

Creating an Effective Communicative Environment in Ukrainian Universities

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Abstract The modernization of Ukrainian education actualizes the investigation of the improvement and development of communicative competence of higher schools teachers as well as their future colleagues – Master's Degree students; the investigation takes place in the process of mastering pedagogical and professional subjects. The necessity of this problem solution is stressed by the majority of Ukrainian higher school teachers who face the insufficient level of preparedness for professional communication among today's young people, in particular, among the future teachers who are to have a definite level of communicative competence. The social-pedagogical necessity of professional training of communicatively competent higher school teacher nowadays is proved.

Keywords: communication, higher school teacher

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1. Introduction

The transition of Ukrainian higher school to market economy stipulates new tendencies in its functioning. The formal obligations of parties in the process of knowledge transmission/acquisition have been transformed, as well as the emphasis of interactions in "teacher-student", "student-student", "teacher-teacher", "rector-teacher", "rector-student" microsystems has been shifted. The humanistic character of post-soviet pedagogics with European tendencies of student-centered approach has acquired new features that were not characteristic to it before and are dictated by market conditions and state's appropriate attitude to education and science. Value system has changed causing the division of future professions into prestigious and "unnecessary". There are a lot of reasons for it, however, we should mention the main ones: the weak promotion of economically important professions, in particular, working ones, future employers' passivity, the lack of efficient communication in applicant-University-employer system in which the work of the main contacters - teachers may and must be intensified. For it is them - educated, intelligent, capable - who have an opportunity to hear at firsthand about the new needs of a modern society and who are able to respond it in a fast and professional way.

2. Subject

The information channels that are used by a society to transfer necessary information provide its activity. Communicative processes are a vivifying net that deeply

penetrates the life of a modern society; it has led to the scientists' statement that this life efficiency depends upon the communication quality, according to A. Giddens [7].

A. Sokolov, a famous specialist in the field of social communication, stresses that "pedagogics is one of the oldest applied communicative disciplines that realizes itself as a communicative science more and more searching scientific depth. As a result, it is obvious that pedagogical activity is a specially organized communicative activity, and its goal is training and education of pupils" [22].

A social communication among all known types of communication as an indirect and desirable interaction of subjects (material, genetic, psychic and social) is appropriately considered in a higher school. Material communication deals with transmission or motion of objects in physical space and time; a message is a definite information (which is sometimes called meaning, sense) transmitted from a person to a person in all the other types of communications. A kind of social communication is processes taking place in educational institutions of a different level - high school, higher school, postgraduate school. Cognitive and culturologic function of communication and the function of transmission of social and cultural heritage concerning with educational and cultural processes in the society despite its name inconsistency, deals with those communicative processes to which a higher school teachers attracts. There is no unified approach to the quantity and content of communication functions in scientists' works; however, most of them recognize such functions as informative, educative (cognitive), managing (administrative), motivational (excitatory), contact, self-affirmative (self-presenting), coordinative (regulatory).

A social communication is expressed with five levels: 1) intrapersonal communication studying information processing by an individual; 2) interpersonal communication investigating the processes of interpersonal interaction with verbal and non-verbal means; 3) group communication dealing with the investigation of information transmission within the group; 4) mass communication concerning with messages for mass audience through mass media; 5) electronic communication studying indirect information exchange through machines, computers, etc [23]. Teaching activity involves all the communications except mass one that is "such form of communication developed on the basis of using technical means of replicating and messaging" [20].

According to its character, teaching professional activity should be referred to **public communication** determined as a "public action for anonymous open audience with direct feedback: meeting, lecture, etc." [16], to direct communication as a "communication when a sender transmits information directly to a recipient controlling the adequacy of its reception" [3], mutual communication that "implies the constant exchange of roles between a sender and a recipient (e.g. conversation)" [3].

