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SELF-EDUCATION OF AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER AS A PREREQUISITE FOR EFFECTIVE PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITY

Abstract

The article examines the self-education of an English language teacher as a prerequisite for effective pedagogical activity. The main aspects of the development and relevance of teacher self-education in the context of contemporary realities and the social challenges of wartime and post-war development are outlined. Emphasis is placed on the permanent need for pedagogical self-improvement that arises among teachers, particularly English language teachers, due to changes in legislation and expanding international opportunities. It is substantiated that teacher self-education constitutes an important dimension of self-improvement, the effectiveness of which is possible only under the condition of voluntary participation in choosing the methods and ways of self-educational activity. Special attention is paid to the psychological component of pedagogical self-education, which is extremely relevant in current conditions. It is established that self-educational activity is multidimensional in nature and encompasses linguistic, methodological, psychological and pedagogical, digital, cultural, research, and personal-reflective dimensions. In the context of further research, it is proposed to conduct an in-depth study of the mechanisms for forming motivation for self-education among English language teachers; to promote the development of effective models for integrating formal, non-formal, and informal education within the system of professional development; as well as to analyze the impact of digital technologies and artificial

intelligence platforms on the transformation of the pedagogical role of a foreign language teacher.

Keywords: pedagogy; philology; professional activity; informal education; self-education.

Introduction. The current stage of development of Ukrainian society is characterized by profound transformational processes caused by full-scale war, the European integration vector of state policy, the digitization of education, and the rapid development of the global information space. In these conditions, new requirements are being formed regarding the specifics of the professional activities of English teachers. The current situation encourages teachers to go beyond the educational space of Ukraine. The constant increase in opportunities available to the state promotes international and academic exchanges and the expansion of the cultural and professional environment, which is particularly relevant for English teachers. At the same time, in the context of war and post-war reconstruction, English is increasingly serving as a tool for international communication, access to global knowledge, participation in international educational programs, grant initiatives, and professional communities.

The sharp change in social demand for English teachers is accompanied by an increase in requirements for their professional competence. This includes a high level of English proficiency, familiarity with the latest teaching methods, integration of digital and multimedia tools, the ability to work in distance and blended learning environments, etc. On the other hand, the active introduction of artificial intelligence into the foreign language teaching process has a significant impact on the professional activities of modern teachers [3]. This significantly actualizes the function of the teacher as a facilitator, mentor, analyst, and moderator of the learning environment, which requires a high level of professional reflection and readiness for continuous self-development.

In the context of these changes, we believe that self-education for English teachers is becoming increasingly relevant, especially if it is understood as a holistic, continuous, and intrinsically motivated process of professional growth. In the Ukrainian context, self-education is closely intertwined with the expansion of opportunities for international academic mobility, free access to numerous online courses from leading world universities, and the opportunity to join professional communities and international educational projects, access to which is largely determined by language proficiency and readiness for independent learning. This is what makes it relevant to study the issue of self-education for English teachers as a guarantee of effective teaching in the context of social transformations, digital changes, and the growing role of English in shaping the future of Ukraine.

The aim of the article is to study the role of self-education of English teachers as a guarantee of effective pedagogical activity.

Main text. At the current stage of development of Ukrainian society, characterized by prolonged socio-economic and political crises, the role of higher education as a basic institution for the formation of human capital is gaining particular attention [14]. In this context, it is worth paying attention to the problem of the quality of higher pedagogical education, since it determines the level of professional competence of future teachers and their ability to function effectively in a constantly changing educational environment. The dynamics of transformations in the social, cultural, and educational spheres necessitate the renewal and modernization of the teacher training system, in particular by increasing attention to the development of the personal and professional qualities of teachers as educated, creative, morally responsible, and multicultural individuals.

In scientific research, self-education is seen as a dynamic process that's directly linked to social demands and requirements for the professional activities of teachers. For example, L. Sysoeva emphasizes that self-education activities

ensure a flexible response to changes in the social environment and constantly stimulate the growth of professional competence, bringing to the fore the need for self-education and self-development [8, p. 46]. A similar position is held by L. Luzan, who defines self-education as a necessary condition for the professional realization of a creative and responsible person, especially when it comes to professions with increased social and moral responsibility, which include teaching [5, p. 220].

Self-education is also commonly viewed as an integrative set of processes involving self-assessment, self-observation, self-determination, self-organization, self-realization, self-criticism, and self-development, the formation of which creates the basis for conscious and purposeful self-educational activities of teachers [1]. Other studies interpret self-education as the purposeful cognitive activity of a teacher aimed at acquiring universal human experience, methodological and specialized knowledge, professional skills and abilities necessary for improving the pedagogical process [6]. This approach emphasizes the idea of continuous professional development, without which it is impossible to maintain a high level of pedagogical professionalism.

