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Development in the Course of Professional
Training of Prospective Foreign Language
Teachers at Content Level

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Linguistic-and-methodological competence development in the course of professional training of prospective foreign language teachers at content level

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Abstract. The problem of the content of linguistic-and-methodological training is vital in the context of a competence-based approach. The purpose of the given study is to test the ways of effective linguistic-and-methodological competence development in the course of professional training of prospective foreign language teachers at content level. In the course of prospective foreign language teachers training the development of linguistic-and-methodological competence becomes very important as it also provides prospective specialists with a wide range of indispensable professional competencies. Effective linguistic-and-methodological competence development is possible in case of certain changes which can be introduced into the content of some disciplines which are taught to prospective foreign language teachers in the course of their Master program. The given study subsequently considers the changes the author proposes to implement into the topics of the disciplines from the cycle of the humanities at content level. The author also describes an experimental study conducted on the basis of three universities of Ukraine and the results of diagnostic testing before and after implementation of innovations into the content of prospective foreign language teachers training proposed by the author. Quantitative analysis of diagnostic testing proves the effectiveness of introduced changes into the content of linguistic-and-methodological competence development in prospective foreign language teachers in the course of their professional training.

Problem statement

The main strategy in Ukraine's educational process today is the focus on globalization and integration. This tendency creates the need to rethink the quality of training of prospective foreign language teachers in higher educational establishments with a focus on a competence-based approach. In the field of education a competence-based approach today is considered as one of the directions of modernization of vocational education both in Ukraine and abroad. In this context linguistic-and-methodological competence of a foreign language teacher is a logic continuation of improvement and development of the conceptual thesaurus on the problem of a competence-based approach in the course of prospective foreign language teachers training [1].

Analysis of recent studies

Theoretical background of competence-based approach in the course of prospective specialists training, as well as its core, contents, structure, and conditions are covered in the studies of Ukrainian scientists, such as N. Bibik, I. Zimniaya, O. Lokshina, O. Pometun, I. Drach, V. Luhovyi, O. Sliusarenko, Zh. Talanova, A. Khutorskyi, O. Savchenko, etc. The terms of "linguistic methodology or linguistic-and-methodological work" are used by such researchers as I. Khizhniak, A. Nikitina, N. Ostapenko, O. Fentsyk, O. Ishutina, O. Kopus' in Ukrainian scientific thesaurus. Such foreign scientists as N. Kolesnikova,

T. Yemelyanova, T. Ramzayeva, N. Fomina have also regarded these concepts in their studies.

The problem of the content of linguistic-and-methodological training is covered in the researches of the following foreign scholars as: Frank J. Kennings, D. Newby, K. Kator, K. Schneider, S. Borg, M. Burns, M. Wallace, R. Dray and others. It is also important to take into consideration the experience of international organizations focused on improving the process of prospective foreign language teachers training, such as, for example British Council and Thematic Working Group "Teacher Professional Development", which, in particular, encourages the development of competencies in foreign language teachers.

The purpose of the study

In their scientific studies the scholars, focusing on the standards of the competence-based approach in education, offer their innovative ideas concerning the content and structure of both competencies themselves and the ways of their development. Those ideas can set the pattern to work out the author's system of linguistic-and-methodological competence development in prospective foreign language teachers in the course of their training in higher educational establishments.

The purpose of our study is to test the ways of effective linguistic-and-methodological competence development in the course of professional training of prospective foreign language teachers at content level.

The research methods

The research methods which we have used to achieve this goal relate to theoretical methods of pedagogical research and cover analysis and synthesis, comparison, generalization, induction and deduction, abstraction and concretization, which help to theoretically elaborate scientific facts on the problem of the given research. Practical research methods include diagnostics: interviews (oral interviews, conversations) and questionnaires and testing (written surveys-questionnaires, tests, testing assignments).

The results and discussion

Under linguistic-and-methodological competence of a prospective foreign language teacher we understand the integrated unity of developed (according to the above-mentioned qualification - a foreign language teacher) professional knowledge (about foreign language and teaching methods), skills, abilities and experience in organization of linguistic-and-methodological and scientific activities (eagerness to use various forms, methods and technologies in the process of organizing prospective educational process, in order to develop (by mastering, grafting, familiarization, and development of required competencies in those whom prospective foreign language teachers will teach) the meta-subject function of a foreign language and its status as a socio-cultural phenomenon); with the aim of being focused on reflection, self-development and self-improvement [2].

