The Development of Foreign Language Professional Competencies of Public Administration Students

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Abstract

The Policy of the Departments of Language Training for future public administration (PA) servants in Europe was formed on the basis of the analysis of foreign language competencies development carried out by the author at the Institute for Social Sciences of Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA).[2] The analysis included the definition and formulation of tasks, goals, curriculum technologies, the methodological support of foreign language teaching, textbooks analysis etc. The research methods include theoretical research, analytical research methods, methodology of empirical research, methods of comparative research, etc. The conclusions made on the results of the analysis make it possible to outline the methods for the improvement of the programmes, making them have a more practical character, and to give some general recommendations to the teachers and education managers thus forming The Policy of the Departments of Language Training – the Policy which fits NISPAcee's strategy and goals.

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2   Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) was founded by Presidential Decree on September 20, 2010. This foundation involved the merger of two previously existing academies: The Academy of National Economy (ANE), which was established in 1977, and the Russian Academy of Public Administration (RAPA), established in 1991. The merger also brought together 12 other state educational institutions. https://www.ranepa.ru/eng/about-academy-ranepa/at-a-glance

Goal

In the XXI century civil servants fully implementing the strategic goals of public administration must have high foreign-language professional competencies.[3] In this regard, the process of the development of these competencies is of particular relevance. It requires careful study and improvement. As the core of NISPAcee's activities is to promote the development of public administration disciplines and training programmes, increasing the quality of instruction and research on international, regional and national levels, the Policy of the Departments of Language Training, worked out by the author of the paper, may be considered relevant for NISPAcee activity because it is aimed at the development of foreign-language professional competencies of future PA servants. The results of the Policy implementation are expected to contribute to the practical side of public administration development on the international level and to make public service in Europe more effective.

Policy Client/Audience/Target Group

The target group that the Policy of the Departments of Language Training should influence includes, first of all, a number of academic institutions which are responsible for the training of future public servants and their certification. Some leading universities with PA specialities, which should raise the level of foreign language competencies development of students, are shown in the Table below.

Policy Aims

The target for the Policy of the Departments of Language Training and the aim of the Policy implementation is, in the long run, the development of civil service human resources by spreading the practices of professional development in the field of mastering the foreign language competencies needed for public management, public policy and governance at both the national and international levels. Spreading the practices of foreign language competencies development will help to adapt the level of future civil servants in Europe to the modern qualification requirements for civil service positions taking into account the international character of public administration functioning. While implementing the Policy recommendations, the Policy Clients, in our opinion, are supposed to make public service more effective.

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3   The Concept of Sustainable Development until 2030, adopted by the UN in 2015, the "Strategy of Innovative Development of Russia until 2020".

Table 1

The University, Providing Training of Public Servants	The Contents of PA Education at the University	Teaching Foreign Languages at the University
RANEPA – a recognised expert in the field of higher and additional professional education of civil servants	The basis for the leading positions of the Academy in this segment are many years of experience, the highest quality of education, practice-oriented training, unique teaching staff	The mission of the Department of Foreign Languages is to provide training of qualified management personnel of a new type with knowledge in the field of foreign language professional and intercultural communication on the basis of the principles of innovative effective higher education and to create a single educational platform in the field of foreign languages teaching
PFUR – Peoples Friendship University of Russia	The graduates of the bachelor's and master's degrees of the PA faculty are ready for professional official activity on execution of powers of public authorities, can fully take part in the development and implementation of administrative decisions, to carry out other various types of works which are included in the duties of the state and municipal employees	Students during their studies have the opportunity to obtain an additional qualification of translator. This programme includes training, not only on practical coursed of foreign language (spoken foreign language foreign language business communication and the language of PA), but also in the framework of this programme, students improve language skills by practising oral and written language, and the study of special theoretical courses
State University of the Management of State and Municipal Administration	Graduates of a bachelor's degree have knowledge and skills in the field of social and public administration, modern economy, administrative and legal management methods, public relations	Currently, the Department of English language trains bachelors and masters in all areas of training, it conducts entrance tests for admission to graduate school with further training of graduate students to pass the candidate minimum exam in English.
Moscow State University	The faculty of public administration is one of the modern and dynamically developing faculties of Moscow University. Based on the best national traditions of training highly qualified University level, the faculty seeks to form students' competencies that meet the standards of the world's leading centres of training for public service	The faculty has a comprehensive system of foreign languages training, which includes undergraduate, graduate, additional education, postgraduate and doctoral studies, preparatory courses for students

