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PEDAGOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF DEVELOPING THE PRACTICAL COMPETENCE OF LISTENERS

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Abstract.
This article provides a scientific-theoretical analysis of the pedagogical and psychological features of developing the practical competence of listeners enrolled at the regional centers for retraining and professional development of higher education personnel. The study reveals the foundations of the competence-based approach, the specific patterns of adult education (andragogy), and the role of motivational-volitional and cognitive processes in the formation of practical skills. According to the results of the empirical research, the combined use of interactive methods, reflective exercises, and case-study technology significantly enhances the practical competence of listeners. Based on the obtained results, scientific and methodological recommendations aimed at improving the professional development process have been developed.

Key words:
practical competence, listener, andragogy, professional development, pedagogical and psychological features, motivation, reflection, interactive learning, case-study, professional growth.

Introduction

In the modern education system, the importance of professional development and retraining courses is steadily increasing. The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026 has identified the enhancement of personnel's professional competence and the development of their practical skills as priority tasks [1]. Within this process, the formation and development of the practical competence of professors, teachers, and staff of the higher education system requires special scientific and pedagogical attention. Listeners are the main subjects of the professional development and retraining system; they are adults who already possess a certain amount of professional experience, knowledge, and worldview. For this reason, their education must rely on the principles of andragogy, their psychological and age-related characteristics, motivational sphere, and personal self-awareness [7]. The ineffectiveness of traditional pedagogical approaches in teaching adults is today a scientifically established fact.

The relevance of the research problem lies in the fact that traditional models for developing practical competence do not fully take into account the specific pedagogical and psychological features of this category of learners. Although foreign scholars such as M.Knowles [7], S.Brookfield [12], and J.Mezirow [8] have proposed distinctive models of adult education, their practical application in the national educational context has not been sufficiently studied. In Uzbekistan, certain aspects of this problem have been addressed in the works of U.Inoyatov [2], B.Adizov [3], Sh.Sharipov [4], and other scholars; however, a comprehensive pedagogical-

psychological model for developing the practical competence of listeners has not yet been elaborated.

The aim of the research is to provide a theoretical justification of the pedagogical and psychological features of developing the practical competence of listeners at regional centers for retraining and professional development of higher education personnel, and on this basis to elaborate the corresponding methodological and organizational conditions. The research objectives are: 1) to reveal the theoretical essence of the concept of "practical competence"; 2) to identify the pedagogical and psychological factors influencing the formation of practical skills among listeners; 3) to study the effectiveness of interactive methods experimentally; 4) to develop recommendations for improving the professional development process.

The theoretical formation of the competence-based approach dates back to the 1970s. In his famous 1973 work "Testing for Competence Rather Than for Intelligence", D.McClelland substantiated the need to assess competencies instead of using traditional intelligence tests for predicting professional success. This approach was subsequently developed by R.Boyatzis, L.Spencer, and S.Spencer. In Russian pedagogy and psychology, the studies of I.A.Zimnyaya [5], A.V.Khutorskoy [6], V.V.Serikov, and V.I.Baidenko occupy a significant place.

I.A.Zimnyaya interprets the concept of practical competence as an integrated manifestation of knowledge, skills, and abilities in a specific professional activity [5, p.18]. A.V.Khutorskoy defines competence as a person's specific relation to real objects and their experience of activity [6, p.24]. Uzbek scholar U.Inoyatov describes practical competence as "the ability to independently solve problems in professional activity, make decisions, and feel responsibility for the results obtained" [2, p.142].

Analysis shows that practical competence consists of four main components: the cognitive component (a system of theoretical knowledge and mastery of professional concepts); the operational-technological component (practical actions, skills, abilities, and the use of professional techniques); the personal component (professionally significant qualities, responsibility, independence, and creativity); and the reflective-evaluative component (the ability to analyze and evaluate oneself and one's activity). The interrelation and integral-holistic formation of these components determine the quality of practical competence.

The founder of andragogy (the theory of adult education), M.Knowles (1980), advanced five basic principles of teaching adults [7, p. 64]: 1) adults' self-direction and independence; 2) the importance of prior life experience as an educational resource; 3) readiness to learn associated with social and professional roles; 4) problem-orientation (rather than academic orientation); and 5) high intrinsic motivation. J.Mezirow, in turn, developed the theory of transformative learning, placing special emphasis on the role of reflection and critical thinking in adult education [8].

