

Approaches to Prospective Economists Professional Foreign Language Training in Computer Orientated Language Learning Environment

Nataliia Fominykh^a, Oksana Barsova^a, Mariya Zarudnaya^a and Natalya Kolomiytseva^a

^a Plekhanov Russia University of Economics, Moscow, RUSSIA

ABSTRACT

The article deals with an actual theoretical and methodological question of defining the approaches to professional foreign language training. The analysis of modern educational approaches variety is conducted in the article. The main idea of this investigation is in the statement that the modern stage of professional foreign language training methods should consist of the mixture of traditional educational approaches, methods, means and computer orientated ones. It is said that prospective economists professional foreign language training should be based on the combination of competence-based, environmental, vitagenetic, communicative approaches, and also on the ideas of connectivism and constructivism. The original idea of organizing professional foreign language training in Computer Orientated Language Learning Environment (COLLE) is presented in the paper. Historical development, contemporary characteristics and some peculiarities while realization in Computer Orientated Language Learning Environment of each approach are described as well.

KEYWORDS

Prospective economists professional foreign language training, educational approaches, competence-based, environmental, vitagenetic, communicative approaches, connectivism and constructivism

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Introduction

The approach to learning foreign languages is a basic category of foreign language teaching methods, it defines the theoretical framework of language learning, puts the key idea of foreign language education into practice in the form of a certain strategy by means of a particular method; in a broad sense the approach acts as the most generalized methodological basis of teaching languages and development of methods of foreign language education.

CORRESPONDENCE Nataliia Fominykh ✉ shvidko72@rambler.ru

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Thus, the article reveals the main educational approaches to prospective economists professional foreign language training.

Materials and methods

The present stage analysis of the problem study gives reason to say that the main approaches to foreign language vocational training of students of nonlinguistic qualifications are: competence-based (Andrienko, 2007), competence-based and combination of competence and activity, communicative-cognitive (Kolkova, 2005), learner-centered (Hutchiso & Waters, 1987), intensive (Alexandrov, 2009), professionally-oriented (Obraztsov, 2005), activity-oriented (Stanchenko, 2009), integrative (Borozinets, 2005), contextual (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989), learner and activity-focused, communicative (Saenko, 2010), cross-cultural (Byram, 1997), lingvoprofessional (Krupchenko, 2006), integrating development (Zvyagintseva, 2014), productive (Rubtsova, 2011).

The analysis of the works mentioned proves that despite numerous researches in this area, the issue with the search for effective approaches to foreign language vocational training of future economists remains urgent. Modern scientific and technological progress, the development level of the global Internet entails dramatic changes of means and technologies of educational activity, appearance of considerably new approaches to foreign language learning for professional purposes based on a wide use of information and communication technologies. For our research the defining assumption is that modern foreign language teaching in a nonlinguistic university has to be based on a rational combination of various approaches, educational theories and the corresponding teaching methods. When establishing a group of approaches, we consider predetermining the idea about effectiveness of teaching and educational process based on the combination of classical achievements of traditional science and pedagogical innovation studies. Thus, we consider that professional foreign language training in a nonlinguistic university should be based on the combination of competence-based, environmental, vitagenetic, communicative approaches, and also on the ideas of connectivism and constructivism.

Results and Discussion

Competence-based approach. In the conditions of a new economy evolving, in which the main resource is a resilient highly skilled human resource, the solution to the problem of establishing interaction between higher education and the international labor market, and the problem of how to increase the competitiveness of Russian economists in the world caused introduction of the competence-based approach in the system of higher education. According to the basic provisions of the competence-based approach, the main objective of professional education is training of a skilled specialist of an appropriate level and specialty, who will be competitive and successful in the international labor market; a competent person, mastering the fundamentals of their profession and finding their way around adjacent spheres of activity and tendencies of global world economy; someone who is ready for lifelong self-study and professional growth. In other words, it is supposed that the economist will be ready and able to bear personal responsibility both for their own well-being and the well-being of society. Competence-based approach is intended to solve the problem of modern education when a graduate of a higher educational

institution has an extensive set of theoretical knowledge, but at the same time experiences considerable difficulties in the professional activity demanding use of this knowledge for the solution of specific tasks or challenging situations. Thus, the balance between higher education and the requirements of life is established.

