

Ganna Gaidai, teacher

Chernihiv National University of Technology, Chernihiv, Ukraine

ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE OF CIVIL SERVANTS OF UKRAINE

European integration of Ukraine brings up the issue of intercultural communication between the partner-countries, and therefore the corresponding foreign language competence of civil servants as state representatives. We are talking of English language competence in particular, as English has been for a long time and is still a “lingua franca” for a globalized world.

There is a number of issues to be discussed on the matter, among them – how to evaluate the level of English language competence of civil servants, what level could be considered as sufficient. These are the questions to discuss.

There are no scientific works on the topic, so the ground for the beginning of research is the national legislation. By 2016, there were some related to the subject matter regulations, in particular: Order "On approval of the General procedure of annual assessment of civil servants performance of the assigned duties and tasks" and Order "On approval of the General guidance of annual assessment of civil servants performance of the assigned duties and tasks". However, now they are invalid, and similar decisions haven't been taken. The only normative document indicating the need to assess English language competence among civil servants is Decree of the President of Ukraine №641/2015 "On announcement of 2016 the year of English in Ukraine", in particular it provides an evaluation of the level of civil servants English and organization of language courses for its study, implementation in the established procedure of qualification requirements for English language proficiency for relevant civil servants [1]. Unfortunately, nothing of the mentioned above has become open to public.

Therefore, the aim of this work is to define objects English competency evaluation of civil servants, to determine its basic principles and criteria for desired results.

Taking into account the understanding of English language competence [2], we suggest the following objects English language competence assessment:

- linguistic competence;
- level of listening and reading skills;
- level of skills in written and oral communication;
- the level of formation of pragmatic competence;
- the level of formation of socio-cultural competence.

Linguistic competence is checked by a test on knowledge of vocabulary and grammar units, the rules of spelling and word usage - these tasks has been widely used since the early years of foreign language study in educational institutions and is becoming more complex in content and form. Skills of written and oral communication are manifested in the ability to produce text (written and oral) on a given topic in compliance with semantic and structural requirements for the selected genre (which manifests formation of pragmatic competence), presentation of monologue, dialogue, writing an essay or letter. The socio-cultural competence includes knowledge of culture, history and present of native speakers, and is embodied in language idioms, phraseology, forms of politeness etc.

Taking into account generally-known requirements, exercises selected for English language competence evaluation of civil servants should be valid, reliable and credible. Only then we may speak about the reliability of the results and a certain level of knowledge. The procedure of evaluation should be conducted according to the plan systematically, objectively and openly to give a clear picture.

What level should show civil servants? Currently there is a widespread global scale of levels of foreign language competence. There is a basic, independent and experienced user with the following gradation into the levels A1 / A2, B1 / B2, C1 / C2. Each level has its own

requirements and criteria to be met by a person. For example, for a graduate of the University with B2 the following statements are true: Can understand the main ideas of a text both on concrete and abstract topics, including technical (specialized) discussions in the field. Can normally communicate with native speakers with such a degree of speed and spontaneity that does not cause any difficulties for a party. Can clearly, in detail speak on a wide range of topics, express opinion on certain issues, giving various arguments for and against. According to the next level, C1, the requirements are more complex: Can understand a wide range of very complex and voluminous texts and recognize implicit meaning. Can speak quickly and spontaneously without significant difficulties associated with finding means of expression. Can effectively and flexibly use the language in public life, education and for professional purposes. Can clearly, logically, in detail speak on complex subjects, showing the conscious possession of grammatical structures and connections [3].

However, given the scale does not include the socio-cultural competence component. Still, in our opinion, the task to assess the level of knowledge in this area is needed at least in the form of tests. Drawing attention to the importance of civil servants knowledge of culture of a foreign partner, key facts of the history of his country, the communication norms and traditions will help to avoid unpleasant situations and embarrassments associated with these aspects, and will facilitate international cooperation and its effective development.

In most programs and internships abroad (academic exchange programs as Fulbright, Erasmus + KA1, program of professional training in the United States and others) potential participants must have English of B2 level, which is a good base level sufficient to communicate in a foreign language environment and achieving personal and professional goals. Accordingly, government officials should meet at least defined for this level above criteria. Employees of civil service, which according to their professional duties, accept foreign delegations, take part in international meetings, round tables etc., must develop their skills to the level of C1 to communicate with other countries "on the level".

Taking into account all above mentioned, it becomes obvious that further development of international activity of Ukraine greatly depends upon the requirements we set to the civil servants on foreign language proficiency. These requirements must be well-grounded with a structured system of evaluation. When we know what and how to check, it is then clear what and how to give for preparation. Moreover, a defined minimum level of English competence for professional development will motivate civil servants to achievements in the sphere.

Literature

1. Decree of the President of Ukraine №641/2015 “On announcement of the year 2016 the Year of English in Ukraine”. – Access mode: <http://www.president.gov.ua/documents/6412015-19560>
2. Ganna Gaidai. English language competence of civil servants as a part of European integration strategy of Ukraine // UKRAINE – EU. MODERN TECHNOLOGY, BUSINESS AND LAW. – Kosice, 2015. – P. 25 – 27.
3. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment / The scientific editor of the Ukrainian edition, Dr. of Redagogics, Prof. S.Yu.Nikolaieva. - K.: Lenvit, 2003. – 273p. – Access mode: kievskiy-ruo.edu.kh.ua/Files/downloads/zagalnoyevrop_rekom.doc