

# THE FORMATION OF SELF-EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE PROCESS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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## ABSTRACT

Today in Russian higher education we can observe a paradigm shift from “teaching” – when the person is taught to the “learning” – when the person learns himself, which means the transition from educational paradigm to self-educational paradigm, where self-education has become a real need of each person. The article aims to analyze the formation of self-educational competence of university students in the process of foreign language learning. The author gives the definition of the concept «self-education» in the context of lifelong learning, defines the nature and content of the self-educational competence of university students. The author distinguishes four components of self-educational competence of university students: motivational, cognitive, activity and reflexive and gives detailed description of them. The materials of this research can be used by teachers in the development of special courses of lectures and seminars on the organization of self-education of university students.

**Keywords:** *self-education, European Higher Education Area, self-educational competence, lifelong learning, language self-education*

## 1.INTRODUCTION

Higher professional education in the XXI century is focused on the realization of the new educational paradigm, actualizing in accordance with the requirements of post-industrial society the problems of training highly educated, competent professionals with a strong individual style of self-education, development of their academic and social mobility and the formation of such a set of competencies that would enable them to be competitive in an increasingly globalized labor market. Among the leading factors that activate the need for the development of students’ self-education are the challenges of the modern civilization: globalization and informatization of all spheres of human activity, the crisis phenomena in the financial and economic sphere, the integration of political, economic, educational space.

Russia's acceptance of the Bologna Process and the formation of a unified Higher Education Area have set new challenges for the modern higher school. Schools are now responsible for helping future specialists to prepare to solve specific professional tasks, to effectively realize professional activities, and to be responsible for professional results. The implementation of these tasks is impossible without the formation of self-educational competence of students in the contexts of globalization and the integration of education [Sagitova, 2011]. A priority and key principle of European Higher Education Area formation is the academic mobility promotion, which is also impossible without the development of students’ self-education. The Bologna Process involves a paradigm shift in higher education from “teaching” (when the person is taught) to “learning” (when the person learns independently).

In modern society continuous self-education becomes one of the main conditions of progress of human society, the world in general and, of course, a condition of vital success of separately taken person. Self-education becomes particularly important in the context of lifelong learning, where the planning, organization, management, and implementation of education depends on the individual, and the process of education develops into the process of self-education. An American philosopher and psychologist John Dewey emphasized that the most important attitude that can be formed in a man is that of the desire to continue learning [Dewey, 1916].

Thus, in modern conditions the necessity in self-education is caused, primarily, by requirements of society and the person (individual). At the same time, most of students of higher educational institutions are not ready and do not know how to effectively organize the process of self-education. Therefore, in modern conditions the problem of formation of self-educational competence of university students is actualized and the solution of this problem will promote improvement of quality of training of future specialists in the context of globalization of education.

## **2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Objectives of the Research**

The main objectives of the study are: 1) to examine the role of self-education in the context of lifelong learning; 2) to define and substantiate the nature and content of the self-educational competence of university students in the conditions of globalization and internationalization of education.

### **2.2. Theoretical and Methodological Basis of the Research**

Our study is based on the theoretical research method – the analysis of foreign and national philosophical, pedagogical, methodical literature on a problem; analysis and generalization of modern pedagogical experience; empirical – research and analysis of pedagogical experience; observation, interviews with teachers and students.

## **3. RESULTS**

### **3.1. The role of Self-Education in the Context of Lifelong Learning**

Analysis of modern Russian pedagogical literature allowed us to identify several approaches to the concept of self-education: self-education in the theories and concepts of personnel training and professional development [Muhametzyanova, 2008; Fakhrutdinova, 2016 ]; self-education in the context of lifelong learning theory [Candy, 1991; Oleynikova, 2009; Tregubova, 2013]; self-education in sociological research [Field, 2000; Nigmatullina, Boltakova, 2014]; self-education in the context of pedagogical and social psychology [Long, 1992; Sakhieva, 2015; Zimnya, 2006]. Having analyzed different definitions of the term “self-education” in Russian and foreign pedagogical references and encyclopedias it can be summarized as a purposeful cognitive activity, managed by the learner himself/herself and aimed at achieving certain personal and socially significant educational goals [Sagitova, 2011].

A success of a person in the modern society depends on their ability to handle knowledge, to update it, to select what is appropriate for a particular context, to learn permanently, self-educate, to understand what is learned in such a way that it can be adapted to new and rapidly changing situations. A famous American scientist A. Toffler noted that people who have to live in a super industrial society need to have new skills in three key areas: the ability to learn, to communicate and to choose... And therefore in

schools of the future it has to be taught not only the sum of knowledge, but also the ability to operate with it. Students have to learn how to learn [Toffler 2002, 449].