Competence-based approach in education was studied by A.G. Bermus (2005), V.A. Bolotov & V.V. Serikov (2003), A.A. Verbitsky (2004), I.A. Zimnaya (2004), A.V. Khutorskoy (2002), M.R. Zheltukhina et al. (2016a) the summary of their publications allows us to define basic concepts of the problem "competency" and "competence". So, competence is a person's possession of the corresponding competences, knowledge, experience necessary for functioning effectively in any subject area, and a personally significant attitude of the individual towards the nature of the activity is among these competences. Competence can also be explained as the sum of professional demand, suitability, satisfaction with specialty and professional success. In turn, competency is a set of interconnected knowledge, abilities, skills, ways of the individual's activity set in relation to a certain range of disciplines necessary for high-quality productive activity in the field of these subjects; it is the readiness of the individual for mobilization of knowledge, abilities and all possible external resources for effective activity in various professional situations.

Competencies represent the integrated characteristics of learners' training quality connected with their ability to comprehend and properly apply a set of knowledge, abilities and work methods to a certain cross-disciplinary range of questions (Khutorskoy, 2002). According to the classification of the author there are three types of competencies: key, general and subject. The researcher also singled out the key competencies necessary for a person in gaining social experience: axiological and semantic (outlook, system of values), common cultural (having national and universal culture), educational and informative (knowledge of educational strategies and abilities in the sphere of independent activity), information (abilities to work with information), communicative (having a good command of the native and foreign languages, ability to interact with people), social and labor (labor, social and civil activity), personal self-improvement (physical, intellectual and spiritual self-development of the personality) (Khutorskoy, 2002).

When characterizing the key competencies, according to M.S. Kagan (1996), it is important to take into account the five main potentials which the personality should possess: cognitive, moral, creative, communicative and esthetic potentials which guide the development of the personality. General competencies belong to any range of subjects and educational areas and presuppose the formation of the learner's ability to make decisions on the basis of known facts, concepts from various educational areas, namely: the ability to define concepts, to make generalizations, to establish analogies, to classify, to independently choose the bases and criteria for classification, to establish cause-and-effect relations, to develop logical reasoning, to make inferences (inductive, deductive and by analogy), to draw conclusions; the ability to use speech means deliberately according to the communicative task, to express feelings, thoughts and requirements; planning and regulation of the activity; knowledge of the oral and written language; monologue contextual speech.



Two types of foreign language competencies suggested by the Council of Europe are crucial in the context of our research: General competencies and Communicative language competencies. General competencies include: value and semantic competency which defines the value system of future economists, degree of their responsibility when making decisions, the ability to understand their role and mission in the world; general cultural competency which involves students in intercultural dialogues, and also implies the ability to find the general and specific in native and foreign languages, the ability to compare and generalize information from various sources, knowledge of the norms established in the cultures of native and foreign languages; educational and cognitive competency which deals with knowledge and abilities of how to organize the cognitive activity: planning, analysis, self-assessment; the information competency which is the key to self-realization, first of all, in professional sphere, and it provides skills of searching, analysis, synthesis, saving, accumulation, protection, production of information.

Communicative language competencies include such components as: the linguistic competency which allows to use the acquired foreign language skills for communicative purposes; the sociolinguistic competency which presupposes knowing the culture of the target language country, the ability to build the speech behavior according to the cultural norms and rules of different countries and people; the pragmatic (compensatory) competency which implies the ability to use the studied language material in a difficult situation.

The important indicator of the organization process of training on the basis of competence-based approach is the students' subject competence, in the case of foreign language vocational training it is the level of foreign language proficiency achieved by students, the realization of informative opportunities, consistency in knowledge acquisition, educational autonomy and effective interpersonal communication, participation in group projects, the ability to carry out self- and peer assessment, ensuring the stability and increase of educational achievements on their own. When it comes to foreign language vocational training we need to consider foreign language communicative competency as a subject competency. However, it is necessary to add that in a broad sense the studied phenomenon is understood as students' readiness to use the acquired foreign language knowledge, skills and abilities to solve real-life and professional practical problems (Passov, 1998). It is possible to form the ability to tackle practical problems only through vigorous activity, therefore, competencies can be built only through various cognitive, communicative, practical, creative activity of a learner. The latter idea explains the popularity of the competence-based approach for foreign language training, as its aim is not to convey a certain amount of knowledge, but to form the students' ability to resolve problems, to gain the experience of foreign language communicative activity, to make the process of foreign language acquisition as a whole pragmatic in character.