"Communication is a kind of interactions between subjects with some indirect object" [22]. Since a teacher works in the organization (institution) being a higher school, he performs his professional duties and is the participant of *organizational communication* which involves the communication within an organization and the communication of an organization with its external environment. Sociologists distinguish a vertical communication being a transmission of information from top to bottom and from bottom to top in hierarchical social systems, and a horizontal communication being a transmission of information on the same organizational level [3]. Horizontal information flows in the organization occur more often than vertical (communication with colleagues), and information exchange in them is distorted to a lesser extent. Information is transmitted according to levels of formal structure from top head to ordinary employees according to vertical flows in a downward direction; and it is used for the feedback of subordinates with guidance to inform about the work results and current problems in an upward direction.

A higher school teacher uses *verbal communication* and *non-verbal communication* that is "communication between individuals based on mimics, gestures and body postures without using speech and language in general" during his interaction with students [7].

The professional activity of a higher school teacher will be more efficient if there are subjective experiences, instructions of their participants, that is the elements of **expressive communication** [3].

We consider that a one-way communication is irrelevant in the education process that is a communication being "non-cooperative one-liner during which the behaviour of a participant is limited only by information transmission and the behaviour of another one is limited only by information reception"[3], since it does not give an opportunity to improve communicative processes. So, it still occurs in a higher school.

Multi-staged communication is a kind of communicative process including a number of mediators between the sender and the addressee [3]. Such type of

communication in professional pedagogical activity in a higher school occurs only in the following situations:

1) the use of communication with management objectives. In this case its scheme may be presented this way: "teacher - group monitor - student", "dean office - teacher - student" etc.;

2) during the application of group work at classroom lessons: "teacher - group leader - student".

Scientific communication plays a significant role in the professional activity of a higher school teacher, that is "establishing cognitive and social relations within the scientific community as well as between scientific society on the one hand and other subjects of social life on the other hand, for the creation and use of scientific knowledge, information exchange, collective estimation of scientific work. Scientific communication may occur in the form of official and informal contacts in a targeted and unspecific manner" according to the contact character [20].

The structure of scientific communication is determined with the kinds and character of contacts between the participants of communicative process. Their components are the following: a) ties mediated by technical means of replicating information - publications (books, scientific journal, abstract journals, etc.), preprints, unpublished materials (scientific reports, the reports about experiments, etc.); b) direct ties - personal conversations, intramural scientific discussions, oral reports; b) mixed ties - scientific conferences, scientific and technical exhibitions.

An important communication for higher school teachers in the Humanities disciplines (foreign languages, Cultural Studies, Philosophy) is socio-cultural communication being "the process of interaction between the subjects of socio-cultural activity (individuals, groups, organizations, etc.) with the aim of reproduction, maintenance and creation of different cultural programs determining the concrete type of culture. Socio-cultural communication is one of the basic mechanisms of cultural dynamics, provides the opportunity for forming social ties, managing common public life, accumulating and translating social experience" [23].

Table 1. Types of Communication in the Professional Activity of a Higher School Teacher

Communication Type	Professional Activity Type
Intrapersonal	Information processing, pre-communicative stage and communicative stage
Interpersonal	Educational-training process
Public	Educational-training process, scientific activity, organizational activity
Scientific	Scientific activity
Organizational	Educational-training process, organizational activity
Socio-Cultural	Educational- training process
Group	Educational-training process, extracurricular work
Interpersonal	Educational-training process, extracurricular work
Electronic	Educational process, methods of teaching, scientific activity
Documental	Educational process, methods of teaching, organization of educational process, scientific activity
Direct	Educational-training process
Reciprocal	Educational-training process
Verbal	Educational-training process, methodical activity, scientific activity, organizational activity
Non-verbal	Educational-training process, scientific activity, organizational activity
Expressive	Educational-training process наочно-виховний процес
Multi-Staged	Educational-training process, interactive technologies
Vertical	Organizational activity
Horizontal	Organizational activity

Thus, a teacher is attracted to the different types of communication (Table 1).