In the works of Polish researcher Kwasniewski, teacher training is viewed as a fundamentally unfinished process, since the specificity of pedagogical activity determines its constant openness to change and additions. The researcher emphasizes that development encompasses the teacher's personality as a whole, rather than individual professional skills, and does not happen automatically, but requires purposeful efforts towards self-understanding and self-development in the context of professional growth [13]. At the same time, the importance of supporting teachers in the transition to the next stages of professional development and the formation of autonomy is emphasized, since it is their own activity and reflection that determine the effectiveness of this process. The thesis that a teacher becomes a teacher in the process of practicing their profession emphasizes the role

of personal experience and self-education efforts, which can only be supported, but not replaced, by educational institutions [13]. Thus, one of the important aspects of the professional formation, development, and improvement of an English teacher's skills is their academic freedom - the right to choose courses and organizations in which the teacher wishes to develop, rather than being forced to do so by their employers.

The professional development of a teacher, as interpreted by another researcher, is a continuous life process within which the teacher's attitudes, values, knowledge, skills, interests, and personal characteristics are formed [15]. Given the complexity and dynamism of pedagogical activity, the author justifies the expediency of identifying certain stages or levels of professional growth that can perform a motivational and stimulating function, contributing to the systematic improvement of teachers' qualifications. Summarizing various approaches, it is advisable to refer to the definition of professional development proposed by Dey, who considers it as a set of natural learning experiences and consciously planned actions aimed at improving the quality of teaching and transforming the moral goals of pedagogical activity. According to the researcher's beliefs, professional development encompasses the processes of evaluating, updating, and expanding professional activity, as well as acquiring and critically developing the knowledge, skills, and emotional intelligence necessary for reflective and responsible work with students and colleagues at all stages of a pedagogical career [11, p. 21].

In this context, self-education as a psychological, pedagogical, and social category is in a state of active scientific reflection, which is determined by objective socio-economic factors and the rapid development of science. Research shows that there's a strong positive link between how much a teacher does self-education and how fast their professional skills grow, which is especially important for teaching, a job that needs constant updating of professional skills [3, pp. 43–49]. According to the Law of Ukraine “On Education,” pedagogical and

scientific-pedagogical workers are obliged to systematically improve their professional level, pedagogical skills, and general culture, which normatively confirms the importance of self-education in the structure of the professional activity of an English teacher [4]. Self-education is a unique form of education that is acquired through independent work without undergoing a systematic course of study at a clearly defined institution on the one hand. On the other hand, it remains an integral part of the formal education system, as it contributes to the deepening, expansion, and stronger assimilation of knowledge [9, p. 329]. In this context, self-education of scientific and pedagogical workers is recognized as the leading form of improving pedagogical skills and professional competence, which is implemented through purposeful, systematic activities aimed at self-development and self-improvement of the individual, taking into account both their own interests and the needs of the educational institution [6].

The voluntary nature of self-education activities determines the special role of the teacher's motivational sphere, which encompasses a system of value orientations, needs, and goals that determine the directions of professional development and self-expression. Motivation performs a regulatory function, organizing the holistic behavior of the individual, increasing the level of activity, influencing the formation of goals and the choice of ways to achieve them, as well as significantly affecting the results of educational activities in general. In this regard, the self-education of an English teacher cannot be limited to updating existing knowledge, but must also include familiarization with the latest pedagogical and psychological research, the search for innovative approaches in the methodology and organization of the educational process, as well as a scientifically based analysis of pedagogical problems that arise in practical activities. The need for self-education is determined, on the one hand, by the social significance of the teaching profession and, on the other hand, by the requirements of continuing education related to the changing conditions of teaching, the

evolution of science and practice, and society's need for specialists who can respond quickly and adequately to social challenges.

The process of self-education of a teacher requires a certain level of pedagogical skills, in particular the ability to work with scientific and methodological literature, analyze and generalize pedagogical experience, select and test methodological ideas in one's own practice, systematize the results of activities, and implement the achievements of psychological and pedagogical science in the educational process. The topics of self-education are determined taking into account the methodological problems of the educational institution, individual professional difficulties, and the scientific interests of the teacher [10]. It can be implemented in individual, group, and collective forms, the choice of which is up to the teacher, although organizational and methodological support can be provided by methodological services, heads of methodological associations, or institutions engaged in professional development. The results of self-education can take various forms, from traditional presentations and methodological developments to the creation of innovative electronic courses and scientific and methodological publications, which testifies to its multidimensional nature and practical significance.