Background of the Problem

Public policies for the education and training of civil servants in all countries of the world address the common goals and objectives of public service. At present, the professional mission of public administration is determined by the social nature of the public service, the main purpose of which is to serve people of various social, economic, political, ethnic, religious groups, and unite them with a common interest, both within the state and at the international level. As is mentioned in NISPAcee mission documents, "NISPAcee is an arena for East – East collaboration through assisting, mediating and facilitating joint research, educational and training programmes and discussions between instructors, civil servants, trainers, public sector managers and politicians".[4] In this regard, the problem of the development of foreign language professional competencies of students studying at the faculties of public administration is of particular relevance, and it requires careful analysis. Basic fundamental and applied problems (hypotheses) solved in the framework of the study are the following: the research and the improvement of the process of the development of foreign language professional competencies of PA students will improve the quality of language training of civil servants in accordance with the new qualification requirements for civil service positions of senior and higher groups of civil servants in the XXI century. The academicians who have researched civil service and foreign language teaching in Russia and abroad (I. Korotkina (Russia), V. Kareva (Macedonia), Jim Scrivener (UK) etc.) stressed the importance of the problem of the development of foreign-language competencies of future public servants: "The institutions from the public sector, such as different governmental bodies, ministries, the local government, public enterprises, the courts and other public organisations need administrators with good communicative skills in English for their contacts with the international community and the representatives of international organisations in the country on topics and with vocabulary related to the field of public administration and politics".[5] In our opinion, good communicative skills in English help public servants in Europe raise their professional standards in order to correspond to the Concept of Sustainable Development until 2030, adopted by the UN in 2015. Foreign language training of public service personnel in Russia should be carried out in accordance with the qualification requirements of the "Strategy of Innovative Development of Russia until 2020". So the public servants of upper and top levels, both in Europe and in Russia, should have high foreign language professional competencies because now these competencies are an integral part of qualification requirements for PA servants.

We have considered the above-mentioned publications and drew the conclusion that now the problem of the development of public administration foreign

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4   NISPAcee mission documents, nispacee.org.

5   Veronika Kareva English for specific purposes: Public administration and political sciences Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences 70 (2013) 1477–1481.

language professional competencies gains special actuality. The use of textbooks, which contain only information about the history of public administrations in different countries, about theoretical problems of public administration functioning in different countries and at different times as well as the discussion of the problems of business English use, are not quite sufficient for the modern tasks of public administration. There exists a gap between the real practical needs in foreign language competencies of public servants and the contents taught during language training at PA faculties of universities. In our opinion, teaching English for Special Purposes for public administration and the development of foreign language competencies at PA faculties of universities requires a more practical approach – the new alternative to the existing policy of teaching PA students. New qualification requirements of public servants in the XXI century as well as practical needs of public service should, first of all, be taken into account. The programmes of study should not only include general information about public service as they often seem to do now. In our opinion, foreign language teaching programmes at PA universities should be 'tailor-made' for public service students, and specially prepared for them. That means that the programmes for every study profile connected with public administration, for example, sociology, psychology, management, political science etc. should be compiled with due account of needs analysis of the students of every specialty. Though some general above mentioned theoretical and historical information about public service may also be included, the language programmes should not be limited to such information. The practical approach to the creation of the programmes should be applied, when in the first place the communication skills of PA students and other necessary foreign language competencies should be developed. So the new Policy of the Departments of Language Training should be worked out as the alternative to the existing policy of teaching PA students.

Alternatives

The new Policy of the Departments of Language Training is considered to be the alternative to the former Policy of teaching a foreign language. The aim of our research was to find out which components of the new programmes of PA studies of the Institute for Social Sciences (ISS)[6] at RANEPA could contribute to the development of foreign language competencies of PA students and could be included in this Policy.