Cognitive-psychological factors also play an important role in developing the practical competence of listeners. L.S.Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development [11], A.N.Leontiev's activity theory, and P.Ya.Galperin's theory of the stage-by-stage formation of mental actions constitute the scientific foundation of practice-oriented methodologies in the education of listeners. D.Kolb's experiential learning model (concrete experience – reflective observation – abstract conceptualization – active experimentation) is of particular importance in designing the didactic structure of professional development courses [9].

The following scientific methods were used in the research: theoretical methods (comparative analysis, synthesis, generalization, and modeling of scientific-pedagogical literature); empirical methods (questionnaire surveys, interviews, observation, and pedagogical experiment); and mathematical-statistical methods (data processing, calculation of the reliability coefficient, and

Student's t-test). The research was conducted with the participation of listeners from the regional centers for retraining and professional development of higher education personnel attached to the National University of Uzbekistan (NUU), Samarkand State University (SamSU), and Fergana State University (FerSU). A total of 208 listeners took part in the experimental work: the experimental group consisted of 104 participants, and the control (trial) group also of 104 participants.

The experiment was organized in three stages. At the first (ascertaining) stage, the initial level of the listeners' practical competence was studied. At the second (formative) stage, a set of interactive methods developed by the author (reflective exercises, case-studies, role-playing games, brainstorming, and the project method) was applied in the experimental group. At the third (final) stage, the obtained results were analyzed and comparatively evaluated.

The scientific-theoretical basis of the research consists of humanistic psychology (A.Maslow, C.Rogers), the personal-activity approach (S.L.Rubinstein, A.N.Leontiev), the competence-based approach (J.Raven, A.V.Khutorskoy), the andragogical approach (M.Knowles [7], S.Brookfield [12]), and the concepts of educational reforms in Uzbekistan. The empirical base of the research comprised the activity of the regional centers at NUU, SamSU, and FerSU, as well as listeners studying there in various professional directions. Data processing was performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0 software package.

The research results demonstrated that several pedagogical and psychological features play an important role in the development of listeners' practical competence. First, the listeners' age, professional experience, motivational orientation, and cognitive style emerged as the main factors determining the quality and pace of practical competence formation. According to the results of a questionnaire survey conducted with the listeners, 78.3% of respondents indicated "mastering practical skills" as their main expectation from professional development courses, while 64.1 % cited "learning techniques for solving real professional problems".

During the research, the following pedagogical and psychological features influencing the formation of practical competence were identified: motivational (intrinsic motivation, the drive for professional growth, cognitive interest); emotional-volitional (self-confidence, perseverance, the ability to overcome difficulties); cognitive (analytical thinking, reflection, a creative approach); communicative (sociability, the ability to work in cooperation, the ability to express one's opinion); and personal (responsibility, independence, self-management). The interrelation of these features calls for a systemic approach. At the beginning of the experiment, an ascertaining study was carried out. The listeners' practical competence was assessed according to the following criteria: the knowledge component (professional theoretical knowledge), the activity component (practical skills), the motivational-value component, and the reflective-evaluative component. The results obtained are presented in the table below.

Table 1

Initial level of the listeners' practical competence (%)

Group	Number of listeners	High level	Medium level	Low level
Experimental group	104	14.4	39.4	46.2
Control group	104	15.4	40.4	44.2

As can be seen from the table, the level of practical competence in both groups was almost identical at the beginning of the experiment. In the experimental group, the high level constituted 14.4%, the medium level 39.4%, and the low level 46.2%; in the control group, the corresponding figures were 15.4%, 40.4%, and 44.2%, respectively. These data confirm the homogeneity of the initial conditions.

During the formative stage of the experiment, the set of interactive methods developed by the author was applied in working with the experimental group. These methods included case-studies, brainstorming, role-playing games, reflective exercises, the project method, the "flipped classroom" technology, and elements of mentoring and coaching. In the control group, the traditional lecture-and-seminar system was maintained. The psychological and pedagogical conditions of the experiment included: the subject-position and active engagement of the listener in the educational process, the practical orientation of knowledge, the regularity of reflective analysis, and the creation of a positive emotional environment. At the final stage of the experiment, the results revealed significant changes in the listeners' level of practical competence. In the experimental group, the share of listeners with a high level rose from 14.4% to 47.1%, whereas in the control group this indicator increased only from 15.4% to 24.0%. To verify the reliability of the results, Student's t-test was applied. The calculated value ($t = 4.86$) exceeded the critical value ($t_{cr} = 1.97$ at $p \leq 0.05$), confirming the statistical reliability of the experimental results.