The structure of a teacher's self-education activities includes various areas, in particular professional, pedagogical, psychological, methodological, aesthetic, historical, political, related to health preservation, as well as the development of personal interests and hobbies. The choice of methods and means of self-education should be based on the teacher's level of training, interests, and capabilities, which ensures the individualization of this process [3, pp. 40–48]. Among the most common forms of self-education for teachers are research activities in a chosen field, systematic study of professional and methodological literature, analysis of colleagues' pedagogical experience, development and testing of new teaching methods, and preparation of educational, methodological, and scientific works.

Informal education also occupies an important place in the system of teacher self-education. It is considered to be organized and systematic educational activity that takes place outside the formal education system and at the same time is part of the concept of lifelong learning [2]. In this context, M. Fordham identifies four key elements of informal education, namely the diversity of places where it is implemented, the wide age and social audience of participants, the focus on achieving specific goals, and flexibility in the organization of the educational process [12]. Non-formal education performs an integrative function, combining continuous education with the adaptation of the individual to the unstable conditions of modern life. Its main characteristics are flexibility, which provides the opportunity for individual choice of pace and forms of learning; voluntary participation, which enhances internal motivation and engagement; content diversity, which opens up opportunities for comprehensive development; accessibility regardless of age and social status; informal structure, which promotes creativity and initiative; and a focus on lifelong learning as a condition for personal and professional growth [16, p. 131]. Taken together, these characteristics reinforce the importance of informal education as a vital resource for the self-education of English teachers and a factor in improving the effectiveness of their teaching.

Considering the content, focus, and methods of self-education for English teachers, we believe it is appropriate to distinguish several types, each of which will reflect a separate aspect of professional activity. The basic type is linguistic self-education, aimed at the continuous improvement of language competence, in particular maintaining a high level of English proficiency in accordance with international standards, developing academic and professional speech, and familiarizing oneself with current language trends. The next type of self-education is methodological self-education, which is related to updating and deepening knowledge of modern approaches and methods of teaching foreign languages,

introducing interactive, communicative, and competence-oriented technologies that directly affect the effectiveness of the educational process and the motivation of students. Another important type of professional growth is psychological and pedagogical self-education, which provides an understanding of the age and individual characteristics of students, improves pedagogical communication, and forms positive learning motivation, especially in the context of distance learning and increased emotional stress. Along with this, digital self-education is becoming increasingly important, focused on mastering information and communication technologies, online platforms, learning management systems, and the possibilities of using artificial intelligence in the educational process, which ensures the adaptation of teachers to the modern digital environment.

The international dimension of pedagogical development actualizes the cultural and intercultural type of self-education, which contributes to the expansion of knowledge about the sociocultural context of English-speaking countries and the formation of intercultural sensitivity, which is a necessary condition for the development of foreign language communicative competence. Scientific and research self-education guides teachers to comprehend contemporary scientific achievements in the field of linguistics, reflect on their personal pedagogical experience, and participate in professional scientific discourse. At the same time, personal-reflective self-education ensures the development of professional self-awareness, emotional stability, and readiness for change, serving as the basis for continuous learning and the prevention of professional burnout. Thus, the typology of self-education of English teachers proposed by us reflects its multi-component nature, and the systematic combination of these types is a key condition for effective pedagogical activity and professional competitiveness of modern teachers.

Conclusions. Summarizing the results of the analysis, it can be argued that self-education of English teachers in modern conditions is a system-forming factor

in the development of professional activity, ensuring the effectiveness of pedagogical practices and compliance with the requirements of a dynamic educational environment. It has been established that self-education activities are multidimensional and cover linguistic, methodological, psychological-pedagogical, digital, cultural, scientific-research, and personal-reflective dimensions, the integration of which forms a holistic model of professional development for English teachers. Such integration contributes not only to the renewal of professional knowledge and the improvement of pedagogical skills, but also to the development of professional self-awareness, the ability to reflect, and readiness for constant change caused by globalization processes, the digitization of education, and the expansion of international academic mobility. Prospects for further research in this area are related to an in-depth study of the mechanisms of motivating English teachers to engage in self-education, the development of effective models for combining formal, non-formal, and informal education in the professional development system, as well as the analysis of the impact of digital technologies and artificial intelligence platforms on the transformation of the pedagogical role of foreign language teachers. Empirical research on the effectiveness of different types of self-education in the context of Ukrainian educational realities, particularly in wartime and post-war reconstruction, also deserves special attention, as it will allow for the development of practical recommendations for improving the system of training and supporting English teachers in higher education institutions.

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