We consider that linguistic-and-methodological competence includes the following structural components: linguistic-subject, didactic-methodological and scientific-research [3].

In the article dedicated to this problem the structural components of linguistic-and-methodological competence have been considered in detail, so in this study we shall only outline that linguistic-subject we distinguish as the first structural component (it includes subject competency, socio-cultural and communicative competencies) [3]. The second structural component (didactic-methodological) incorporates auto-psychological, psychological-pedagogical and organizational competencies [3]. The third structural component - scientific-research includes scientific-research competency which is essential for the scientific-research activity of a foreign language teacher [3].

We believe that the development of linguistic-and-methodological competence in prospective foreign language teachers in the course of their professional training is achievable only via detailing the content of linguistic-and-methodological competence and implementing a system approach. This process should be holistic and include a set of interrelated and interdependent components focused on achieving the main result of the development of linguistic-and-methodological competence in prospective foreign

language teachers in the course of their professional training. Consequently, this process should also be reflected in the aim, content and technologies of prospective foreign language teachers training. Ukrainian scholar S. Shekhavtsova believes that the content of professional training of prospective teachers should reflect the interrelation between general, particular (including supplementary, and taking into account the specifics of the faculty), and individual (differentiation and individualization of education and training), that is, to cover the knowledge and skills required to perform efficient professional activity [4]. That is why, in our opinion, the content of the pedagogical system of development of linguistic-and-methodological competence in prospective foreign language teachers in the course of their professional training creates the background for successful development of other components of the pedagogical system.

Thus, it should be noted that the content of the pedagogical system of linguistic-and-methodological competence development in prospective foreign language teachers should be implemented only in case if the content and structure of linguistic-and-methodological competence are revealed and its connection with professional competence of a foreign language teacher is proved.

Before proceeding to define the content of such training, we regard as appropriate to consider functional characteristics of future educational activity of a foreign language teacher. According to I. Zimniaya pedagogical activity is implemented in certain pedagogical situations by a set of different actions (perceptual, mnemonic, communicative, subject-forming, researching, controlling/self-controlling, assessing/ self-assessing), which are subordinated to some goals and aimed at solving certain pedagogical tasks, when these tasks require to perform a particular pedagogical function [5].

S Shekhavtsova introduces a new paradigm of teaching foreign language which supposes a focus on communication; learner-centered approach; integrated skills development; emphasis on the process; open-ended, multiple solutions and tests which also teach [6].

Taking into account available scientific achievements, we shall distinguish the main functions of a foreign language teacher in the context of our scientific search, thus highlighting: **gnostic-designing function** (the ability to accumulate the necessary linguistic-and-methodological knowledge, to develop in those whom prospective teachers plan to teach, speaking, linguistic, communicative and socio-cultural competencies); **communicative-and-organizational function** (the ability to cooperate and organize team work with the participants of the educational process); **diagnostic-and-correcting function** (the ability of a foreign language teacher to keep control and correct knowledge, skills, and abilities); **motivational-developing function** (the ability to analyze and assess the most important achievements of the international pedagogical science for self-education, self-improvement and self-development); **reflexive**

function (the ability of a foreign language teacher to rethink the process or result of their professional activity, to critically self-analyze effectiveness of means, forms, methods and technologies applied in the course of their pedagogical activity).

The defined chief functions of the professional activity of prospective foreign language teachers require the identification of effective pedagogical approaches to optimize the content of linguistic-and-methodological competence development within the outlined pedagogical system. Such **pedagogical approaches include: synergetic** (it allows to take into account, strengthen, expand and compensate for what already exists in the system of professional training of prospective foreign language teachers); **competence-based** (where different competences are developed, which is an integral characteristic of a modern specialist); **systematic** (which is used to connect individual components in the course of training, to notice its integrity, to compare the facts which are interrelated, to look for analogies in phenomena of different origin, to find which is common and different in theories, ideas, and views); **personal activity-based** (implemented through consistent individualization of a student's personal specifics, their personalization, personal qualities, individual features, involves knowledge of individual features, individual styles of activity, ability to diagnose and predict their impact on learning efficiency); **communicative** (encourages to exercise foreign language not only within the limits of solely foreign language communication, but also to solve professional problems); **student-centered approach** ("draws" attention to the student, turning the students into the main participant in the educational process, giving them a leading and active role).

