FEATURES OF THE PROFESSIONAL FUTURE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS’ TRAINING FOR TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO PRESCHOOLERS IN UKRAINE

Abstract. This article explores the unique characteristics and challenges involved in training future early childhood educators for teaching foreign languages to preschool-aged children in Ukraine's educational landscape. It delves into the specific methodologies, pedagogical approaches, and curriculum considerations required to effectively impart language skills to young learners within the context of early childhood education. Drawing upon current research and educational practices, the article examines the interdisciplinary nature of language acquisition and early childhood development, highlighting the importance of integrating linguistic principles with age-appropriate teaching strategies. Furthermore, it discusses the role of cultural sensitivity and multilingualism in fostering a supportive learning environment for preschoolers, emphasizing the need for educators to possess not only linguistic proficiency but also a deep understanding of diverse cultural contexts. Additionally, the article addresses the practical aspects of future early childhood educators preparation, including pre-service training programs, professional development initiatives, and ongoing support systems aimed at enhancing pedagogical competencies and promoting reflective teaching practices. The article underscores the significance of continuous assessment and evaluation practices to monitor student progress and adapt teaching strategies accordingly, ensuring the effectiveness of language instruction in preschool settings. Furthermore, it explores the potential challenges faced by future early childhood educators in addressing the diverse needs and abilities of young language learners, including those with special educational requirements or linguistic backgrounds. By offering insights into the
multifaceted aspects of professional training for future early childhood educators, this article aims to inform educational policies and practices that promote inclusive, culturally responsive, and effective foreign language education for preschoolers in Ukraine.

**Keywords:** professional training, future early childhood educators, foreign languages, preschoolers, pedagogical techniques, language acquisition, early childhood education, cultural sensitivity, cultural diversity, curriculum integration.

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ПІДГОТОВКИ МАЙБУТНІХ ПЕДАГОГІВ ДО НАВЧАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНИМ МОВАМ ДІТЕЙ ДОШКІЛЬНОГО ВІКУ В УКРАЇНІ

Анотація. У статті проаналізовані характеристики та проблеми, пов’язані з підготовкою майбутніх педагогів дошкільної освіти для викладання іноземних мов дітям дошкільного віку в контексті освітньої системи України. У статті розглядаються конкретні методологічні підходи, педагогічні стратегії та аспекти навчальної програми, які необхідні для успішного формування мовних та мовленнєвих навичок у дітей дошкільного віку. Засновуючись на актуальних наукових дослідженнях та практичних знаннях, у статті охарактеризовано міждисциплінарний характер процесу засвоєння мови та розвитку дитячого мозку, акцентуючи увагу на важливості поєднання лінгвістичних принципів з педагогічними стратегіями, що відповідають віковим особливостям дітей дошкільного віку. Окрім того, розглядається роль культурного різноманіття та багатомовності в створенні сприятливого навчального середовища для дітей дошкільного віку, зокрема, важливість для педагогів володіти не лише мовними навичками, а й глибоким розумінням різноманітних культурних контекстів. Попереднє підготовче навчання, професійний розвиток та системи підтримки є ключовими аспектами якісної професійної підготовки майбутніх педагогів дошкільної освіти в Україні. У статті підкреслено значення систематичного оцінювання та використання результатів для адаптації навчальних стратегій з метою забезпечення ефективності мовного навчання в дошкільних установах. Також,
The training of future early childhood educators for teaching foreign languages to preschool-aged children in Ukraine represents a multifaceted and critical aspect of early childhood education. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the demand for early language proficiency grows, emphasizing the importance of adequately preparing future early childhood educators to meet the unique challenges of language instruction in the preschool setting.

This research will be beneficial for those scholars who are engaged in comparative pedagogy. Our dissertation study is based on comparing the systems of professional training for future early childhood educators in the United States and in Ukraine. This research explores the key features and considerations involved in the professional training of future early childhood educators tasked with imparting foreign language skills to young learners in Ukraine. It delves into pedagogical techniques, cultural sensitivity, curriculum integration, and the interdisciplinary nature of language acquisition and early childhood development, all of which are essential components in shaping effective language education strategies for preschoolers. By examining these features, we aim to provide insights into the nuanced approach required to equip future teachers with the competencies needed to foster linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding among preschool-aged children in Ukraine.

