

Problems of Modern Higher Education in the Sphere of Russian Philology and the Ways of Solving them (on the Example of the Situation in Kazan Federal University)

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The article is devoted to the actual problems of modern higher education in the sphere of Russian Philology which depends on the world crisis situation, that continues to persist, despite the efforts to reform it. This article aims to mark some important problematical items necessary to realize the reformation of higher philological education and to formulate a number of key statements that could help in future. The theoretical character of the article is based on analytical approach to the problems of higher education. The article analyzes modern curricula on "Philology" and "Pedagogical education", the bases for professional training at the undergraduate and graduate programs in Kazan Federal University. The practical significance of the article lies in the possibility of using the results of the study to improve a curriculum in training future specialists not only in Russia.

Keywords: higher philological education, curriculum, undergraduate, graduate.

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of the study

The situation in higher philological education, despite the obvious problems, doesn't attract such wide public attention, as the teaching of Russian language and literature at school. The goals of the school program and a list of required reading for over two years are the subject of active discussion in the professional environment and in special commissions of the government. However, to solve that problems without addressing to ones of higher education in the sphere of Philology is impossible.

Modern problems in philological education according to diagnostic stage

At the beginning of XXI century in Russia there were made some positive steps to

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reform the current structure of philological education (which had advantages and disadvantages), because the scientific basis of Philology in Russia during «perestroika» has rapidly developed. In Kazan State University there were opened some new specializations that met the demands of modern science, such as: "Applied linguistics", "Historical linguistics", "Literary criticism and editing", "Philological bases of journalism", "Russian as a foreign language". However these positive steps did not support the needs in reforming education, because there existed obligatory curricula, in which remained a specific set of disciplines, strict sequence of their teaching.

It was expected, that transformation to two-level (bachelor + master) system of education will provide opportunities for universities, that have received the status of Federal, to develop their own educational standards in the relevant disciplines and educational programs, taking into account such factors as: specificity of the region, the level of students, the material base of the University, etc.

However, the problem of standardization of curricula increased with setting of Federal educational standards that determined some obligatory statements of the system of higher philological education.

The establishing of the bachelor degree as the initial stage of higher education has led to the abolition of additional specializations, which provided a variety of curricula (at least 30% of special disciplines), it also caused a tendency towards the unification of the curricula of different specializations, which is impossible and absurd.

As a result, the first-year students in the field of study "Philology" get some averaged higher education, the special philological component among the total number of educational subjects is barely about 50 %. Before the beginning of the reform it was possible to introduce philological disciplines at least in the units chosen by the student himself, the curriculum of bachelors now includes the disciplines "History", "Philosophy", "Safety", "Mathematics", "Law", "Conflict", "Concepts of modern natural science", "Politics", "Sociology", "Economics", "Management", " Psychology of management ", etc. – but none special courses!

Students which had chosen the sphere "Pedagogical education", during first years in addition to social and economic disciplines study intensively the psychological and pedagogical disciplines. But basic disciplines like "Main (Russian) language" and "History of Russian literature" get into the curriculum of 1-2 years as a residual. That approach forms a teacher who knows the basic competencies but does not possess deep knowledge in the field of Philology. This approach fundamentally contradicts the postulate that a good teacher should be, first of all, a good specialist in his professional field.

The tendency to get away from academic education is found in the internal politics of the University to the sphere "Philology": the number of students is reduced, basic courses are cancelled, replaced by applied courses. Their priority is due to a change in "social inquiry" in philological professions: the increasing demand in professionals in public relations, referents, press-secretaries, copywriters, speechwriters, etc. However, the complete renunciation of training specialists-philologists in the traditional way will inevitably lead to the destruction of Philology as a field of scientific knowledge, and then as a methodological basis for training specialists in applied fields.

Note also that the using on «per capita» financing forced to join students from several departments in the basic lecture courses. Lectures working in "multi" classrooms do not have the possibility to adjust the course material, taking into account the future profession of students. As a result, many students perceive, for example, lecture course "Logic" as something abstract and scholastic, but not as a necessary tool to build linguistic and literary concepts and classifications.

Reduction of training period from 5 years to 4 also called the necessity of revision of curriculum: it was necessary to reduce the quantity of lectures of academic disciplines,

including basic; to transform an established sequence of courses involving their succession. For example, some years ago the history of Russian literature was taught during 8 semesters. Bachelor's course is reduced, making it impossible to study deeply a basic course. As a result, folklore and old Russian literature are taught simultaneously, whereas for adequate understanding of the material of historical and literary courses students should already have a basic understanding of the folk epic. And such examples are not rare. The overall reduction in hours leads to the reduction of hours for such subjects as the history of foreign literature and Slavic languages. It is no doubt that to understand the national identity of language and literature it is necessary to include them in a wide philological context.

Another significant disadvantage of current curricula is the inconsistency in teaching various courses: literary and linguistic, theoretical and historical, social and special. As a result, students do not know how to correlate the training material from different disciplines; there are many difficulties about the specifics of the historical era, recreated by the author in his work of art. The ability to give a complete philological analysis of the text is not formed, so as the understanding of the form of the work as meaningful, as reflecting the worldview of the author.

A particularly difficult problem is a significant reduction in the number of special disciplines, which made it impossible to former professional specialization of students.

Education is becoming more and more superficial: students have general idea about the existence of a number of literary and linguistic disciplines, however, are often not able to analyze the text using their specific tools.

The tradition of special seminars which gave students the opportunity to test their hypothesis and methods of the research is forgotten. Their «scientific study» loses the status of research and more turns as an abstract.

As a result, the graduates are not prepared to solve specific professional tasks. This is especially true for the graduates of "Pedagogical education", whose professional activity implies a period of gradual mastery of skills during practical activity and does not leave for the young specialist the right to be wrong.