The choice of the competence-based approach as the basis for foreign language vocational training of future economists in COLLE is also motivated by the fact that this approach is a peculiar correlate of a set of more traditional educational scientific approaches, incorporating their best features. So, the educational orientation on solving learners' professional and personal problems, stems from the ideas of professional and personally-oriented

approaches; emphasis on result (which is viewed as not the sum of the acquired information, but the person's ability to function in various situations) together with teaching through students' activity are borrowed from the activity approach; the ideas of the communicative approach found their reflection in the communicative component of the education, in the orientation of foreign-language training on the learners' ability to carry on foreign language communication in various social, every day and professional situations; information literacy, ability to perform the main operations with information (search, storage, distribution, analysis, synthesis, production of information) within the notion of the competence-based approach originates from the information approach.

Thus, based on the results of the theoretical research of the above-mentioned authors' publications, and also emanating from our own work experience, it is possible to single out the main peculiarities of the competence-based approach to prospective economists professional foreign language training. These are:

- close interrelation between the linguistic knowledge and practical speech abilities of students;
- substantial, logical interpretation and specification of the common goal – formation of foreign language communicative competency as the sum-total of individual competencies (language, speech, sociocultural, pragmatic);
- the professional orientation of the educational process aimed at forming the students' ability and readiness to make communicative decisions in the professional sphere of activity;
- internationalization of students' and teachers' educational and scientific activity;
- building students' basic skills of how to conduct everyday, social and professional communication in a foreign language;
- the ability to make household, social and professional communicative decisions is based on the knowledge acquired in the course of foreign language education;
- development of search skills, skills of analysis, synthesis, systematization of the necessary foreign language information, work with documents written in a foreign language in the professional sphere;
- organization of effective interpersonal communication of students and teachers;
- formation of students' ability to learn a foreign language not passively, but actively, diligently, and to use a foreign language in everyday and professional life, both within, and outside the educational environment;
- professional versatility, the ability to change spheres and ways of foreign language communicative activity.

Environmental approach. Modern teaching and educational process is not limited to the educational institution itself, on the contrary, it is characterized by the learner's free choice of the place, time, forms and methods of teaching. For this reason one of the problems of modernization of the current education system is the design question of virtual educational environments, in which the learners' self- and peer education will be carried out. In spite of the fact that



environmental approach is not new in world educational practice, and it was studied both by Russian (Krechetnikov, 2003; Manuylov, 1997; Sheck, 2001; Yasvin, 2001; Zheltukhina et al. (2016b) and foreign researchers (Abowd, 1999; Hutchinson, 2003; Lieberman, 2014), the interest in the research of the environmental approach contrasts with the coverage of this study.

The analysis of above-mentioned scientists' progress in this issue showed that attempts to formulate the fundamentals of the environmental approach were made not only by educators, it was also studied in psychology, sociology, education philosophy. So, in philosophy of education it is about designing a new educational environment as a multidimensional space adequate to learners' needs and corresponding to the tendencies and dynamics of the modern culture. Also the development of a flexible environmental approach is set as a goal, focused not only on the object and material world, but also on the development of the communicative world, links and relations between the world's educational systems, mergers of educational institutions and their educational environments, their integration into uniform communicative cultural space. In sociology, the question of the person's interaction with the environment is considered within the environmental approach. Psychologists set a task of the analysis and use of educational environment as a factor, condition and means of building the educational process (Ivanova, 2014); the works of V.I. Panov (2004) and A.V. Rubtsova (2011) are devoted to the problem of the comprehensive psychological analysis of educational environment. Instead of the term "environmental approach" author G.G. Sheck (2001) uses synonymous concept "mediated guidance in pedagogics" and offers the following definition: "the original theory and technology of using the environment as a means or instrument of mediated guidance of the learner's personality development".

Within the environmental approach education is viewed as an open, self-organized, nonlinear, dynamic system. In this sense the environmental approach is opposed to the systematic one, according to which vocational training of future economists represents a complex multicomponent pedagogical system, structurally difficult, steady, invariable, strictly organized, in which it is possible to single out such components as education, upbringing, research activity of teachers and students, links between these components; at the same time in the sphere of teachers' scientific analysis the problem of the continuity of interaction between the professional training of economists and educational environment is not studied.