Recent researches. “Preparation of Future Educators Using Information and Communication Technologies for Teaching Foreign Languages to Children” by Vittenberh K. [3] delves into the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the training process of prospective early childhood educators, particularly focusing on their preparedness for instructing children in foreign languages. The study investigates the role of ICT tools, methods, and strategies in enhancing the proficiency and effectiveness of language instruction within early childhood education settings. Through an examination of pedagogical approaches, curriculum development, and practical applications, the research aims to provide...
insights into how ICT can be leveraged to optimize language learning outcomes for young learners.

The author did not provide a detailed analysis of the psychological aspects’ impact on the effectiveness of using information and communication technologies in teaching foreign languages to children. This is important to investigate because understanding psychological factors can influence the effectiveness of technology use in the educational process. Such analysis will help determine how best to implement information and communication technologies to achieve optimal results in teaching foreign languages to children.

Trofaila N. [9] in her research “Modern Professional Training of Future Educators in the Preschool Education System in Ukraine” examines contemporary approaches to preschool education in modern pedagogical science and reveals the professional functions and modern requirements for educators in preschool institutions. However, the peculiarities of professional training of future early childhood educators in Ukrainian universities were not investigated. A more thorough study of the content and training technologies for students is important for a better understanding of the current state of professional training of future early childhood educators for working with children in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of such training with further propositions for correction.

Some aspects of this problem also were studied by Boichyk N., Borova V., Chomsky N., Krasovska O., Shkabarina M., Havrysh I., Kotenko O., Pochynok E. and others.

Aim and tasks. The aim of this study is to investigate the key features of professional training programs for future early childhood educators tasked with teaching foreign languages to preschool-aged children in Ukraine. By examining these features, the study aims to provide insights into the effectiveness and adequacy of current training methods and identify areas for improvement in preparing early childhood educators for the unique challenges of language instruction in the preschool setting.

According to the aim we identified such tasks:
1. To conduct a comprehensive review of existing literature on professional training for teachers of foreign languages to preschoolers, both globally and within the context of Ukraine.
2. To identify the specific methodologies, pedagogical approaches, and curriculum considerations utilized in professional training programs for future early childhood educators in Ukraine.
3. To investigate the role of cultural sensitivity and multilingualism in professional training programs and their impact on language instruction for preschool-aged children in Ukraine.
4. To explore the challenges faced by early childhood educators in addressing the diverse needs and abilities of young language learners, including those with special educational requirements or linguistic backgrounds.

5. To analyze the strategies employed for continuous assessment and evaluation of student progress within professional training programs, and their implications for effective language instruction in preschool settings.

6. To contribute to the development of educational policies and practices that promote inclusive, culturally responsive, and effective foreign language education for preschool-aged children in Ukraine.

Methods and materials. A variety of sources of information were utilized, including scholarly articles, books, official documents from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, future early childhood educators’ training programs, regulatory acts, and teaching methodological materials. The primary data sources for analysis were the future early childhood educators’ training programs for foreign languages in Ukrainian universities, as well as recommendations and guidelines for educational courses and teaching methods for foreign languages in preschool educational institutions.

Such methods have been used:

– Literature Review. A systematic analysis of scholarly literature on professional training for early childhood educators of foreign languages for preschool educational institutions in Ukraine and abroad was conducted. This analysis identified key aspects and trends in the training of future language teachers.

– Analysis of official documents. The analysis of official documents from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine related to standards for training future early childhood educators, educational programs, and other regulatory acts defining the requirements for teacher training in preschool institutions was conducted.

– Comparative Analysis. The comparative analysis of the system of training future early childhood educators for preschool educational institutions in Ukraine and other countries, including the United States was conducted. This analysis identified differences and commonalities in approaches to professional early childhood educators training.

– Data Systematization and Analysis. The obtained data were systematized and analyzed to identify the main characteristics of the system of training future early childhood educators. This analysis allowed us to draw conclusions regarding the main features and potential directions for further research in this area.