Nowadays, different higher educational establishments in Ukraine offer somewhat different list of disciplines to study in the course of professional training of prospective foreign language teachers. The analysis of the curricula shows that, the disciplines are mostly identical in their content though they may have some discrepancies in their title. Consequently, the improvement of the disciplines content in the context of the development of linguistic-and-methodological competence should be made, on the one hand, via the potential of the disciplines stipulated in the curricula, and on the other, by taking into consideration the components of linguistic-and-methodological competence discussed above.

Thus, we shall outline the principal ways of the content compiling and enriching which is aimed at developing of linguistic-and-methodological competence within the topics of particular disciplines or additionally introduced special courses.

Let's start with detailing the content of the disciplines included into the cycle of the humanities. These disciplines comprise "Logic and methodology of scientific knowledge"/"Methodology and organization of scientific research". These disciplines will help to consider the features of pedagogical philosophy in the context of general concepts, and universal problems of educational philosophy by considering conflicting philosophical directions in the field of education;

summarize the practices in the area of educational philosophy; specify the characters of leading innovative teachers. Such a topic, introduced into the content of the professional training, will generate the image of model innovative teachers in the mind of the Master's student, which in turn will help to focus the students on the competences which they need for a successful professional career. The pedagogical activities of P. Pimsleur, I. Schechter, D. Riddell, J. Scrivener, S. Thornbury, J. Harmer can be considered as model examples.

Within the framework of providing knowledge on the subjects from the General Cycle, such as "Management in Education" or "Fundamentals of Social Communication and Optimization of International Scientific Research", the peculiarities of the foreign language teacher's work in higher educational establishments can be particularly emphasized. We propose to detail the program of the discipline according to the needs which foreign language teachers will face in the course of their future professional activity.

In the course of studying the above-mentioned discipline, it is important to familiarize the students with the features of management of the educational unit within the major department; with strategic directions of education development in Ukraine; with current legal standards in education; with the process of education quality management in the course of foreign language teaching. It is possible to achieve this goal via supplementing the discipline with an additional topic, such as: "Pedagogical management of a foreign language teacher", which includes the issues of theoretical background of pedagogical management in the context of future professional activity as a teacher of a foreign language (main functions of a foreign language teacher; managerial activity of a foreign language teacher; social and pedagogical aspects of pedagogical management; management of innovative processes); job descriptions of a foreign language teacher; the features of educational pedagogical systems of the leading countries in the aspect of foreign language teaching; criteria and indicators of foreign language teacher effectiveness in accordance with social needs.

The course of "Fundamentals of Social Communication and Optimization of International Scientific Research" is mainly focused on working with grant programs. We believe that the potential of this discipline includes a wider range of opportunities in the context of linguistic-and-methodological competence development. The main objective of this discipline is to develop in prospective foreign language teachers the ideas about every available opportunity for professional development outside the higher educational establishments, hence from the point of joining international grants this discipline already has considerable methodological experience, for example, the curriculum of the course relates to research programs in the USA, Europe, Canada, and Scandinavia. The potential of this discipline can be supplemented by the topics of internship and improvement of linguistic-and-methodological

competence online, for example, the topic of “Distance online lacunae for linguistic-and-methodological competence development” is highly recommended to study. The possible purpose of this topic may be to familiarize the Master’s students with the widely available online platforms and courses for foreign language teachers which are provided by the leading higher educational establishments (Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, etc.) in the context of linguistic-and-methodological competence development. In this way, the discipline will give the students an opportunity to study strategic lacunae which allow to find the necessary seminars, webinars, online discussions, lectures, marathons, blogs, YouTube channels and other resources to upgrade the level of linguistic-and-methodological competence in prospective foreign language teachers.

The content of the discipline “Psychology and pedagogy of high school” is essential in linguistic-and-methodological competence development. The potential of this discipline gives an opportunity to consider the issue of adult learning, both pedagogically and psychologically. That is why we propose to include the topic of “Psychological features of adult learning” into the module on Psychology. Within the framework of this topic it is important to consider the issues of psychological features of adult learning; the dynamics of adult intellectual functions and its impact on the learning process; to analyze the opinions of psychologists as to the competence-based approach in the course of adult learning and to explore the principles and motives for adult learning. In the module related to “High school pedagogy”, it is also important to study the topic of “Pedagogical features of adult learning”, which allows to research the conceptual aspect of adult learning, to consider the main goal and to analyze didactic principles of adult education.