In contrast to this, in the framework of the environmental approach learning efficiency depends precisely on the degree of harmonization, mutual enrichment, co-development, complementarity of environment and students. Using the environmental approach in the training of future economists can be a key factor in achieving openness, dynamism and competitiveness of higher education institutions.

According to the ideas of environmental approach, participants in the educational process are: the student, the teacher, the environment, and the main task of the teacher is to make the environment his/her ally, assistant in the process of education and training. The object of research in this process is the development of the individual, depending on the characteristics of the environment. The environment is interpreted in the following way - all among what remains the subject of development and by means of which he realizes

himself as a person. Such an understanding of the environment provides opportunities as for the subjects of education (students) and the governance subjects (teachers) that is equally important and educationally significant. In addition, as part of the environmental approach, environment is a significant, but an intermediate link between the subjects of education and management. The principles of environmental approach, the implementation of which allows control of the environment, its transformation and change in the desired direction are: the principle of type-orientation, mediation, variability, technology implementation (Manuylov, 1997).

Traditionally, the main provisions of the environmental approach considered in pedagogy are: 1) the differentiation of education (educational environment); 2) a dialectical interrelation of functions developing and shaping the educational environment. For the disclosure of the first thesis it is necessary to turn to the researches of U.S. Manuylov (1997), who proved that any area of human life can become the environment, when it is mediated by its purely personal meanings and values, i.e. the environment exists only in the correlation: "a subject - the environment." According to this provision, the educational environment - is not so much an environment conducive to accomplish the educational goals rather than a result of special educational strategies, special education modality (Yasvin, 2001). Educational environment - is always the developing environment, providing a set of opportunities for self-development of the educational process participants.

As to the second thesis of environmental approach, its essence lies in the continuity of the training and developing potential of the learning environment. The external expression of this relationship acts is the individual character of the mediation of norms and values, cultivated by the environment. Even when an individual breaks with the environment, it suffers from its effects. That is why, when it comes to the planned organization of the educational environment, the position of the unity of its developing and shaping functions should be put forward. Educational environment must function so that the socially significant personal qualities of students were formed without any obstacles to their individualization.

Determination of the environmental approach as a basic element of the Computer-Oriented Environment (COE) concept in a foreign language training of future economists is determined by the following factors: the rapid development of communication means; eliminating of economic borders; new type of work-life balance; changes in the nature and principles of the organization of work, dictated by the development of the information society. Besides, the process of modernization involves the incorporation of the latest achievements of science and innovations in the educational process. In study the author proved the innovative nature of the environmental approach based on these conclusions: 1) the approach in the full sense is a system of scientific views on interdisciplinary contemporary pedagogical reality; 2) its source materials basis of interdisciplinary functional approach, the theory of complex self-organizing systems (synergy), philosophical linguistics, ecological theory, co-evolutionary strategy, modern logic, hermeneutics, developmental psychology, theory of social control, historical phenomenology (Sheck, 2001).

Environmental approach to foreign language training of future economists appears to us as a set of research procedures, including: 1) the identification of



mutual influence of the student and the educational environment patterns; 2) the design of foreign language learning environment in training future economists based on the results; 3) the optimization of the learning environment impact on the students' personalities development. Thus, the environmental approach - it is a theory and technology of indirect management of educational process in which the focus is on the inclusion of a student's intrinsic activity, his/her self-learning, self-education and self-development; the learning environment - is the condition and factor of success or failure of the student; we believe that the essential features of the implementation of environmental approach to foreign language training for future economists should be:

- co-evolution of the educational environment and society, implying the timeous response of educators to the slightest social, economic and scientific changes in society;

- mediated, volumetric, non-discrete, non-linear effect on the student;

- educational environment provides for the student the ability to obtain the necessary information, data, sources for improving intelligence, whereas, the ability to receive the information and process it is acquired during the education;

- learning environment is both the diagnostic, design and production of results' tool, and the actualization of the student's inner world;

- selectivity of the environment, i.e. the possibility of building their own paths of foreign language education, is based on the ability of the environment to provide multivariate development of the educational process;

- a student appears not a consumer of knowledge but a co-creator of the educational environment;

- sources of information and knowledge in the educational environment are educational materials, online communities, groups, all participants of the educational process;

- the ability of the educational environment to act as a micromodel of communicative and informational culture of humanities;

- the ability for students to manage the process of the learning environment design;

- the learning Environment is a special personal space of learning and development, where each student develops according to their individual characteristics.