Thus, educational-training process involves interpersonal, public, organizational, socio-cultural, group, interpersonal, direct, verbal, non-verbal and multi-staged communication; methodical activity includes verbal, electronic and documental types of communication; organizational activity involves verbal, non-verbal, public, organizational, horizontal and vertical types; scientific activity includes scientific, public, verbal, non-verbal, electronic and documentary types of communication.

Therefore, communicative competence of a teacher plays a significant role in performing his professional duties, particularly, in training and development of the future professionals in any field.

"Science and education traditionally refers to those social institutes of a society where there is an especially great share of highly professional intellectual work and where the quality of scientific and pedagogical staff is objectively crucial. A higher school teacher is one of the main social-professional group who has two extremely important and interrelated tasks of a society:

- the conservation, enhancement and transmission of cultural (in the widest sense of the word) including scientific-technical heritage of a society and civilization in general;

- the socialization of a personality on the responsible stage of formation associated with obtaining professional training which demands a higher level of education" [1]; p. 9-10].

A teacher's professional activity is known to involve some components. O. Velychko, V. Ivashchenko, O. Yasev, O. Rozhkov distinguish "teaching (educational), scientific, methodical and socially oriented ones that are estimated according to the results to be measured. Teaching activity is measured with education hours, scientific one - with research amount and the quantity of scientific publications, methodical activity - with the number of methodical publications, socially oriented one - with the quantity of extra positions and assignments" [24], p. 35]. K. Astakhova distinguishes the scientific-subjective, psychological-pedagogical and cultural-educative aspects of a teacher's activity and stresses that the academic load of a higher school teacher has been significantly increased recently having an impact on the other aspects of his professional activity. Thus, "at the time of Nicholas I of Russia the academic load of a Professor was 8 hours a week, in the Soviet time - 12-14 hours, in the early years of the new century - 17-21 hours" [1]; p. 82].

The majority of higher school graduates returned to a higher school as a teacher only after obtaining relevant professional experience (for 3-10 years). Only a small proportion (in % terms) of graduates got recommendation to postgraduate course immediately after graduating from higher school. At the same time, there was a large number of places for training future scientists not at the higher schools and Universities but at the research institutes of Ukrainian Academy of Science and Ukrainian Academy of Pedagogical Science; therefore, graduating from postgraduate course contributed primarily research activities. Many scientists directed their efforts on scientific research but not on teaching. Over time, these scientists tried to find a work at a higher school since their

salary was less than teachers' one. Thus, economic factors provided scientists' return to a higher school; they had the experience of scientific activity without teaching experience.

First of all, such a scheme to attract teachers to a higher school providing higher schools with a staff did not promote their proper psychological and pedagogical training including the development of their communicative competence. A teacher starting his educational and methodical work tried to teach in a way he was taught traditionally. Accordingly, the advantage was gained by the graduates of pedagogical institutions who acquired both professional and psychological-pedagogical knowledge, had developed skills to set contacts with listeners, to perform the transmission of educational information, namely developed communicative skills.

In 2004 Ukraine Ministry of Education and Science developed a program for training teaching staff in Master's Degree Course. Future teachers are professionally trained in Ukraine by classic, pedagogical, technical, technological, agrarian Universities and special higher schools of relevant Ministries. According to scientists [9], the quality of Masters training depends on many factors: the lack of material resources, the lack of need in highly qualified specialists in Ukraine, the lack of experience of training Masters in Ukraine, etc. Despite these social circumstances, Ukrainian higher schools are engaged in purposeful activity of professional Masters' training.

3. Materials and Methods

In the system of Ukrainian higher schools providing complete higher education, the most popular one is a University, a multidisciplinary higher school that "provides education, conducts fundamental and applied research, is a leading scientific and methodical centre, has a developed infrastructure of educative, scientific and scientific-productive departments,... promotes scientific knowledge and provides cultural and educational activities" [31].