The principle "from theory to practice" should be observed when compiling the programmes for the new alternative Policy of the Departments of Language Training because, as we know, the former studies were based mainly on the theoretical and historical texts about PA, which though they helped a lot in the theoretical education of PA students, still could not help them in practical communication with

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6   ISS – the Institute for Social Sciences of RANEPA.

each other and with citizens and did not develop the practical skills necessary for their work as public servants. The previous Policy of ESP learning has been used for many years, but it is no longer effective. We have compared both the previous Policy and the Policy of the Departments of Language Training proposed by the author. A set of criteria such as effectiveness, efficiency, administrative feasibility and political feasibility of both policies has been compared by the author in both cases.

Now we shall discuss how the implementation of the alternative Policy will lead to the expected results of this Policy introduction.

First of all, the basis for studying a professional English language should be created. In our case, such a basis has been provided by the courses for the First Cambridge Certificate exam (the first and second courses of study) and IELTS exam (the third and fourth courses of study) to provide the uniformity of English language competencies development for all students at the same level. It is important because all students enter the Academy with different language competencies, so they need some common knowledge and skills to start with. In our case, these standards were taken because the ISS cooperates officially with the Cambridge Assessment Centre in Moscow. Standards for English competencies development, such as TOEFL or some other English competencies development standards may be used by other universities depending on circumstances and the students' command of the foreign language.

The necessity of thorough students' needs analysis and the deeper analysis, such as the so-called 'purpose mining', should help in creating practical programmes for every profile of the study and for the different levels of the students. The questionnaires concerning the needs analysis should be distributed amongst students of every speciality. In our opinion, the questionnaires allow the saving of time in class because the interviewing of all the students usually takes more time. Of course, it should be helpful to make the same analysis for the potential employers of the students, but this is not so easy. So, we used only the needs analysis of the ISS students of four specialities (Liberal Arts, Psychology, Management, and Politology).We have chosen these four specialities because they are the most popular amongst students and involve more students than other specialities. This analysis helped the teachers to build the programmes for developing the skills and competencies (Reading, Listening, Writing and Speaking) that were pointed out by the needs analysis of the students. One more important thing following on from the needs analysis results is the necessity for compiling programmes in close collaboration with profile teachers who can help a language teacher choose the topics for discussion and the appropriate vocabulary for every speciality. Profile teachers can also supply students and language teachers with a list of professional literature on this or that profile of study.

We have found that the development of professional foreign language PA vocabulary is very important when teaching future public servants. After a thorough

students' needs analysis we came to the conclusion that overall, understanding of the main PA terms should help better cooperation of PA servants in Europe. The epoch of globalisation and closer international communication in the XXI century requires the creation of the International PA English Vocabulary and PA Vocabularies in other languages. The course 'Social and Political Vocabulary' was created and introduced at the ISS, RANEPA, Moscow, for every profile of study. It took approximately one-third of the entire programme of study in every profile. The course 'Social and Political Vocabulary' created at the ISS of RANEPA, Moscow, may be considered to be a contribution to the International PA English Vocabulary. Besides, the course will help students to develop all of the above mentioned English language competencies for their practice while studying or working as PA servants.

Modern technologies of teaching a foreign language should be used during studies to bring them closer to practice. Amongst them are modular training technologies, business and role games, collective problem solving, group discussions etc. They are widely used at the ISS of RANEPA, Moscow, in line with E-learning technologies and digital media use in all the disciplines of study. E-learning technologies help the students obtain the necessary information, ideas, to solve problems, to make up projects, to communicate with each other on the actual topics, and to do home work etc. They help future public administrators to obtain the necessary skills for real life work, because digital means are becoming more and more popular in PA work and in work with citizens. E-learning contributes a lot to the development of foreign language competencies as a part of the development of general proficiency competencies of PA servants, so at the ISS of RANEPA, Moscow, special attention is paid to the E-learning of the students.

The example of E-learning is the creation of online courses for different specialities of PA students at the third and the fourth courses of study at the Academy. They cover such profiles of study as Liberal Arts, Psychology, Management, Politology, and some others. Creating the effective learning environment and compiling the English programmes of the courses is carried out in close collaboration with profile teachers. The list of the obligatory and supplementary literature in English on all the subjects of study is also provided by profile teachers.

One more stage of work at the third and the fourth courses of study is a Project Design work. The students are taught to carry out a research work, make up a Project in English, and make a presentation at the students' conferences of RANEPA, Moscow, or at other conferences with an appropriate subject or topic. The course of Academic Writing helps the students to obtain the skills necessary for presenting the results of their work.