Vitagenetic approach. Professional activities of the modern economist increasingly carried out in an atmosphere of a workstation in a virtual professional space, where key positions are occupied by e-mail, chat, web, business correspondence, communication with the international community, the information data storage, a variety of professionally oriented software, electronic records management. Vitagenetic approach is based on the idea of a virtual simulation of the formation process of acquiring human vitagenetic experience that led to the choice of that approach to the foreign language teaching for future economists as a computer and ICT are the means of designing a virtual computer-oriented environment in which students gain experience in business, every day, scientific communication in a foreign language.

The main provisions of vitagenetic approach are reflected in the works of A.S. Belkin & N.K. Zhukova (2001), N.O. Verbitskaya, (2002), V.A. Krivenko (2001), N.G. Svinina (2001). The analysis of these studies showed that the pivotal concept of the studied approach to teaching is the term "vitagenetic experience" meaning the process of self-discovery, self-creation by a person of his/her personality. In contrast to the life and practical, vitagenetic experience reflects the self-person trial in their spiritual essence, self-construction, continuous self-improvement and spiritual growth; it is a personal achievement, remaining in long-term memory, and in a state of constant readiness for actualization (request) in appropriate situations. It is a composition of thoughts, feelings, actions that have been experienced by a person and representing for him the self-sufficient value, associated with the memory of the thoughts, emotions and behavior. The characteristics of vitagenetic experience are: socially-valuable significance which is stored in the memory while living, and helps to design the future in view of past mistakes and achievements, and includes the experience of previous generations; replenishments of vitagenetic experience does not stop, it is a continuous process (Krivenko, 2001).

Age of students 18-25 years old (late adolescence or early adulthood), from the point of view of psychology, is sensitive, i.e., favorable for the completion of the formation of psychophysical and personal qualities, it is in the student's age when young people are redefining values, shaping ideology, the process of identity formation of the person is finalizing under the influence of experienced life events, thus, we consider the most appropriate and even natural to use vitagenetic approach while studying at a higher education institution.

The process of obtaining vitagenetic experience by a student is based on the stages of processing vitagenetic information by him: 1) primary: primary perception of information, undifferentiated, complex; 2) assessing and filtering: the definition of the importance of the information received from the point of the personal importance; 3) adjusting: the creation of the adjustment on memorization of information with an approximate "shelf life." The significance, importance, value for life and professional importance of the data, determines the degree of interest of the student to his shelf life of vitagenetic information and the levels of its adjustment, among which are: 1) operating: weak memorization, the lowest value of the information for personal achievements; 2) functional: memorizing for a longer period, using as necessary; 3) remembered for a long-term: the high value of the acquired data for an individual. One of the core problems of vitagenetic approach implementation in education is to find reliable sources of vitagenetic information, the solution to this problem at the present stage of scientific and technological development of society seems to us to be in using the global Internet as such a resource. Thus, vitagenetic approach to foreign language teaching for future economists implies:

- Obtaining vitagenetic experience of interpersonal communication on the basis of "experiencing" and "conceptualization" of social and professional foreign language communication situations;
- Cooperation, co-participation and partnership of students with each other and with the teacher;
- Making full use of foreign-language Internet resources as a source of vitagenetic information;



- An active, systematic appeal to the vital, practical, social, communicative and cultural experience of the students, which can be enriched by theoretical knowledge and practical skills obtained in the course of foreign language learning;

- Joint purposeful foreign language communicative activity of the teacher and students to establish a mutually supportive atmosphere of intercommunicative dialogue in a group using personally-meaningful experiences of each individual and collective vitagenetic experience;

- Development of the ability to decide foreign-language communication tasks in different areas of professional activity in future economists based on the use of social experience, which is part of students' own experience of;

- Designing the content of a foreign language teaching of future economists on the basis of the adapted didactic experience in dealing with cognitive, ideological, moral, political, and cultural problems personally significant for the student.