The disciplines “Sociocultural technologies of teaching foreign languages”/“Methodology of teaching a foreign language” are also vital in linguistic-and-methodological competence development. We consider it appropriate to supplement these disciplines with the topic of “Development of communicative competence in non-linguistic students while teaching the course of “Foreign Language for Specific Purposes””. This topic is considered relevant because it is supported by a number of credible organizations and should also be included into the course of “advanced” foreign language teachers training. Within this discipline it is possible to study the issues of state regulation of language policy, to research the concepts of teaching foreign language for specific purposes to non-linguistic students, the peculiarities of methodology of teaching foreign languages to non-linguistic students, innovative forms, methods and technologies of the communicative competence development in non-linguistic students.

It is advisable to introduce to Master’s students the achievements of play-based learning activity implemented at the state institution “Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University” as a tool to develop students’ professional communicative competence within university course „English for specific

purposes” which have already been proven in the educational process [7]. This practice demonstrates the effect of the initiated changes on both competent and inexperienced foreign language teachers. As an outcome, students can join the given program in the course of their teaching internship and test the effectiveness and efficiency of play-based learning activity as a tool which develops students’ professional communicative competence in students of different specialties.

We propose to integrate the fundamental disciplines into one logical group, in which the subjects include everything related to linguistics, language studies and literary studies (“History of linguistic thought”, “Topical issues of philology”, “Genre-and-stylistic originality of modern novels”, “Current trends in the narratology development”). In order not to change the system of the Master's degree completely, these disciplines should ideally be supplemented by “Linguistic-and-methodological special course on teaching methodology of linguistic, language studies and literary studies disciplines”. If this option is not provided, then the subjects of the fundamental training cycle can be supplemented with additional topics and issues. These topics we recommend to study either with the help of language-methodological special course “Methodology of teaching philological disciplines”, or sharing them among all the disciplines of the fundamental cycle which are taught to prospective teachers of foreign languages in the course of their professional training.

Within the framework of this special course it is important to solve the following tasks: to provide prospective foreign language teachers with theoretical knowledge in the field of linguistic-and-methodological training in general and in the context of linguistic-and-methodological competence development in particular; to give them knowledge of the peculiarities of the organization of the educational process in the higher educational establishment (forms of educational activity, methodology and teaching methods of linguistic, language and literary studies disciplines; features of students’ educational activities in the course of their practical training; peculiarities of students’ independent work and its relation to research activity); to determine topical issues of linguistic-and-methodological training of prospective foreign language teachers, i.e.: implementation of recent pedagogical approaches to the study of linguistic, language and literary studies disciplines, introduction of new professional disciplines, and IT in the teaching of philological subjects.

The content component of the special course includes the topic of “Linguistic-and-methodological competence in the focus of prospective foreign language teachers training”. It considers the content and structure of linguistic-and-methodological competence, and its role in the course of philological disciplines teaching. Additionally, the linguistic-and-methodological competence of a foreign language teacher is considered in interdisciplinary field, and consequently we clarify its relation to pedagogy, psychology, pedagogical psychology, methodology,

philosophy, linguistics, language and literary studies.

The next topic is "History of the development of linguistic-and-methodological training in the higher educational establishments of Ukraine". It considers the stages of development of linguistic-and-methodological training of foreign language teachers from its origin to the present. Such experience will broaden understanding of a foreign language teacher profession; help to trace the dynamics of the profession development and realize the current social value of this profession in the context of linguistic-and-methodological competence development in a foreign language teacher.

The topic "Features of educational process organization in higher educational establishment" gives the prospective foreign language teachers knowledge of the peculiarities of educational process organization in higher educational establishment.

Another topic from the first module is "Forms of teaching linguistic, language and literary studies disciplines" considers the forms of classroom work, which are used in the process of a foreign language teacher training in higher educational establishment, i.e.: lectures, seminars and practical classes. In addition, prospective foreign language teachers study modern multimedia resources which help to optimize their work in various forms of classroom activities.

