educational and didactic procedures. Constructing a module / modules as elements of the universal system of teaching / learning foreign languages depends on the demands of social reality and the value and motivational needs of students. N. Chomsky's linguistic competence is a source for creating any given module, or the repertoire of modules, namely, the infinite intrinsic potential of operational / generative language possibilities and processes. The entropic social nature, being permanently disintegrated and self-organized, indicates that in such a «fluid» time-space to develop the mentioned principle and approach is very promising and, probably, inevitable.

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У статті проаналізовано ґенезу формування концепту «іншомовна компетентність/компетенція». Розглянуто найбільш актуальні уявлення про змістовий обсяг зазначеного поняття. Виокремлено та обґрунтовано основні тенденції та напрями при інтерпретації змісту і структури іншомовної компетентності. Відзначено історичний/ретроспективний контекст процесу формування аналізованого концепту й окреслено перспективи його змістовного розширення.

Ключові слова: іншомовна компетентність, ґенеза, психолінгвістика, комунікативна компетентність/компетенція.

В статье анализируется генезис формирования концепта «иноязычная компетентность/компетенция». Рассматриваются наиболее актуальные представления о содержательном объеме обозначенного понятия. Выделяются и обосновываются основные тенденции и направления при интерпретации смысла и структуры иноязычной компетентности. Отмечается исторический/ретроспективный контекст формирования анализируемого концепта и намечаются перспективы его содержательного расширения.

Ключевые слова: иноязычная компетентность, генезис, психолингвистика, коммуникативная компетентность/компетенция.