The study of selected curricula of pedagogical, classical, technical, medical Universities, being the leading Ukrainian Universities of all types training Masters of pedagogical specialties, those experts who have the qualification of "higher school teacher" in education-qualification characteristics of training standard, shows that the separate elements of communicative training are found only while studying linguistic (Ukrainian and foreign languages) and pedagogical (some elements) disciplines. Communicative aspects of professional pedagogical activity of a higher school teacher are found to be paid with insufficient attention in the content of pedagogical disciplines involving generally a lot of information as to the pedagogical processes, phenomena, methods, forms and means of education.

Numerous scientific publications show that the students of economic, technical, medical Universities have problems with communication in their study, with communication, the expression of their thought, the search and transmission of necessary information [2,4,5,6,8,11,12,13,14,17,26]. It should be mentioned that recently attention has been increased to communicative

aspects of professional activity because of the actual need in the development of specialists' communicative skills in economic and medical higher schools [5,12]. The Bachelor's curricula include elective courses aimed at highlighting the practical aspects of communicative activity of a manager, an economist, a specialist in foreign trade [2,5,6,8], emphasizing the importance of the problem for the efficiency of professional activity of various specialists.

Therefore, it is the state of development of communicative competence of future and young teachers that raises concerns; and we consider it to be one of the urgent problems of modern higher school.

Thus, N. Symonenko stresses the importance of a teacher's communicative training and points out that the following facts do not promote the efficiency of its realization:

- 1) "discrepancy of language arsenals of a sender and a recipient; inadequate perception of information;
- 2) undeveloped skills of a sender (a teacher) to realize the process of information exchange" [21].

Since a student enters Master's course after graduating from Bachelor's course (or obtaining "Specialist" education level), his training in communicative activity is found. The professional training of Masters of pedagogical specialties as future higher school teachers is found to be properly organized in Pedagogical Universities because it includes significant theoretical and practical training, namely, transverse pedagogical practices helping to accumulate the primary experience of communication in professional activity. At the same time, the content of professional training is found not to pay the proper attention to the development of communicative competence of a higher school teacher.

4. Results

The questionnaire of students, Masters of pedagogical specialties and teachers helps to find their general lack of preparedness to communicative activity. Firstly, they cannot explain the essence of "communication", "teacher's communicative activity", "teacher's communicative competence" concepts; they do not determine the communicative aspects of professional activity of a higher school teacher; they have no adequate knowledge about the types and means of communication. Determining communicative activity, they mostly use such terms as intercommunication, activity, understanding without such concepts as information transmission, barriers, information perception, feedback, communicative situation, etc. indicating the identification of intercommunication and communication. The analysis of students' questionnaire shows it. The majority of fourth-year students (82%) and Masters of pedagogical specialties (79%) as well as teachers (61%) cannot explain communication essence; name its indicators in the education processes, in teaching professional activity. Teachers' answers discover the verbal means of communication and their lack of knowledge as to the documentary and electronic means of communication.

The respondents put verbal means of communication on the first place among communicative means (91%). Unfortunately, only 39% of respondents can name some

separate disadvantages of using the verbal means of communication: the loss of large amounts of information, difficulties with selecting main and minor aspects, passive listening, the loss of attention while listening resulting in the loss of information, etc. Most respondents stress the close connection of using verbal means and the level of speech activity. It should be mentioned that both teachers and Masters recognize the importance of special work with the development of a teacher's speech skills, the formation of his rhetorical abilities. At the same time, Masters pay much attention to the development of a teacher's vocabulary; teachers distinguish the development of phonetic abilities (intonation, skills to use a pause, logic stresses, and language rhythm).

The research shows that teachers and Masters are not fully aware of the significance of non-verbal communication means. The fact that non-verbal means are primary in origin with more ancient history turns to be new for them.

The respondents were offered during the questionnaire:

- 1) to give a situation with successful use of non-verbal means of communication, in their opinion;
- 2) to propose non-verbal means of communication for a concrete situation.

Unfortunately, only 28% of respondents coped with the first part of the task; it shows the lack of preparedness to the use of non-verbal means of communication. The following situation dominated among the ones proposed by the students:

- organizational, connecting with the use of contact, the management of students' education, their transition to other type of work;
- the situations of the personal influence of a teacher upon a student;
- the situations of focusing students' attention on the important aspects of educational material, namely, connected with reception and decoding of given information.