Our research showed that the development of foreign language competencies and practice oriented study of professional English at the ISS of RANEPA, Moscow, made it possible for PA students to be closer to real life goals of public administration, and to better fulfil their PA tasks after graduation from the Academy. All new

parts of the ESP programmes of ISS have been included in the assessment procedure during the final exams, and the results have demonstrated the grade of the students' readiness to use English for communication purposes and for work with citizens in their future work as PA servants.

Stakeholders Analysis

The first group of stakeholders of the Policy of the Departments of Language Training in academic institutions consists of elected officials, municipal leaders, staff and education management, public sector managers and politicians. Their final goal is to provide proper performance of public servants (including the provision of necessary foreign language competencies for PA servants). Staff and education management elaborate modern education policy, provide education quality standards, and carry out retraining of the senior managers ("train the trainers" programmes).

The second group of stakeholders includes the personnel of the universities and PA schools: teachers of foreign languages, trainers and instructors, tutors and education managers. Their aim is the creation of effective training programmes for the students, research programmes (PA programmes updated in close cooperation with students through feedback), programmes for lifelong learning, and retraining of personnel.

Citizens, students, and civil servants may be considered as the largest third group of stakeholders. Their needs, expectations and ideas might be very important, both when initiating the programmes, and throughout the entire learning period (constant feedback for updating the programmes).

Consultations

Spreading the practices of good professional public management, public policy and governance which make public service more effective, including spreading the Policy of the Departments of Language Training, requires thorough consultations of public service representatives and experts from member institutions of NISPAcee. Discussions between instructors, civil servants, trainers, and public sector managers are required before the implementation of the Policy of the Departments of Language Training at academic institutions of NISPAcee. The implementation of the Policy also requires the consultations of experts in the field of language training as well as of profile teachers of PA students at all stages of this Policy implementation, because the conditions of the implementation of the Policy, based on the research presented by the author, may differ in different countries, so the recommendations suggested by the Policy of the Departments of Language Training should be adapted to every academic institution with the help of consultants from these institutions

as well as the academicians who discussed the Policy during the latest NISPAcee conference.

Policy Recommendation

In our opinion, **the Policy of the Departments of Language Training in academic institutions of NISPAcee should be based on the uniform level of language competencies development of PA students.** Students need some common knowledge and skills to begin with. These should be provided by common General English courses as in our case, when the uniformity was achieved by the exams for the First Cambridge Certificate (the first and second courses of study) and IELTS exam (the third and fourth courses of study).The exams showed the grade of the students' readiness to use English for communication purposes and for work with citizens in the future.

What should be done before teaching students and developing their language competencies?

Needs analysis and deeper analysis, such as the so-called 'purpose mining', should help the teachers to create practical programmes for every profile of the study and for different levels of the students. The programmes of study should be compiled in close collaboration with profile teachers who can help a language teacher choose the topics for discussion and the appropriate vocabulary for every specialty.

For teaching future public servants, the main PA terms which should help better cooperation of PA servants in Europe, the development of professional foreign language PA vocabulary is very important. The epoch of globalisation and closer international communication in the XXI century requires the creation of the International PA English Vocabulary and PA Vocabularies in other languages. This work should be done by teachers of English, together with profile teachers and instructors.

Modern technologies of teaching a foreign language should be used during studies to make them closer to practice. Amongst them are modular training technologies, business and role games, collective problem solving, group discussions etc. **Creating the effective learning environment by implementing E-learning technologies and digital media in all the disciplines of study, the creation of online courses for different specialities of PA students will help students obtain the necessary information and ideas, to solve problems, to make up projects, to communicate with each other on the actual topics, and to do home work etc.** E-learning technologies help future public administrators to obtain the necessary skills for real life work, because digital means are becoming more and more popular in PA work and in work with citizens.

The students should be taught to carry out a research work and Project Design work, to make up a Project in English, and to make a presentation at the students' conferences.

In our opinion, implementing the Policy recommendation shall promote both human capacity building and institutional development in public administration and bring about considerable synergetic effects to all NISPAcee member institutions.