The role of students' self-education has become stronger since the realization in the Russian higher educational system the main provisions of the Bologna Process, which have led the transition from educational paradigm to self-educational paradigm, where approaches centered on the learner are increasingly important. The previous paradigm involved an emphasis on the acquisition and transmission of knowledge. Elements in the changing of this paradigm include: education centered on the student, the changing role of the teacher, further definition of objectives, change in the approach to educational activities, shift in from input to output, and a change in the organization of learning [Tuning, 2002]. This process prescribes a three-cycle system of higher education by the formula "bachelor-master-doctorate." The descriptions of three cycles of education adopted at the European level define the basic vectors, according to which the requirements of the learning outcomes for each cycle of programs should be formed. The Dublin Descriptors offer generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities associated with awards that represent the end of each Bologna cycle. Thus from 1st cycle (Bachelors) to 2nd cycle (Masters) to 3rd cycle (Doctorates) there are differences or "step changes" between the respective Dublin descriptors. The process emphasizes that in bachelor degree programs there has to be a balance between special knowledge and general skills, with the emphasis on autonomous study, which will allow students to develop learning skills that are necessary for optimal self-education. In magistracy programs students must have learning skills that allow them to study autonomously [Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, 2005].

In the context of a new educational paradigm we regard self-education as a purposeful, independent, cognitive, practice-oriented activity to enhance available knowledge and competences, the acquisition of new knowledge and the formation of modern competencies in one or more areas of human activity, self-improvement of the personality throughout life [Sagitova, 2011].

### 2.3. The Nature and Content of the Self-Educational Competence

Russia's integration into the unified Higher Education Area coincided with the development of the third generation of state educational standards of higher professional education, which are based on the competence-based approach, involving the development of students' self-education process, and thus the formation of their self-educational competence. General conceptual idea of competence-based approach can be formulated as follows: competence-oriented education is aimed at integrated development of knowledge and ways of social and professional activity, providing the successful functioning of a person in the key spheres of life in the interests of both him/her and society, and the state in general. The concept "competence" acts as the central "key" notion of competence-based approach. In the Russian educational standards of higher professional education, the term "competence" is defined as the ability of the person to apply knowledge, skills and personal qualities to be successful in a particular field. According to the TUNING project, competence is understood as including knowing and understanding (theoretical knowledge of an academic field, the capacity to know and understand), knowing how to act (practical and operational application of knowledge to certain situations), knowing how to be (values as an integral element of the way of perceiving and living with others and in a social context) [Tuning, 2002].

In the framework of Tuning Project there are two different sets of competences: subject-specific and generic competences. Subject-specific competences are crucial for any degree and they are intimately related to specific knowledge of a field of study. They are referred to as academic-subject-related skills and competences. These give identity and consistency to the particular degree program. Generic competences are classified into 3 groups: instrumental, interpersonal and systemic competences. Generic competences are not related directly with the solution of professional tasks, but are associated with the success of professional activity indirectly. They are based on the certain characteristics, such as the ability

to learn, ability for analysis and synthesis, etc., and are common to all or most of the degrees. As the most important Generic competencies both graduates and employers (according to the results of the questionnaire in the framework of the TUNING project) highlighted capacity for analysis and synthesis, capacity for applying knowledge in practice, ability to work autonomously, capacity to learn, interpersonal skills, information management skills, research skills [Tuning, 2002]. It follows that in fact in the TUNING project it is implicitly emphasized the priority of fundamental training of university graduates and development of their skills to self-education .

The analysis of the Russian educational standards of the third generation, works of domestic and foreign researchers, has allowed us to define self-educational competence as the integrative characteristic of the person which includes knowledge, skills, methods and experience of self-education and also personal qualities manifested in needs, abilities and readiness for implementation of the activity directed on achievement of personal, professional, social self-realization of the person. Thus, within our research we refer self-educational competence to the most significant Generic competencies which has to be formed at all students, irrespective of their future profession.

The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature allowed us to distinguish four components of self-educational competence of university students: motivational, cognitive, activity and reflexive. The motivational component of self-educational competence includes the student's need for continuous self-development and self-improvement, promotes the formation of a complex of motives, sustained interest, provides a positive attitude towards self-educational activity, aspiration to continuous self-education, awareness of its personal and social importance. The cognitive component describes the level of student's knowledge about the nature, forms, methods, ways of self-education, the level of proficiency in general education, subject and professional knowledge, ability to continuous personal self-education through the use of modern information and telecommunication technologies. The activity component of self-educational competence of university students assumes the possession of a set of constructive-designing, organizing, communication skills, ability to organize their own self-education activity, ability to work independently with the information, conduct research, carry out interdisciplinary projects, etc. The reflexive component of self-educational competence involves reflection and self-assessment of their readiness for self-education, includes an adequate assessment of their achievements, the need for self-reflection and the possession of reflexive technologies in the field of self-education [Sagitova, 2011].

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

1. The presented definition of the concept "self-education" promotes expansion of scientific knowledge of self-educational activity of students.
2. The theoretical analysis of the problem has allowed us to define that in the context of a new educational paradigm "Lifelong Learning" self-education is purposeful, independent, cognitive, practice-oriented activity to enhance available knowledge and competences, the acquisition of new knowledge and the formation of modern competencies in one or more areas of human activity, self-improvement of the personality throughout life.
3. The study of the nature and content of the self-educational competence of university students showed that this competence relates to the most significant Generic competencies and has to be formed at all students, irrespective of their future profession. Theoretical substantiation of the essence and content the self-educational competence of university students specifies and expands the scientific understanding of the competences of modern specialist and competent-based approach in general.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The materials in this research can be used by teachers in the development of special courses of lectures and seminars on the organization of self-education of university students.

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