Masters and teachers were found not to consider documental and electronic types of communication as types of communicative processes, not to realize their significance and specific character in the educative process. Most teachers (87%) recognize the necessity of using multimedia means for the realization of communicative processes and do not consider other forms of electronic communication (interactive personal correspondence – chat, deferred personal correspondence – e-mail, collective interactive correspondence – collective chat, deferred collective correspondence – electronic conferences, forums) to be expedient and efficient. However, current research shows that Internet-technologies have a significant influence upon the development of communicative and cognitive potential of a personality [4,10,15,18,19,25].

As for the use of documentary communication, it is not recognized by the teachers as a communicative process despite all its available features: information transmission, feedback, information channel, addresser and addressee.

65% of recipients did not answer the question "What part of methodical document or lecture précis performs contact-defining function when using documentary means of communication?". 8% of recipients gave partial answer to the question "What is the difference in defining a contact with a reader as an information recipient while using such forms of documentary communication as methodical instructions, lecture précis, instructions to the

laboratory works?”. The degree of teachers’ awareness in the kinds of communication forms is presented in Figure 1.

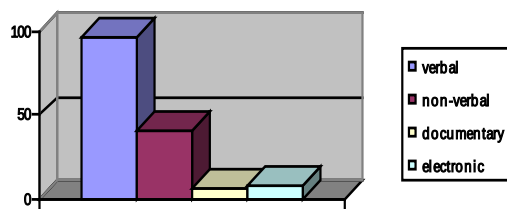


Figure 1. Degree of Teachers' Awareness in Communication Forms

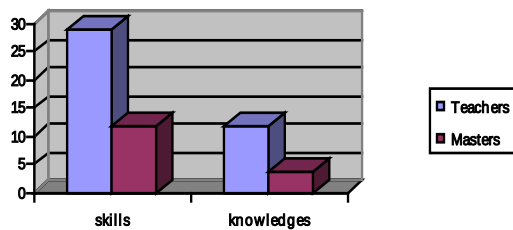


Figure 2. Differences in the Quantity of Communicative Features of a Teacher Pointed out by Masters and Teachers

The Masters of the pedagogical specialties were interviewed as future teachers. They were asked to continue the sentence “A good teacher can...” The respondents’ answers were characterized with three functions of a teacher in the communication mentioned above: educational function (a teacher can explain, interpret, make the content of the educational information clear, etc.), organizational function (a teacher can describe the requirements to educational activity, determine the algorithm of task performance, stimulate the work, etc.), personality function (can have a contact, understand communicative difficulties and problems, help and support). The number of communicative features pointed out by Masters and teachers completing the sentence “A good teacher knows...” was significantly less than the sentence “A good teacher can...” (Figure 2). It may be stipulated by the lack of Masters’ teaching experience and focusing on the effective communicative activity. The quantity of communicative features of a good teacher pointed out by Masters and higher school teachers was 4:12 in the first case and 12:29 in the second one respectively. It stresses the significance of communicative processes in education and, therefore, the significance of the communicative competence of a teacher for students.

A certain level of communicative skills of the students of pedagogical higher schools is formed due to the pedagogical practice during intensive professional intercommunication with pupils; the students of classic Universities have not such an opportunity. First, the content of psychological and pedagogical disciplines is significantly narrowed; second, the duration of practice is reduced; third, there is the lack of communicative component in the content of educational disciplines.

We consider the experience of National M.P. Dragomanov Pedagogical University and Donetsk National University to be successful introducing the educational discipline “Rhetoric” along with traditional pedagogical courses to the educational-professional program for training Bachelors; “Rhetoric” belongs to the cycle of social-humanitarian and economic training of curriculum, is taught in the second term and involves 36 hours (1 ESTC credit); 9 hours of lectures, 9 hours of practice are among them; the form of control is test (credit). The introduction of “Information-Communicative Technologies” course is also rather interesting and substantiated; it comprises 270 hours including 70 hours of lectures and 70 hours of practice.

The problem of developing communicative skills and abilities is still more relevant for training Masters of pedagogical specialties as future higher school teachers in postgraduate course. Training of Masters in pedagogical specialties as future teachers of a higher school is known to be offered in all postgraduates’ courses of Ukraine, from pedagogical to technical and classic Universities. The duration of training of Masters varies in different higher schools from a year to 1 year and 10 (6 or 4) months. The amount of Masters training in specific categories of “Higher School Pedagogics” speciality is 40 credits: professional and practice training – 28 credits, the disciplines of independent choice of a higher school – 8 credits; the disciplines for students’ independent choice – 4 credits.

The discipline of “Higher School Pedagogics” has the task of training a future teacher in Master course of pedagogical specialties (except specific). Taking into account the different duration of Master training, basic pedagogical training, the content and amount of “Higher School Pedagogics” course aiming at the development of necessary competence of a future teacher is different. Thus, it involves 81 hours (1.5 credits) in technical and classic Universities and 54 hours (1 credit) in other ones.

Table 2. Factors Promoting the Development of Masters' Communicative Competence in Higher Schools of Various Types

Higher School Types	Individual Peculiarities	Pedagogic Training at Bachelor Course	Practice of Previous Communicative Activity	"Pedagogics of Higher School" Course	Special Courses	Practice of Communicative Activity At Master Course	Higher School Policy
Pedagogical Higher School	+	+	+	+	Insufficient	+	Selective
Classic University	+	Insufficient	Insufficient	+	Insufficient	+	Selective
Technical, Agrarian Universities	+	Insufficient	Insufficient	+	Insufficient	Insufficient	Selective
Economic, Medical Universities	+	Insufficient	+	+	+	+	Purposeful
Master Course of Specific Category	+	+	+	+	–	+	Purposeful

The other form of training Masters of pedagogical specialties as future teachers is the Master course of specific categories - 8.000005 "Higher School Pedagogics". Master course of this speciality is offered at National M.P. Dragomanov Pedagogical University, Kirovograd V. Vynnychenko State Pedagogical University, Lviv National University, Poltava V.G. Korolenko National Pedagogical University, Dnipropetrovsk O. Honchar National University, Sumy Region Institute of Postgraduate Education, Cherkasy B. Khmelnytsky National University and others. The curriculum of training future teachers has more opportunities for developing communicative competence.

If we compare the factors that promote the development of communicative competence of Masters of pedagogical specialties at various higher schools, the general picture will be the following (Table 2).

Thus, the general factors having an impact on the development of communicative competence of a future teacher are only personal features of a student (his communicative abilities and skills) and "Higher School Pedagogics" course, which, unfortunately, has no information as to the process of communication in teacher's professional activity. Therefore, we consider that there is no general way of developing the communicative competence of Masters as future higher school teachers.

5. Conclusion

Summarizing the results of the study, we note that higher school Masters have different potential opportunities as for the development of communicative competence. Thus, the Masters of language specialties at pedagogical Universities have the best opportunities for their development since, first, the curriculum includes the sufficient set of professional and psycho-pedagogical disciplines; second, these students have appropriate abilities for communication and a high level of language skills. The students of other specialties of pedagogical higher schools occupy the second place. The students of classic Universities take the third place; the students of technical, medical and agrarian Universities - the last place.

Despite the available difference in Masters' abilities to communication, the program of their training to teaching activity at Master course according to state standard is identical in content. It is not entirely clear and appropriate since higher schools are entered by school leavers with inadequate speech and communicative development. We consider that curriculum for training future teachers should include educational disciplines aimed at the development of their communicative competence since postgraduate as a higher school teacher must develop future specialists' communicative competence as one of the key competences [27,28,29,30].

A higher school teacher should be aware in the importance and value of communicative processes in professional activity, be ready to intensive interpersonal and group communication with students in different forms: verbal, non-verbal, documentary, electronic.

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