The topic "Methods of teaching linguistic, language and literary studies disciplines" also plays an important role in the course of prospective foreign language teachers training. Within the context of outlined issues, it is important to consider a new vision of traditional methods and characterize the appropriateness of using innovative methods in teaching these disciplines.

The first topic of the second module is "Means of teaching philological disciplines". The ability to correctly choose the means of teaching is an extremely important element of current linguistic-and-methodological training. It is also very important to consider the potential of online tools in the course of teaching these subjects.

The topic "Organization of students' activity in the course of practical training" gives the prospective foreign language teachers the knowledge of peculiarities of this form of professional training. In the process of studying this topic, it is important to determine the role and place of practical training in the course of professional competence development, to familiarize the students with different types of practical training, to characterize the content and purpose of practical training and the importance of foreign language in the course of their professional training.

While considering the topic "Organization of students' research work" it is important to emphasize its significance in the course of foreign language teaching, to characterize possible areas of research work, to set up interdisciplinary links in the context of learning foreign languages and professional activities, and hence integrate this topic into the next one - "Organization of students' independent work". In the course of this topic it is necessary to consider the general concepts of independent work of students, its role and significance in the educational process, to

determine the types of students' independent work.

The last topic of the second module is "Topical issues of linguistic-and-methodological training of prospective foreign language teachers". This topic considers and defines recent strategies of linguistic-and-methodological training of prospective foreign language teachers, the role of IT technologies and ways of increasing the effectiveness of pedagogical activity of a foreign language teacher in the process of their use.

The discipline "Methods of modern methodological research" can also be essential in the aspect of linguistic-and-methodological competence development. The purpose of the discipline is to master students' knowledge and skills in explaining, understanding and interpreting information about the nature of scientific activity, features and tendencies of methods development in general and in the focus of the methodology of teaching foreign languages in particular.

The program of the course provides consideration of the following topics: "Methodological foundations of scientific knowledge", "Cognition and research methods in the methodology of teaching foreign languages", "Theoretical methods of scientific-experimental research", "Empirical methods in experimental research", "The concept and essence of experiment in methodology of teaching foreign languages", "Organization and planning of experimental research", "The problem of knowledge, skills and abilities (competences) control in the course of foreign language teaching".

The course consists of two modules and is taught in the first year of prospective foreign language teachers training: the first part of the course concerns the development of skills to work with theoretical methods of research, and the second - with empirical ones, which provides the prospective foreign language teachers with the knowledge and skills of writing their Master's thesis.

Therefore, the purpose and objectives of particular disciplines, on the one hand, are to take into account their own content and specifics, and on the other, additional material, which is proposed to add in the context of linguistic-and-methodological competence development. In addition, the content of the material we propose to add should establish and intensify interdisciplinary contacts in order to holistically develop linguistic-and-methodological competence in prospective foreign language teachers in the course of their professional training.

In this context, it should be noted that the final result of such professional training, according to N. Kuzmina, is an indicator of the effectiveness of the pedagogical system itself, because it is "an indicator of creative readiness for future professional activity" [8].

According to Ukrainian researcher S. Shekhavtsova, the development of prospective teacher personality in the process of their professional training is the result of a long and complicated process, in which qualitative changes in the personality of prospective teachers take place under the influence of their tutors in the educational process [9].

Consequently, it is essential to check the effectiveness of the changes we have proposed and specified at content level of linguistic-and-methodological competence development. Thus, at the beginning of the experimental test after changing the content of professional training of prospective foreign language teachers in the focus of linguistic-and-methodological competence development, we should achieve such result of professional training as **linguistic-and-methodological competence development, which is diagnosed via certain activity and allows to perform the competence of prospective foreign language teachers in the process of quasi-professional activity.**

This hypothesis has called for an experimental study, which has been started with the definition of the level assessment criteria of linguistic-and-methodological competence in prospective foreign language teachers. Thus, the criteria for such assessment have become the above-mentioned structural components of linguistic-and-methodological competence (linguistic-subject, didactic-methodological and scientific-research). Each of these criteria has been tested for the level of development by the following diagnostic methods as: interview (oral questioning, dialogues) and questionnaire and testing (written questionnaire, tests, testing assignments, teaching training documentation, “linguistic-and-methodological portfolio”).