As a positive we note the fact that modern curricula tries to overcome the gap between University education and practice of school teaching due to the significant increase of hours for teaching practice. The traditional "active practice" in the senior class is also supplemented by teaching practice during 2-3 years because of the "school day", allowing students to combine the study of psychological and pedagogical courses with the observation of the educational process at school.

It was assumed that the necessity to improve knowledge in the sphere of future profession will be solved on the basis of master course. However, the norm of budget places is only 10% of the quantity of bachelors.

Especially difficult situation now is for bachelors in "Pedagogical education": not having a master's degree, they can't expect to have a good work at school. Moreover, under the existing Federal educational standard they study "Russian language" or "Literature" and do not have the opportunity to teach at school both disciplines, though traditionally in Russia the teacher teaches both subjects at the same time. It should be noted that in Tatarstan this problem at the state level is interpreted as significant. In 2015 there were recruited master's groups "Teaching of Russian language and literature in polyethnic environment" and it was a special grant from the Tatarstan government.

The masters' programs "Literature in the context of religious and secular culture" (2012 and 2013), "Multilingual technology of early childhood development" (2015) were opened under the demands of modern school and pre-school education.

On the other hand, bachelors now have lost their profound theoretical training: traditionally students were given theoretical basis and then practical skills; now we have a trend "away from science" (for example, the applied character of the program "Philological providing of the business sector, advertising and PR").

We think these examples are enough to understand the problems facing higher education in the field of Russian Philology, they are understood by all participants of the

educational process. It is evident from by the sociological survey held by the authors among the students of different courses, professors of Kazan Federal University and school teachers of Russian language and literature in Tatarstan Republic.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methods of study

Data was collected by the following groups of research methods: analysis, comparison, testing, questionnaires, interview, observation, modeling method.

The experimental base of the study

The experiment was conducted during 2013-2015 years. 15 specialists of Kazan Federal University were involved in the experiment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What are the ways to improve the situation?

First of all, we need to change curriculum.

The first three years of a bachelor degree of higher philological education should provide students with a lot of disciplines - humanitarian, social, economic and professional. This is necessary due to some changes in the initial input level of our first year students: the school does not provide them with basic humanitarian level, that is why modern universities are forced to compensate for these shortcomings.

It is necessary to build a system of lecture courses correlating linguistic and literary, as well as humanitarian and philological disciplines. For example, the course "Ancient Russia literature" must be correlated with the course of the history of Ancient Russia, Ancient Russia art, ancient Russian language, history of the Russian literary language. Correlation must be based primarily on the synchrony of teaching courses.

However, it is necessary to correlate the principles and forms of presentation in different lecture courses, coordinate the courses in a module and form a single concept that will allow to see the evolution of culture in General. To ensure this coordination will help the regular methodological workshops in which teachers represent their vision for the courses, identify existing problems of teaching, as well as regular visiting and discussing the lectures of each - the necessity of which is dictated not so much with the quality control of teaching, but rather with the exchange of experience.

The coordination of different courses in the system of higher philological education should be based on the integrative principle: it is necessary to create courses combining linguistic and literary approaches to the different phenomena, for example, courses of philological text analysis, disciplines that reveal the problems of the writer's language (style), the unity between language and mind, the specificity of ethnic, gender, pictures of the world.

The fourth course should be focused on preparing the student to follow a specific professional activity. The system of classes in the final year of bachelors training should be based on the practice courses: "School Teaching of philological disciplines", "Philological providing of the business", "Philological base of cultural activities", "Applied linguistics", "Bibliography, literary criticism and editing", etc. These courses synthesize literary and linguistic approaches (whereas at the present we have special courses on literary and linguistic).

The student must obtain an overall picture of all potential job fields, and at the same time, should deeply learn the discipline, preparing him to one of them on a professional level.

Combination of fundamentality and variability should lead to a change in lecture courses, modern lecture should contain not only the description of writer's works or linguistic phenomena, but deep reviews of modern judgments on the problem.

At the same time, there should be no reduction in lecture hours because the modern school graduate is not able to work independently with the material and needs regular contact with his teacher. Seminars can include elements of communicative games, such as communication training, at the same time it is necessary to conserve traditional forms of work, training of monologist speech, which allows to check knowledge of material that should be learned by, etc.

Competence based approach requires the use in the training of students-philologists a wide range of interactive methods: presentations, e-learning resources (textbooks, courses of lectures, electronic modules). However, in the training of philologists the efforts of teachers should be aimed primarily at creating situations of communication active, dialogue that not always can be provided by computers. Therefore, an interactive approach is more appropriate in independent work and in the system of distance education and not in classroom.

CONCLUSION

The existing two-level structure of philological education should be developed, but it is necessary to correlate the quantity of bachelors and master places. In Kazan Federal University they have the idea of making the University a center of master study in the region. However, it is impossible to cancel from the bachelor degree in general, as it is necessary to prepare master students and to train the future young staff of the University.

It is necessary to realize two types of master degrees: academic and practice oriented. All of them must be multidisciplinary, because it is the only way to increase the possibilities for graduates at job market. Practice oriented master courses are intended to strengthen the content of bachelor's programs. It is necessary that courses for bachelors and masters were sufficiently different in level of presentation and used educational technologies. As the academic disciplines for masters are the result of much effort of professors and require annual renewal, it is necessary to reduce the number of classroom work for those who work with masters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The further reforms of philological higher education are directed to improve the system of undergraduate and graduate programs. Otherwise philological education cannot compete in the modern world. However, the modern world would not exist without those who have received philological education.

Research materials and results may be used by specialists to study and solve different problems of higher philological education.

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