These methods allowed us thoroughly to study and describe the main aspects of professional training for future early childhood educators for preschool educational institutions in Ukraine, ensuring the completeness and objectivity of our research.
Results and discussion. At the present stage of world development, knowledge of foreign languages has become particularly relevant for all segments of society. Especially important is the preparation of future early childhood educators for teaching foreign languages to children in preschool institutions in Ukraine.

Under the conditions of properly organized associative learning, preschool-age children, without knowing grammar rules, quickly learn the language to the level of fluent proficiency. This is explained by the nature of the initial cognitive activity of elementary school students. A child learns a foreign language better compared to adults, especially through motor exercises, artistic activities, games, and familiarization with the surrounding world [10, p. 27]. As a result, with a good foundation, they can continue their studies much easier in secondary school. Therefore, there is significant demand for high-quality early childhood education specialists. It is worth noting that the teaching of foreign languages to preschoolers is a priority direction of our state’s educational policy.


The preparation of future early childhood educators for teaching foreign languages to preschool children depends on the level of mastery of the knowledge system by students, their understanding of the essence and peculiarities of preschoolers’ development, as well as their proficiency in methods and forms of teaching foreign languages to children. In the educational curriculum for bachelor's degree programs in the field of preschool education (Specialty 012), students are required to study subjects such as “Foreign Language”, “Professional-oriented Foreign Language” and “Methods of Teaching Children a Foreign Language”. The teaching of these disciplines involves a combination of lectures, seminars, practical sessions, and laboratory classes using both traditional and innovative teaching methods [7].
According to Kotenko O., the professional competence of future early childhood educators in preschool institutions includes the following components: motivational, which is expressed in the purposeful development of the student's educational-professional activity, based on the priority of developing the personality of preschool children; personal (qualities, pedagogical and special abilities, etc.); content-related (mastery of learning content, skills, abilities); professional-activity, containing a system of educational-professional actions. These components entail, among other things, the acquisition by students of specific analytical skills that allow them to perceive and analyze pedagogical situations as multi-component, modern realities [5, p. 63]

The following prerequisites can be identified for the effective implementation of the professional functions of an early childhood educator:

1) Cognitive-research, aimed at studying the individual-personal characteristics of children, collecting and analyzing facts of their behavior, establishing the causes and consequences of their actions, as well as designing the development of the personality of each child and the group as a whole. It also includes the acquisition of advanced experience and new pedagogical technologies.

2) Educational prerequisite, which is manifested in the development and implementation of educational and teaching content, the selection of new forms and methods for shaping the child’s attitude towards nature, the surrounding world, other people, and oneself, as well as fostering interest and a culture of cognition.

3) Design-organizational prerequisite, aimed at organizing the pedagogical process in a preschool institution, using new forms for the effective development of children, modeling and guiding various types of their activities, as well as pedagogical management of their behavior and activity.

4) Diagnostic prerequisite, which involves determining the level of children’s development, the state of the pedagogical process, the tasks of educational work with children and parents, as well as the use of corrective methods.

5) Coordinating prerequisite, which ensures the unity of the work of the preschool educational institution and the family to create a full-fledged educational environment conducive to the formation of an independent, creative personality of the child, as well as the use of pedagogically appropriate forms of work with parents based on a differentiated approach to different types of families [8, p. 42].

During the training of future early childhood educators, significant attention is paid to their proficiency in a foreign language. They should have a level ranging from B2 to C1 according to the “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages”, as teaching children relies heavily on oral instruction, and it is crucial for early childhood educators to be able to converse fluently and without errors. Thus, the implementation of pedagogical conditions, both external and internal, is necessary to achieve the goal of educational activity. The implementation of
pedagogical conditions should ensure the fulfillment of tasks and the achievement of research goals based on methodological approaches and didactic principles.