Thus, the main objective of foreign language teaching of the future economists in non-linguistic high school when vitagenetic approach consists in obtaining vitagenetic (personally significant, self-acquired) foreign language professional communication experience. The role of knowledge is not diminished; it is converted from the main goal of learning into a tool for personal development. As evidenced by numerous statistical studies, in the era of scientific and technical progress the knowledge of students of non-linguistic areas of training is becoming obsolete in the course of their studies at a University. Therefore, professional training of modern economists must not only ensure a certain level of knowledge and skills, but also contribute to the formation of personality, their outlook, the development of intelligence, psychological potential, spiritual core, the nature; and form the students 'good habits', one of which - a constant need to learn.

The communicative approach. With the acquisition of international status by the English language in 1960-70th, there was a need in the language proficiency as a tool of communication and interpersonal communication. Failure of learning techniques commonly used at that period (audio-lingual, grammar-translation) to meet the needs of students led to the emergence of a new approach to foreign language education - communicative, as the main purpose of which was supposed to teach in contact with someone, to express one's thoughts and understand the opponent. Whereas, the main condition for the process of mastering a foreign language was studying *in vivo*, for verbal communication - the verbal communication itself.

A significant contribution to the formation and development of communicative approach to foreign language education made I.A. Zimnaya (2004), E.I. Passov (1998), D. Clark (2015), W. Littlewood (1997), J.C. Richards & S.R. Theodore (1986), M. Swan (1985). Within this approach, the practical orientation of speech in a foreign language is both the aim and the mean of education. An important aspect in teaching communication in a foreign language - formation of special abilities of students, specifically: to start communication, to finish and to renew it; pursue their strategic line in the process of expressing their own ideas, to implement it in the behavioral tactics; communicate with multiple partners of speech considering the possibility of changing roles in the process of communication; predict the probabilistic behavior of communicators.

The main principles of the communicative approach are: cogitative speech activity, individualization, functionality, innovativeness, situational (Passov, 1998). We characterize these principles basing on the E.I. Passov (1998) ideas if applied to foreign language teaching in a University. The essence of the principle cogitative speech activity is to teach communication in a foreign language through speech practice, using valuable communicative speech material at the lesson for adequate areas of every day and professional communication of students. Speech training material value is the higher, the greater is the likelihood of its further use in real life communication situations.

Individualization principle involves taking into account in the process of teaching a foreign language for special purposes the context of professional activity, outlook of students, their life experience, areas of interest, aptitudes and considering these aspects, the ways to create communicative motivation of future economists. Communicative motivation of students we understand as the need to communicate in a foreign language. Functional principle, above all, considers the selection of speech means, namely the correlation of foreign language material within the non-native speech system means to the needs of communication. Also, the identified principle implies the preservation in the process of teaching the functional unity of the four types of speech activity (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) equally developing each aspect. Novelty, on the basis of the theory of communicative approach should cover all aspects of the joint activity of the teacher and students: the variability of forms and content of making a statement in a foreign language; a variety of methods, techniques, forms and conditions of teaching; constant updating of the content of future economists foreign language teaching. The most significant importance in the context of our study belongs to a situational principle, which in general terms means that communication takes place on the basis and through the development of communicative situation, which can be simplistically defined as the complex of the circumstances in communication.

The following characteristics of a communication situation are considered as essential:

- direct connection of language tools and language units available to a student with current communication conditions;
- belonging to particular occasions of professional activity which allows interaction between prospective economists;
- different degree of frequency in professional environment of prospective economists, which results in different depth of solutions to communication situations and discussion on different topics;
- being aimed at finding solutions to communication tasks in a foreign language;
- being dynamic, in particular, the ability of a communication situation to change continuously, depending on verbal activity of partners;
- highly focused on a student's personal and professional interests.

Thus, taking into consideration all above mentioned, we can define communication situation as a dynamic system of students' interaction, which facilitates development of communication motivation and simultaneously serves as both the foundation and a tool for organisation of professional communication of prospective economists in a foreign language. This definition can be supported



by E.I. Passov (1998), who stated that a person becomes a subject of an activity only if there is a need and a situation in which the need can be met. In order to maximise the effectiveness of ESP, it is essential to unite different communication situations using communication mechanisms which can include the following types of mechanisms: organisational and managerial (creation of motives for communication, fostering a group of communicators), social (participants attraction, distribution of social roles), cognitive (information exchange), axiological (value-orientated attitude to communication content and audience), linguistic (communication tactics and technique), psychological (contamination, infusion, imitation, persuasion, fashion), spatial (time, venue), technological (means of telecommunication).

Thus the characteristics of communicative approach to ESP are the following: verbal and cognitive activity, contractibility, communicability of students; informatively and novelty of educational process; situational nature of sessions' organisation. This, in its turn, means that the following factors should be considered:

- students' motivation, creation and maintenance of a need in communication in a foreign language;
 - functionality in selection of study materials, in accordance with the intentions the communicators have in course of communication;
 - individual psychological, age-related and national characteristics, as well as prospective economists' personal interests;
 - active and creative interaction of subjects of the educational process while using a foreign language as a means of communication;
 - application of active and problem-orientated methods of foreign language teaching to groups of students;
 - communication situations design in a foreign language (both in oral and written forms) relevant for professional activity of prospective economists;
 - focus on independent search of information and its critical understanding and acquisition;
 - organisation of prospective economists' communication in a foreign language in academic environment on the basis of dynamic and professionally significant communicative situations;
- which also provides:
- a) a considerable increase in time each student has for oral practice;
 - b) simultaneous acquisition of professionally orientated constituent of a foreign language and the one of general culture in course of communication;
 - c) genuine communicativeness, consciousness and evolving basis for a foreign language acquisition in conditions of indirect (computer and web technology assisted) and direct communication.

Connectivism - is one of the approaches to research in the area of artificial intelligence, neurobiology, psychology and philosophy of the mind. This approach is based on the theories of nets, chaos, elaborated and self-organised systems and models mental and behavioural phenomena on the net S. Downes (2005) and G. Siemens (2005) contributed to development of connectivism and lately a number of Russian authors (Voronkin, 2012; Patarakin, 2006; Starodubtsev, Shepel & Kiseleva, 2011; Titova, 2009), conducted research in this area. On the

basis of analysis on their publications it can be stated that the fundamental postulates of connectivism are the following:

- learning is conducted in constantly changing environment;
- knowledge moves to net works;
- learning is building a network;
- learning is not a process but a permanent state;
- mental phenomena can be described as a network formed by connections between simple elements;
- the personality of a student is initial;
- learning is supported externally and is based on connection to the sources of information.

The basic notions in terms of this approach to education are the following: Personal Learning Environment, Personal Learning Network, Personal Learning Plan, Open Educational Resources. Two elements are essential to create a network: a circuit and connection; while at the same time a neural net is formed in the brain of people, organisations, libraries, encyclopaedias, internet sites, books, magazines, databases and so, i.e. any source of information being its circuits. Variability of the environment is presupposed by the fact that the circuits, which have lost their importance or meaning, eventually disappear and, in contrast, new essential circuits are formed. Referring to connections it should be mentioned that due to their variability, each net user forms an individual learning net thus the learning process is conducted via multiple channels and varied sources of information are used. In the given context, the ability of a modern individual to build required connections between the circuits of a net and see meaningful links between areas of knowledge, concepts and ideas becomes the key skill (competence).

Being a modern educational theory, connectivism laid the ground for a new direction in pedagogy-peergogy - a self organised mutual teaching in the web on a peer to peer principle, without a clearly organised teacher (tutor/trainer). In this case the teacher's role on the net is the one of a co-ordinator and an expert while every participant of the net receives an equal share of the teacher's responsibilities. The primary goal of peergogy is a learning context that is created by equal participants and is essential and sufficient for their self-education.

Connectivism ideas have been chosen as a basis approach to teaching ESP in a Computer Orientated Language Learning Environment (COLLE) mainly due to global social restructuring. A modern economist uses nets, both real-life (colleagues, team or group members) and virtual (sites, communities, expert groups) in order to solve problems and, in many cases, individuals become sources of information for each other; in other words the working place and working relations tend to go beyond physical boundaries of an enterprise.

