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Formation of professional competencies of EFL teachers in pandemic period

A study about teaching competencies is discussed in various scientific research around the world. Especially it takes its momentum during the pandemic period. An approximation of the competencies advocating excellent and effective teaching profiles should be put into practice by linguistic education teachers. To achieve this goal, two actions were taken: a review of the frameworks for professional teaching generally and the role of teachers' lab-based teaching showing their competencies to teach the English language at general education establishments in Kazakhstan. The recent pandemic period showed the relevant need to upgrade teachers' qualifications and self-development. An observation of the conditions of the soft model realization was tested by research conducted by the authors. The conditions of three types were presented: content-activity, organizational-managerial, and the ability to transform the conditions of the first and second types for professional development of the teachers. The world keeps an extreme pace of remote-classroom activities nowadays, therefore it demands a model of a teacher who can adapt to changes and display creative leadership while building reciprocal relationships with learners throughout the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: teaching competence, pandemic period, soft platform, online mektep, learning format, school teachers, distance learning, teaching content, professional competence.

Introduction

Emergency distance learning involves an approach in which disciplines are offered through distance learning in response to a crisis, rather than planned or developed initially for a distance learning format. This refers to the sudden (and often hasty) transition from classroom learning to distance education and/or virtual classrooms.

Many are calling for a distinction between online learning based on inclusive pedagogy and distance learning to emphasize the fact that online learning is planned and designed as such, while distance learning is mainly about using technologies to perform tasks designed to be performed in classroom teaching. Distance learning is defined as distance learning for learners without regular face-to-face contact with the teacher in the classroom. Distance learning, once carried out by correspondence, includes learning through print materials in the home, radio or television programs, and online. Online learning usually refers to learning that takes place over the Internet. It can be part of distance learning programs, but can also be used to complement classroom learning (blended learning). Students can study online at home or in their classrooms and with their peers. Online learning uses a variety of formats, often combining Internet technologies and educational technology applications that can be used offline.

Blended learning combines several forms of learning, including face-to-face teaching and learning, the use of educational apps, and student interaction with online learning. In this case, educational apps and online learning are some of the learning strategies that help students achieve their personal learning goals. Blended learning can also include distance learning.

Yulia Cherepanova states that the pandemic has exacerbated factors contributing to social exclusion: low income, unemployment, poor health, social capital, living conditions, local infrastructure (local support, transportation, etc.).

The level of education is usually influenced by factors operating at four levels:
• Child and family: gender, ethnicity, income, health, mobility;
• School: resources, teaching and learning methods, ethics and ideals, care and support;
• Community: the relationship between the school and the community, the involvement of local authorities, civil society;
• National level: policy, investment, gender and social norms [1].

Research on teachers' professional competencies based on the soft model dealt with in scientific research. In general, four dimensions were identified. They are knowledge of teaching content, didactic

knowledge of the content, management or organization of the classroom, and teachers' leadership capacity and relationships with other agents.

The growth of requirements in this period for the quality and effectiveness of educational activities made changes and additions in a number of government documents and determines the need to normalize the professional activities of teaching staff. Therefore, English teachers, acting as facilitators, play a pivotal role in classroom learning. It is in line with Richards who states that language teacher competence is represented by a teacher's ability to speak the language he or she teaches fluently and accurately, maintain the continuation of the target language, and conduct enjoyable and meaningful learning activities [2]. Abad also emphasized that learning strategy helps in improving students' competence in English. This study focuses on how EFL teachers develop their competence in class management for school learners [3].

The significant competencies teachers should have, namely: personal, social, pedagogical, and professional. Personal competence refers to a teacher's characteristics or personality traits that support his or her performance, while social competence is related to how teachers socialize or communicate with their peers. Pedagogical competence is related to mastery on learning methods or techniques that help students when learning process takes place. At last, professional competence is a type of competence closely related to mastery of English as a teacher's field of study and how a teacher as a professional develops him or herself.

Experimental

The general theoretical basis for the design of the normative-competence model of the teacher consists of the system-activity, competency-based, and comparative general scientific approaches. The methods of qualification and dispersive analysis, expert estimations, participant observation, stratified sampling were used to determine the efficiency of the model and diagnostics of professional competencies of teachers of additional professional education. Processing of the obtained data was performed by the methods of observing statistics — the analysis of reliable expectation differences and hypotheses checking based on a fitting criterion.

Literature Review

Researchers have focused on English teacher professionalism, for instance, Mustofa, Husein, Amin, Priajana, and Irmawati discussed the profile of professional English teachers. Mustofa investigated how professional English teachers use their service time as one of the criteria in professional teacher competitions [4]. Priajana focused on the professional development of English teachers that involves their professional competence [5]. In addition, Irmawati conducted a study on methods professional English teachers use to develop their pedagogical and professional competence. Out of several studies on English teachers' professional competence, there has not been one emphasizing the development of the English lecturer's pedagogical and professional competence in writing skills. Taking into consideration the integral role of English writing competence for university students, lecturers are responsible for self-development to find out types of learning process that improves students' writing skills and apply them into a classroom setting [6].

According to Kumar, the first experiment of using a Language Laboratory for language teaching was undertaken at the University of Grenoble Alpes, France in 1908. USSR and Germany also used Language Laboratories in the 1950s and 1970s, respectively [7].

The Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan, together with Bilim Media Group, an innovative online learning company, developed and launched the Online Mektep digital educational platform (www.bilimland.kz) in 2020. The main goal is to provide an opportunity for adaptive learning for students of general education schools online. Online Mektep contains digital educational content for all academic subjects from grades 1–11 under the Model Curriculum for students of the country's comprehensive schools. The content of the lessons, a set of exercises and assignments developed by the leading teachers of the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) is moderated by the subject specialists of the Center. For example, more than 500 teacher-developers are involved in the Project, including teachers from NIS and secondary schools in the country. The total number of developed lessons from 1–4 quarters for grades 1–11 is 24074 [8].

The idea of the platform is that for each lesson, theoretical material is developed in the form of notes, diagrams, and intelligence cards. The practical part of the lesson is presented in the form of level assignments, the implementation of which allows one to consistently and systematically develop the skills necessary for the formation of functional literacy in students. The site presents a level system for organizing the content of the lesson. The development of the lessons was based on the principle of task-based learning. The

student, completing a task of a certain level, is included in the active cognitive process. Each task is accompanied by the headings "Important to know" and "Explanation" in the form of a brief theoretical material that helps the student to consolidate knowledge on the topic of the lesson and contribute to the meaningful completion of tasks. Considering the different levels of assimilation and the pace of learning the material, the student is given the opportunity to individually study the materials on the platform.

This, in turn, makes it possible to qualitatively consolidate the material passed through, as well as build one's own individual training schedule. As of December, according to the schedule, the development of 11 304 (eleven thousand three hundred four) lesson scenarios for 1–2 quarters in all subjects has been completed, by the Model Curricula for Primary, Basic Secondary and General Secondary Education in the languages of instruction. According to the current schedule, 7,102 lessons for the 3rd quarter are currently being developed. In January 2021, it was planned to develop 5,668 lessons for the 4th quarter. The online platform was launched for students of the country's comprehensive schools on September 1, 2020. At the moment, the number of connected schools in Online Mektep is 3,581, the number of active students is 238,754, 2,893,050 active users daily, total views since September 1 is 51,779,298.

However, these primary attempts failed to earn a reputation due to frequent breakdowns and limitations of technology for EFL teachers in Kazakhstan. At present, teachers are well equipped with advanced soft platforms such as Zoom and other IT-enabled Web tools. The English Language soft lab is a technological breakthrough for imparting almost all needful language skills and sub-skills of English due to the application of Digital Pedagogy. It offers an exclusive result-oriented and efficient way to enrich the English language learning process. Multimedia-based language lab helps to learn and enhance language proficiency by sharing course materials within seconds. These are developed on the methodology of STEPIK courses organized specially for all teachers in Kazakhstan free to gain more skills and abilities to manage remote classes.

The language laboratory of these tools is a helpful tool for practicing and assessing one's speech, testing four skills, learning at their own pace with teachers' organization. Dey (2013) shows that it builds the motivation of learners reducing fear, and it makes students feel comfortable even when they are remote from their classrooms. Language lab software, in the present century, is one of the essential tools used in teaching and learning Communicative English to learners. Language lab is a practical approach that boosts self-learning by providing self-guided and at the same time well-structured training to achieve the objective set by the education body. It functions as complementary to classroom teaching through which the learners can reinforce the material learned in class by putting them into practice. It is a great help to the teachers in monitoring and evaluating the progress of the learners and mentoring them about their weaknesses. It has been observed that learners learn much faster in the language lab compared to the classroom where they are taught traditionally [9].

Results

The presented Online Mektep platform model contains a set of key qualities that provide the pedagogical worker with the ability to be successful in achieving strategic educational goals. The structure of the model includes the clusters of universal, general professional, and professional competencies; maps and indicators of competencies divided into three levels: monodisciplinary, multidisciplinary, metadisciplinary. The advantage of the model is that it can serve as a framework for objective assessment of professionalism of teachers of additional professional education as well as a standard framework to upgrade teachers' qualifications and self-development. The inputs and outputs research results on teachers' competencies by the end of the teaching term. Online Mektep platform shows the efficient developed model in the format of a self-training organization. Its practical significance lies in the normative-competence model is universal and fully consistent with the requirements of the teachers' career development system. The model presented provides the groundwork for teachers' educational activity of additional professional education and can be used by everyone who is engaged in educational activity in the conditions of continuous pedagogical education.

Discussion

Language lab allows the teachers to bring more diversified activities to keep the classroom interesting. They also offer a great tool to foster communication in the classroom as it allows chatting – sending a message and interacting in the group. Language lab software devices are mainly used for the following purposes:

Multiple options for communication: A teacher can communicate with the learners in multiple ways. There are various inbuilt features that allow for one-to-one communication either through audio, video, or text. Intercom feature enables one to send text messages, and through audio–video, one can directly com-

municate with the student. The unique tools in the software allow the teacher to communicate with the individual student, selected students in a group, or a whole class. It is one-way communication provided only to teachers. Instant messaging, audio and video chatting are the different forms that the teacher communicates with the learners.

Incognito monitoring: As the name suggests, the teacher can monitor student activity in real-time discreetly. Incognito supervision of students' activities takes place through the supervisor feature.

Inbuilt applications: The teacher can make customized e-lessons with the help of specially designed tools to make the lessons interesting and engaging. There are various inbuilt applications like Lesson Studio, e-Reader, Billboard, e-Writer, Net Flick, X-Play, Video Streaming, Conferencing, Live Classroom, and e-Assignments for creating and implementing customized lessons.

Inbuilt mechanism for lab class: The list of implementation tools includes incognito monitoring, customized e-lessons creation, instant evaluation and feedback, listening comprehension practice and pronunciation practice. Personalized, interactive video quizzes, proctored assignments and progress tracking will safeguard students' engagement and involvement in English Language Lab class.

Instant evaluation and feedback facility: Assessment of speaking, listening, and all the other assignments addressed to the students are corrected, and the evaluation and feedback are given instantly at a single click of a button.

Listening comprehension practice facility: Language lab provides a platform for the teachers to skillfully use the resources available in the software to the best fit. The technology provides various comprehension modules for different levels and helps the students gradually move to the tougher lessons successfully.

Pronunciation 6 practice facilities: Language laboratory lay stress on pronunciation, stress, intonation and expression in the guided mode where the student can monitor their progress report on each stage. This helps to fill the loopholes in the ability to understand the right way to spell a particular word or expression.

Personalized interactive video quiz facility: Implementing a personalized and interactive video quiz in the learning module develops self-learning and enables the students to reach the expected progress for the module quickly. Visual aids play a vital role in bringing out the best in the students that make the learning exciting and fun.

Assignments and progress tracking facility: Each student is continuously monitored through his completed tasks and assignments. There are alerts set in the software to remind the students to expedite the backlogs quickly. Progress report for each assignment is available to the teacher on the main screen. The teacher can set deadlines for a particular assignment and offer help based on his progress chart.

Students' active involvement: The most important output the teacher receives at the end of each session is the student's participation and active involvement in the assignments at every stage of her/his progress. Collaborative learning and interaction enhance the student's active involvement in the lessons and stays concentrated on completing the given assignments. The language laboratory is useful for assessing students' speech. It provides students with the technical tools to get the best samples of the pronunciation of the language. The electronic devices used in the laboratory will stimulate the eyes and ears of the learner to acquire the language quickly and easily. The laboratory's collection is designed to assist learners in the acquisition and maintenance of aural comprehension, oral and written proficiency, and cultural awareness.

Digital Session/Lesson Planning is a pedagogic art of mixing teaching techniques, digital tool-based activities and deployment in such a way that an ideal balance is maintained school children. In a general language course, there will be work on the four skills. Although a teacher will probably come to a decision about the relative merits of each skill, there will be presentation and controlled practice, roughly tuned input of receptive skill work and communicative activities.

Different student grouping will be used. If the lab-based English faculty members have a large variety of techniques and activities that they can use with students, they can then apply themselves to the central question of session/lesson planning:

What is it that Engineering English students will feel, know or be able to do at the end of the session/class that they did not feel or know or were not able to do at the beginning of the session/class? It may be presumed that the technical students will feel more positively involved in active learning of English at the end of the class than they did at the beginning as a result of activities that were enjoyable. One may say that the students will know some new language usage that they could not learn before their involvement in Digital Lab based English class. For example, one may presume that the target technical students will be able to write a type of Business Letter that they were not able to write before they got exposure to digital pedagogy which entails digital tool-based peer-reviewed practice sessions. (See Session Plan for details). It goes with-

out saying that English teacher will create the objectives for the class at the outset. Students may be involved in a game-like activity because the teacher's objective is to have them relaxed so that they may feel more positive about their digital English Lab classes. The students may be given a reading passage to work on because the teacher's objective is to improve their ability to extract specific information 12 from written text/s in context. Storytelling activity may be introduced if the objective is to enhance 'speaking skill' of the students by enhancing speaking sub skills called reference skill of the past and the present in context.

Conclusions

Today, experts agree that it is incorrect to compare online and offline. Both formats have their undeniable advantages, and the effectiveness will be different for each specific case. The result depends on the context, subject, learning goals, student personal characteristics, the quality of the educational product implementation, and an infinite number of less obvious factors.

The online education market is diverse: massive open online courses general education platforms, educational mobile applications and computer games, tools for video conferencing, virtual lessons with teachers, and much more. The question "What is more effective?" does not make sense. It is more important to understand: "How to properly combine formats and tools to achieve the best result?".

It is no coincidence that after the first wave of the pandemic, the vast majority of the world's leading universities announced plans to introduce blended learning when classic face-to-face classes are complemented by work on an online platform. The training format of the education depends on a personal choice. Some skills can be learned remotely, e.g., everything related to working on a computer: learning new software, web design, and programming.

However, in the case of the study of foreign languages, the development of flexible skills, and the acquisition of complex knowledge (involving diverse skills), most likely, it will be necessary to combine different teaching methods and formats.

If a person needs to master a skill important for work but is not interested in it, it is better to look for formats where a real person will teach. Online lessons with a teacher or courses that involve collaborative work with other students may be a good option. Human interaction can motivate when a person does not want to learn.

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Б. Тұрлыбеков, А. Ермекбаева

Пандемия кезеңінде ағылшын тілін шетел тілі ретінде оқытатын мұғалімдердің кәсіби құзыреттілігін қалыптастыру

Оқытушылық құзыреттер туралы зерттеу бүкіл әлем бойынша әртүрлі ғылыми зерттеулерде талқыланады. Ол әсіресе пандемия кезінде қарқын алуда. Лингвистикалық білім беру оқытушылары оқытудың үздік және тиімді бейініне ықпал ететін құзыреттерді жақындастыруды практикада іске асыруы тиіс. Осы мақсатқа қол жеткізу үшін екі іс-әрекет жасалды: жалпы кәсіптік оқыту негіздеріне шолу және Қазақстанның жалпы білім беретін мекемелерінде ағылшын тілін оқытудағы олардың құзыреттілігін көрсететін мұғалімдерді зертханалық оқытудың рөлі. Соңғы пандемия кезеңі мұғалімдердің біліктілігін арттыру мен өзін-өзі дамытудың өзекті қажеттілігін көрсетті. Жұмсақ модельді іске асыру жағдайларын бақылау авторлар жүргізген зерттеумен тексерілді. Үш типтегі жағдайлар ұсынылған: мазмұнды-белсенді, ұйымдастырушылық және басқарушылық, сонымен қатар мұғалімдердің кәсіби дамуы үшін бірінші және екінші типтегі жағдайларды өзгерту мүмкіндігі. Қазіргі уақытта әлем қашықтықтан оқыту сыныптарындағы іс-әрекеттің экстремалды қарқынын қолдайды, сондықтан ол өзгерістерге бейімделе алатын және оқу процесінде студенттермен өзара қарым-қатынас орната отырып, шығармашылық көшбасшылық таныта алатын мұғалімнің моделін талап етеді.

Кілт сөздер: педагогикалық құзыреттілік, пандемия кезеңі, жұмсақ платформа, онлайн-мектеп, оқыту форматы, мектеп мұғалімдері, қашықтан оқу, оқыту мазмұны, кәсіби құзыреттілік.

Б. Турлыбеков, А. Ермекбаева

Формирование профессиональных компетенций преподавателей английского языка как иностранного в пандемический период

Исследование о преподавательских компетенциях обсуждается в различных научных исследованиях по всему миру. Особенно эта тема набирает обороты в период пандемии. Преподавателями лингвистического образования должно быть реализовано на практике приближение компетенций, способствующих отличному и эффективному профилю преподавания. Для достижения этой цели были предприняты два действия: обзор основ профессионального обучения, в целом, и роли лабораторного обучения учителей, демонстрирующего их компетентность в преподавании английского языка в общеобразовательных учреждениях Казахстана. Недавний пандемический период показал актуальную необходимость повышения квалификации и саморазвития учителей. Наблюдение за условиями реализации мягкой модели было проверено исследованием, проведенным авторами. Представлены условия трех типов: содержательно-деятельностные, организационно-управленческие, а также способность трансформировать условия первого и второго типов для профессионального развития педагогов. В настоящее время мир поддерживает экстремальные темпы деятельности в дистанционных классах, поэтому он требует модели учителя, который может адаптироваться к изменениям и проявлять творческое лидерство, выстраивая взаимные отношения с учащимися на протяжении всего процесса обучения.

Ключевые слова: педагогическая компетентность, пандемический период, мягкая платформа, онлайн школа, формат обучения, школьные учителя, дистанционное обучение, содержание обучения, профессиональная компетенция.

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