Conclusion

The new Policy of the Departments of Language Training, in our opinion, contributes to the creation of an educational and methodical base for the formation and development of foreign language professional competencies of students, undergraduates and postgraduates studying at the faculties of public administration. The materials and the results of the research may be used by practitioners in public administration and public policy education, which will make it possible to improve the quality of language training of future civil servants.

The results of our research may be used for methodological support of professional training of persons who are going to hold positions of senior and higher civil service; for cooperation in the field of international activities of public authorities; for qualitative improvement of education standards in the field of training of civil servants, and for their better communication and work with citizens etc. We hope that the new Policy of the Departments of Language Training will help the ESP teachers to create an effective learning environment for future public servants.

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Appendix 1

Evaluation Tools and Criteria for the Assessment of Students on the Discipline "English Language" (1 term, 2018–2019 academic years)

In the development of the curriculum, the selection of educational materials and assessment tools, as well as in the development of criteria for assessing students' progress, we focus on the "Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching and Assessment".

The Chair of English language of the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS), PANE-PA, Moscow, adopted a score-rating system of assessment, according to which the student can score 100 points during one term, and they are distributed as follows:

1 and 2 course

1 module – maximum 15 points	Modular control work– maximum 10 points	2 module – maximum 15 points	Credit/exam – maximum 60 points
5 points – for attendance 10 points – for work on the course of "General English"	10 points	5 points – for the work on the course "Social and Political aspect of the English language" 10 points – for work on the course of "General English"	Written work – 30 points Oral exam– 30 points

3 course

1 module – maximum 15 points	Modular control work– maximum 10 points	2 module – maximum 15 points 2	Credit/exam – maximum 60 points
5 points – for attendance 5 points – for project work 5 points – for work on the course "English for Academic Purposes" or "General English"	10 points	5 points – for the work on the course "English for Specific Purposes" 5 points – for project work 5 points – for work on the course "English for Academic Purposes" or "General English"	Written work – 30 points Oral exam– 30 points

4 course

1 module – maximum 20 points	Modular control work– maximum 20 points	2 module – maximum 20 points	Credit/exam – maximum 40 points
5 points – for attendance 15 points – for work in the classroom	20 points	5 points – for attendance 15 points – for work in the classroom	Written work – 20 points Oral exam– 20 points

Project work suggests the creation of a project on the topic corresponding to the theme of the major subject. The developed skills are: creating one's own project, proving its relevance and its novelty, the skill of defending one's own project, the skill of writing and speaking on a professional topic. It is supposed that the projects should be defended at the Department of Foreign languages, the managers and teachers of the profiles being invited.

Appendix 2

Evaluation Tools and Criteria for the Assessment of Students on the Discipline "English Language" (2 term, 2018–2019 academic years)

In the development of the curriculum, the selection of educational materials and assessment tools, as well as in the development of criteria for assessing students' progress, we focus on the "Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment".

The Chair of English language of the Institute for Social Sciences (ISS), PANE-PA, Moscow, adopted a score-rating system of assessment, according to which the student can score 100 points during one term, and they are distributed as follows:

1 and 2 course

1 module – maximum 15 points	Modular control work– maximum 10 points	2 module – maximum 15 points	Credit/exam – maximum 60 points
5 points – for the work on the course "Social and Political aspect of the English language" (for weak and strong groups) 10 points – for work on the course of "General English" (15 points for weak groups)	10 points	5 points – for the work on the course "Social and Political aspect of the English language" (for weak and strong groups) 10 points – for work on the course of "General English" (15 points for weak groups)	Written work – 30 points Oral exam– 30 points

3 course

1 module – maximum 15 points	Modular control work– maximum 10 points	2 module – maximum 15 points	Credit/exam – maximum 60 points
5 points – for the work on the course "English for Specific Purposes" 5 points – for project work 5 points – for work on the course "English for Academic Purposes" or "General English"	10 points	5 points – for the work on the course "English for Specific Purposes" 5 points – for project work 5 points – for work on the course "English for Academic Purposes" or "General English"	Written work – 30 points Oral exam– 30 points

Project work suggests the creation of a project on the topic corresponding to the theme of the major subject. The developed skills are: creating one's own project,

proving its relevance and its novelty, the skill of defending one's own project, the skill of writing and speaking on a professional topic. It is supposed that the projects should be defended at the Department of Foreign languages, the managers and teachers of the profiles being invited.