Conclusion

Thus, taking into consideration all above mentioned, there are the following distinguishing characteristics of applying connectivism ideas to prospective economists foreign language professional training:

- social facilitation (learning is done in the course of oral or written communication in a foreign language; in terms of speed, effectiveness and efficiency increase due to virtual presence of other people, who are perceived by



the subject's consciousness as an observer or, sometimes, as a competing individual or individuals);

— mutual formation of the content of the educational media (active blogging, creation of sites, professional and educational social groups, societies, themes, discussions, in other words, all sort of additional sources of information circuits, which can be later used by the net participants as open learning resources);

— educational media for prospective economists foreign language professional training is not a passive and static educational space with a variety of available resources, but a tool and an active co-participant of the learning process;

— high level of development of students' IT culture (as learning activity is distributed and non-linear, it is essential for a student to have a high level of IT culture (which includes the ability to work with information: to find, evaluate, analyse, proceed, store, distribute and produce information) and understand that it is impossible to know everything and sometimes extra knowledge may lead to loss of concentration, disperse of their personal efforts and prevents achieving a result);

— forming the culture of co-operation among prospect economists (which means forming students' systematic thinking, skills of team work, interbranch communication, project co-ordination and management of people, groups, societies; ability to perform different social roles in a team in constantly changing conditions of multitask performance);

— development of students' ability to assess events from different viewpoints, understand and accept the positions of other participants of the learning process (in the course of interaction on the net a student is not necessarily looking for approval of their cultural or philosophical position, but is prepared for confrontation and comprehension of other ideas), formation of prospect professionals' ability to communicate with their business partners equally effectively, regardless of any cultural differences;

— development of students' ability to set goals (basing on the skills of setting priorities for short- and long-term development, evaluate the level of goal achievement and move to the next goal).

Constructivism. According to the research «School's Over: Learning Spaces in Europe in 2020: An Imagining Exercise on the Future of Learning» (European Teaching 2020) conducted by Joint Research Centre of European Committee in co-operation with the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, changes to the global demography is one of the key factors leading to dramatic transformations in the educational system. The majority of today's intellectual workers will retire much later than those of their parents' generation. Thus, the term of their employment will increase significantly and economists will be required to learn and acquire new skills life-long. Besides, due to global changes, total automation and redistribution of labor activity, new skills and competences, and, consequently, new specialisations, that modern professionals will have to acquire, appear almost annually. Due to this, such a new approach to education as constructivism increases in popularity, as a person with well developed constructive thinking is capable of finding necessary information and respond to changing global social and economic situation.

Constructivism is an approach that considers education not as a process of knowledge transfer, but as an independent, conscious and active constructive process of building a person's own system of knowledge. Such an approach develops students' abilities to think, reflect, find non-conventional solution in the course of communication with the environment.

This approach can be implemented on the basis of students' constructive skills: modelling, planning and design of an activity in a standard and non-standard conditions; the teacher's task is to discover the students' capabilities, teach them to think constructively and find creative problem solutions.

We consider the following to be characteristics of constructivism as an approach to prospective economists foreign language professional training:

— involvement of students in creation of products of speech activity in a foreign language which bear product creation (written or oral) and public importance;

— development of constructive educational media which will enable students to construct their own system of using a foreign language on the basis of self-education, self-preparation, self-control, self-actualisation and interest in foreign language learning;

— shift of focus from the volume of knowledge to methods of its acquisition, which will lead to the utmost educational goal: up-bringing of a reflective and self-organised individual;

— dominance of active, creative and research-oriented educational methods: experiment, problem solving, project and case methods, search for non-standard solutions, brainstorming;

— dominant role of a student, as a person who searches and interprets information;

— unity of contact classroom activities and independent, extracurricular students' activities;

— the role of the teacher as a factor supporting and directing the process of independent construction of an individual system of a foreign language acquisition;

— reflection and arrow analysis as an element of knowledge acquisition.

Thus, taking everything said above into consideration, it is possible to conclude that success of prospective economists professional foreign language training depends on the correct choice of educational approaches such as competence-based, environmental, vitagenetic, communicative approaches, and also on the ideas of connectivism and constructivism.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

Nataliia Fominykh, PhD, assistant professor at the Foreign languages department №1 of the Humanitarian training center in the Plekhanov Russia University of Economics, Moscow, Russia.



Oksana Barsova, senior instructor at the Foreign languages department №1 of the Humanitarian training center in the Plekhanov Russia University of Economics, Moscow, Russia.

Mariya Zarudnaya, senior instructor at the Foreign languages department №1 of the Humanitarian training center in the Plekhanov Russia University of Economics, Moscow, Russia.

Natalya Kolomiytseva, instructor at the Foreign languages department №1 of the Humanitarian training center in the Plekhanov Russia University of Economics, Moscow, Russia.

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