Table 2

Level of the listeners' practical competence after the experiment (%)

Group	Number of listeners	High level	Medium level	Low level
Experimental group	104	47.1	40.4	12.5
Control group	104	24.0	44.2	31.8

The analysis of the empirical data shows that the successful development of listeners' practical competence depends on the following pedagogical and psychological conditions: reliance on the listener's personal and professional experience; organization of the educational process around the listener's real professional problems; establishment of subject-subject relations; regular reflective analysis; integration of external and internal motivation; the creation of a psychologically safe environment; flexibility with respect to different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic); and the provision of constructive feedback.

In the discussion section, it should be emphasized that the research findings empirically confirm D.Kolb's theory of experiential learning [9]. The practical competence of listeners is formed not only through theoretical knowledge but also through real experience and reflective analysis of it. M.Knowles's andragogical principles were also validated during the experiment: listeners showed better results in situations where they felt themselves to be subjects of education, had the opportunity to draw on their own experience, and were oriented toward specific practical goals [7].

The research findings are also consistent with A.Bandura's theory of self-efficacy [10]. Among the listeners of the experimental group, who experienced success, an increase in confidence in their professional abilities and a strengthened readiness to cope with difficult situations in the future were observed. This factor is of crucial importance in the formation of practical competence.

In addition, the research revealed the need to differentiate teaching methods according to the listeners' age and professional experience. Younger listeners (up to 25 years old), although more open to new technologies and innovative methods, require greater theoretical grounding. For middle-aged listeners (35–50 years old), practical orientation and work with real cases are more effective. For older adults (over 50 years), connection with life experience and consistency are required. These conclusions are also consistent with E.Erikson's theory of psychosocial development.

During the research, a structural-functional model for developing the practical competence of listeners was elaborated. This model includes four interrelated blocks: the goal-conceptual block (educational goals, principles of the competence-based approach, and foundations of the andragogical approach); the content-procedural block (educational content elaborated on a modular-competence basis, interactive methods, and technologies); the diagnostic-evaluative block (complex diagnostics, monitoring, and reflective analysis); and the resultative-corrective block (analysis of achievements, correction, and identification of prospects for development). The effectiveness of the model was confirmed under experimental conditions.

The results of the scientific-pedagogical research carried out allow the following conclusions to be drawn: first, the practical competence of listeners is a multi-component, integral pedagogical-psychological concept with personal specificity. It represents the integrated manifestation of knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation, values, reflective-evaluative capacity, and the experience of creative activity. The successful formation of practical competence is an inseparable part of the listener's professional self-awareness and professional growth. Second, the process of developing the practical competence of listeners must be organized on the basis of the principles of andragogy, taking into account their psychological and age-related characteristics and their professional experience. The main emphasis must be placed on ensuring the listener's subject-position, the practical orientation of education, the creation of a reflective-developmental environment, the activation of the motivational sphere, and the application of a personal-individual approach.

Third, the experimental research conducted with the participation of listeners from the regional centers at NUU, SamSU, and FerSU (a total of 208 participants) proved that the use of a set of interactive methods (case-studies, role-playing games, reflective exercises, the project method, and the "flipped classroom" technology) significantly increases listeners' practical competence. In the experimental group, the share of listeners with a high level rose by 32.7%, which is 3.8 times higher than the corresponding indicator in the control group. The statistical reliability of the obtained results was confirmed by Student's t-test ($t = 4.86$; $p \leq 0.05$).

Fourth, the following recommendations for improving the system of professional development and retraining were elaborated: 1) to introduce a complex diagnostic methodology for assessing the practical competence of listeners; 2) to include interactive teaching methods as a mandatory didactic element; 3) to create conditions for elaborating the personal and professional roadmaps of listeners; 4) to improve curricula on a modular-competence basis; 5) to organize special professional development courses on andragogy for faculty members.

The scientific and practical significance of the research lies in the fact that its results yield universal pedagogical and psychological principles applicable not only in the system of professional development but also in higher education, professional-technical education, and corporate education. Promising directions for future research include the development of practical competence in the digital environment, the use of artificial intelligence tools, and the study of the effectiveness of distance learning formats for professional development.

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