The experimental study has been conducted on the basis of the state institution of “Luhansk Taras Shevchenko National University” (Starobil’sk), Donbass State Pedagogical University (Slavyansk), and Uzhhorod National University (Uzhhorod). The experiment has involved students from such speciality as: “Secondary education” (English, French, German, Russian, Polish) at Master’s academic level. We have selected two groups for diagnostics: the first group (control) started professional training in 2017 and finished in 2019, and included 213 Master’s students. Control group studied according to traditional curriculum. The second group (experimental) started its professional training in 2018 and finished in 2020, and included 198 Master’s students. The curriculum of professional training of this group has been changed according to the above-mentioned options. Subsequently, the diagnostic testing was performed twice - in 2018 (CG) and in 2019 (EG).

Visually, the results of diagnostic testing before and after implementation our content innovations are given in Table 1. Therefore, we shall proceed to their qualitative analysis. It should be noted that their level before professional training has no differences; it has changed after the process of professional training has been influenced by linguistic-and-methodological competence development in prospective foreign language teachers at content level. As the number of Master’s students slightly differs in GC and EG, we have mainly focused on the percentages. For example, 28 Master’s students (13.2%) from CG have reached high level of linguistic-subject index, while in EG 38 Master’s students (19.2%) have achieved this result. 110 Master’s students (51.6%) have reached a

satisfactory level in CG, while in EG 117 Master’s students (59.1%) have reached this level. There is also a significant difference in the indices at low level of this component development. Thus, in CG 75 students (35.2%) have achieved this level, while there are significantly fewer Master’s students from EG at this level – only 43 of them (21.7%). Didactic-methodological component also shows interesting results. 69 Master’s students have remained at low level in CG (32.3%), while in EG this index is significantly lower: 42 Master’s students (21.2%). There is also a significant difference in these indices at high level. So, in CG we have 23 Master’s students (10.9%) at high level, while in EG we have 33 Master’s students (16.7%). We also have significant results with scientific-research criteria. 82 Master’s students (38.4%) in CG have low level of this criterion, and 50 (25.2%) Master’s students have the same level in EG. Only 16 Master’s students (7.5%) have reached high level of scientific-research criteria in CG, while 26 Master’s students (13.1%) have reached high level this criterion in EG.

Table 1. Level of linguistic-and-methodological competence development in prospective foreign language teachers

Criterion	Groups	Level of linguistic-and-methodological competence development in prospective foreign language teachers					
		Low		Sufficient		High	
		ab	%	ab	%	ab	%
Linguistic-subject	CG (213)	75	35.2	110	51.6	23	10.9
	EG (198)	43	21.7	117	59.1	38	19.2
Didactic-methodological	CG (213)	69	32.3	121	56.8	23	10.9
	EG (198)	42	21.2	126	63.6	30	15.2
Scientific-research	CG (213)	82	38.5	111	52.1	16	7.5
	EG (198)	50	25.2	122	61.6	26	13.1

By the end of the experiment, Master’s students from experimental group (EG) have achieved the following results: they mastered the basic means, methods and techniques for linguistic-and-methodological competence development in their subsequent professional activity; prospective foreign language teachers have developed linguistic-and-methodological competence at satisfactory and high levels, which is a precondition for successful future

professional activity; a great number of Master's students have developed their own style of professional behavior for successful professional activity; Master's students have learned to apply their knowledge, skills and abilities in various professional situations, which in turn has facilitated their analytical skills, the ability to make quick professional decisions, their own understanding of the features of future professional activity.

Conclusions and prospects for further research

Consequently, quantitative analysis of diagnostic testing demonstrates the effectiveness of introducing changes into the content of linguistic-and-methodological competence development in prospective foreign language teachers in the course of their professional training. Such data show a higher level of readiness of prospective foreign language teachers for their future professional activity, their willingness to adapt to difficulties while performing their professional duties. We conclude that Master's students from the experimental group have a higher level of linguistic-and-methodological competence development in each criterion. As a result, the analysis of the obtained data leads to the conclusion that Master's students from experimental group show better results than the students from control group, although initially the level of the given groups was approximately the same. The prospects for further research are centered on testing the effectiveness of the use of technologies, forms and methods of linguistic-

and-methodological competence development in prospective foreign language teachers in the course of their professional training.

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