The educational-professional training in higher educational institutions involves shaping the future early childhood educator as an individual characterized by humanity, spirituality, and creativity. They should acquire the necessary professional knowledge, skills, and abilities for work in preschool institutions. The content of education in higher education institutions should meet such requirements as prioritizing national and universal spiritual values, integrating specialized courses with the national culture, history, and traditions of the Ukrainian people, fostering students’ needs for abilities in cognitive creativity, establishing criteria for a scientific worldview that prioritizes human values. The social-humanitarian disciplines should have a scientific and secular character, independent of political parties, public, and religious organizations. The teaching system of disciplines should be democratic, allowing students the freedom to choose forms of study and educational courses. There should be a continuous system of higher pedagogical education: pre-university, university, and post-university [4, p. 50].

Among the array of contemporary teaching methodologies, it is imperative to underscore those whose efficacy has been substantiated through the practical application within higher education institutions, including personalized, integrative, collaborative, informational, distance, creative, modular-developmental techniques, PPP (presentation, practice, and production) and more. Let us do the concretization:

– Integrative technologies: educational systems that ensure the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, various types of activities at the level of integrated courses (including electronic ones).
– Professional-business game technologies: educational systems utilizing various games where skills are developed through solving tasks based on compromise choices.
– Training technologies: a system of activities for practicing specific algorithms of solving typical practical tasks using a computer.
– Information-computer technologies implemented in educational systems of computer-based learning through a ‘man-machine’ dialogue using various educational programs (training, monitoring, informational, etc.).
– Moreover, progressive teaching techniques are also utilized in instructing higher education students in foreign languages to foster their proficiency. These include the PPP (presentation, practice, and production) method, the communicative approach, and task-based learning [6, p. 121].

Recently, in higher education practice, the contextual approach has gained popularity, according to which the acquisition of declarative and procedural knowledge by students occurs during academic, quasi-professional, and educational-professional activities [1].
According to the detailed analysis and research we can summarize main features of the professional future early childhood educators’ training for teaching foreign languages to preschoolers in Ukraine.

These features include: emphasis on early language acquisition, recognizing the unique cognitive and developmental stages of preschool-aged children; adoption of a child-centered approach, prioritizing individual needs, interests, and developmental level; development of language proficiency among future early childhood educators, ensuring effective communication and engagement with preschoolers in the target language; integration of play-based learning activities to facilitate hands-on, interactive experiences for language development; utilization of multisensory techniques, including visual aids, auditory stimuli, and movement-based activities, to engage preschoolers' senses; consideration of cultural context in language instruction, promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity among early childhood educators; integration of technology as a tool to enhance language instruction, providing educators with skills to utilize digital resources and interactive platforms; emphasis on assessment and feedback mechanisms to monitor preschoolers’ language progress and provide constructive support; promotion of collaboration with families and communities to enrich the language learning experience both inside and outside the classroom; encouragement of lifelong learning and professional development to ensure early childhood educators are equipped to meet the evolving needs of preschoolers effectively.

Further research in the field of training future early childhood educators to teach foreign languages to preschoolers in Ukraine has been focused on several key areas: teaching methods effectiveness, cultural integration impact, technology in language learning, parental involvement, long-term language development impact, future early childhood educators’ training program Evaluation. Exploring these research areas holds practical significance for future early childhood educators’ training and language education practices in preschool settings in Ukraine. By investigating these topics, early childhood educators and policymakers can gain valuable insights to improve language instruction and support the linguistic development of preschoolers effectively.

Conclusion. Thus the features of professional future early childhood educators’ training for teaching foreign languages to preschoolers in Ukraine are multifaceted and crucial for fostering effective language education in early childhood settings. The training emphasizes the development of essential competencies such as cultural sensitivity, pedagogical creativity, and proficiency in teaching methodologies tailored to young learners. Furthermore, the emphasis on integrating Ukrainian cultural elements into language instruction underscores the importance of creating culturally relevant and engaging learning experiences for preschoolers. Additionally, the utilization of innovative teaching methods, such as
task-based learning, reflects a commitment to dynamic and interactive language acquisition approaches.

The practical application of these training features equips future early childhood educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to address the diverse needs and abilities of preschool-aged language learners effectively. By fostering inclusive and culturally responsive language education practices, the professional training of future early childhood educators plays a pivotal role in nurturing language proficiency and cultural understanding among preschoolers in Ukraine.

References:
