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ACADEMIC MOBILITY DEVELOPMENT IN PROCESS OF PROFESSIONALLY ORIENTED FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING*

The article is concerned with the problem of academic mobility understood as an integral personal quality. Establishment and concurrent development of academic mobility in students in the process of professionally oriented foreign language learning and acquisition is considered. Pedagogical environment facilitative in the enhancement of the targeted integral entity is identified and substantiated. A five-step model of the modified educational technology pursuing realization of the three-tiered goal inclusive of academic mobility development is described.

Key words: Academic mobility, targeted integral entity, professionally oriented foreign language, pedagogical environment, educational technology

The latest reforms in the area of higher professional education, induced by the globalizing economy and subsequent demand for highly qualified specialists, have created special opportunities for academically mobile individuals aspiring to meet the challenges of dynamically changing social and professional environment.

Academic mobility has turned into a unique instrument facilitative in the enhancement of the European Higher Education Area [1], [7]. Purposeful promotion of academic mobility by the Ministers of European higher education and Rectors of European universities contributed greatly to its victorious penetration into the area of pedagogical research.

In the frames of the Bologna Process, academic mobility is understood as a free and equitable access to educational institutions, equitable approach in assessment of skills, knowledge and competencies, and equal employment rights [8]. Realizing the value and constructive power of academic mobility, the Counsel of Europe has elaborated a set of mechanisms called to promote and advance academic mobility among students and staff residing on the territory of the countries-signatories of the Bologna Process. One of the mechanisms called to support academic mobility, Common European Framework of Reference, which is instrumental in the assessment of language competency and widely used to describe achievements of foreign language learners, gives us a substantial reason to ascertain that every academically mobile individual is required to have a good command of one or more foreign languages. High foreign language competency, on the one hand, assists academically mobile students in becoming beneficiaries of the emerging opportunities provided by the open society and, on the other hand, helps in satisfying their personal and professional needs.

In light of the latest educational research, foreign language communicative competency is understood as a personal trait intrinsic to the academically mo-

bile individual. Which in turn brings us to a conclusion that academic mobility can be viewed both as a social phenomenon (ability to move freely across borders) and as a personal quality (ability and readiness to function in new cultural, social, academic, and professional environment). Such approach is shared by a number of scholars [5], [6] closely involved with the research pertaining the problems and challenges arising from new educational practices.

We in our research define academic mobility as an integral personal quality, characterized by its dynamic nature, driven to assist an individual in the process of adaptation and integration into the altering and versatile environment for the purpose of personal growth and subsequent transformation of both an individual himself and a society he lives in. Academic mobility is a prerequisite for key and professional competencies development [4].

The level of foreign language proficiency sufficient for communication and interaction in social and professional environment with students and professorial staff of foreign universities is a targeted learning outcome of foreign language teaching provided by the university. A required mastery can be achieved in the process of language acquisition. Foreign language teaching aimed at language proficiency development is instrumental in the establishment and enhancement of targeted personal qualities [3]. Therefore, targeted development of academic mobility, as a personal integral quality, can be achieved in the process of language acquisition.

According to our research, academic mobility, as an integral personal quality, can be represented by a dynamic structure, consisting of the four interrelated components. The approach to view academic mobility as a dynamic structure is based on the personality development theory of the Russian researcher and psychologist K. K. Platonov. Every component of academic mobility has its own indicator:

- value-based component: motivation of affiliation and motivation of success;
- cognitive component: cultural knowledge, knowledge of grammar, phonetics, and vocabulary inclusive of professional terminology; ability and readiness to employ obtained language knowledge and developed language skills;
- task-based component: independent study skills and team-work skills based on tolerance;
- reflexive component: skills of critical thinking assistive in self-assessment process and evaluation of incoming information.

All components of academic mobility are interrelated and, therefore, interdependent. Enhancement of one of them is correlated with the progress of the others and vice versa. It has already been stated that all character traits develop in the process of active engagement. A driving force of any activity is motivation, which is understood as needs, desires, or drives within individuals. It is a process of stimulating people to actions to accomplish the goals. People are social beings and a need for socialization, communication is inherent to them, because verbal and nonverbal interactions are learning styles helping individuals to realize who they are and understand their life goals.

To overcome language barriers an individual needs to be motivated to achieve positive outcomes. On the other hand, determination to become successful encourages communication aimed at getting new information and new experience. An academically mobile person is driven to promote himself socially and professionally. To gain valued outcomes he has to be motivated for both affiliation and achievement. Interaction (affiliation) is a process involving one or several people. Successful cooperation is based on the ability to work in teams and demonstrate respect, tolerance, and mutual support. On the other hand, personal growth and ability to make intellectual investments requires well-developed self-study skills and independent thinking skills. Assessment of the achieved outcome, given by the educator or peers, is very important for every studying individual, though true enhancement and progress of the individual character traits occurs in cases when critical assessment of personal progress is provided by the individual himself. Analysis of the performance, achievements, and failures helps students to learn better planning and avoid the same mistakes in the future, which in turns enhances their motivation for achievement and success, makes them more open for communication and learning.

It is necessary to stress that separate components making up academic mobility receive due attention from both students and instructors at different classes and courses provided by the university curriculum and, therefore, become subjects of development and improvement. However, establishment and enhancement of academic mobility as a targeted integral entity, inclusive of foreign language competency, can

be achieved during the course of professionally-oriented foreign language teaching.

The process of professionally oriented foreign language teaching is understood as a process of organized orientation of the goals, curriculum content, forms, and methods of teaching toward expectations of the future profession, as well as at purposeful development of professional skills and enhancement of personal qualities required performing social and professional tasks effectively.

Achievement of the defined objective is feasible in case necessary learning environment is provided. Having analyzed the essence and characteristic features of academic mobility it seems reasonable to suggest that the following requirements should be observed in the process of language teaching aimed at academic mobility development:

1. Integration of student-centered and competence based approach – creates learning environment instrumental in personal growth and independent study skills development (I. S. Yakimanskaya, I. A. Zimnyaya, I. L. Bim, V. I. Baidenko and others).

2. Context-based teaching – models professional situations (A. A. Verbitskiy, O. G. Larionova and others).

3. Advanced and differential methods of teaching – advances new concepts, helps to differentiate content depending on individual skills and interests (L. S. Vigotskiy, S. N. Lisenkova, I. S. Yakimanskaya and others).

4. Interactive methods of teaching – involves into independent and creative activities (N. D. Galskova, N. I. Gez, V. V. Kraevskiy, A. V. Khutorskoy and others).

Development of particular individual qualities is perceived as a development of the individual as a whole, as a change in his dynamic structure and content under the influence of internal and external factors. All character traits and individual qualities develop in the process of active engagement or task-oriented activity. The process of language learning and acquisition aimed at foreign language competency development is characterized by active involvement of language learners into learning activities.

One of the tools greatly contributing to the establishment of cooperative and dynamic learning environment characterized by active involvement of language learners are pedagogical (educational) technologies.

A purpose driven, goal oriented, based on scholarly approach, pedagogically managed, diagnosed at different stages process of active interaction directed at the achievement of pedagogically-substantiated objectives is understood as a pedagogical technology [2]. The basic value of pedagogical technology is founded on the fact that it guarantees achievement of the targeted objective in case certain steps in the process of active engagement are observed.

Considering that, we elaborated a modified pedagogical technology grounded on the principles of project teaching. The modified technology is aimed at realizing three goals:

- enhance foreign language competency development;
- utilize the above mentioned conditions of the learning environment as a single set;
- develop academic mobility as a personal integral quality.

The proposed modified technology based on project teaching principles (purposefulness, problem solving, personal interest, independence, teamwork, active involvement, productivity) consists of five steps.

1. Value-based step – provides establishment of internal motivation directed at academic mobility development and positive motivation for mutual cooperation and project-based team work;

2. Orientation step – provides students with a model of project based team work aimed at academic mobility development;

3. Affirmative step – implies organization of the joint project-based cooperation and team-work directed at the understanding and acceptance of the “image of the future product”;

4. Presentation step – implies public demonstration of the mutual product, discussion of the problem, defense of the position;

5. Critical assessment step – stimulates critical assessment of personal achievements, learning outcome, and progress.

Pedagogical technology modified for the purpose of academic mobility development is realized by means of different interactive methods of teaching. For example, during the first stage of technology re-

alization, a method “alphabet” is employed to help students define the category of “academic mobility”. A method of “brain storm” is used to identify the most problematic issues that interest language learners and discuss possible ways of solving problems. A role-play method is utilized in the course of presentation and assessment

Employment of interactive methods in the process of project based teamwork helps to engage students into purpose-driven activities aimed at solving professionally oriented problems; to actualize obtained knowledge and skills; to reveal knowledge gaps and find ways of problem solving; to overcome language barriers and, therefore, promote linguistic performance; to set cooperative environment and by this promote enhancement of motivation of success and affiliation [9]. Teamwork oriented at solving professionally oriented problems facilitates in the development of tolerance and acceptance in case opposing opinions arise. A right to choose the topic and participation in problem solving projects promotes independent study skills and increases personal responsibility for the results of the project. Critical assessment carried out by peer students and by a participant of the project himself is conducive to the development of critical thinking skills, which in turn helps to reveal failures and identify achievements and progress, to avoid the same mistakes in the future.

In conclusion, we would like to stress that establishment and enhancement of academic mobility as a personal integral entity can be achieved in the process of professionally oriented foreign language learning and acquisition in a purposefully organized educational environment which is realized by means of a modified educational technology.

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