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The Concept of Higher Philological and Pedagogical Education in the Tatarstan Republic

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Abstract

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The Concept of higher education in the field of Russian Philology in the Tatarstan Republic is the scientific-methodical document that defines the fundamental aspects of teaching Russian language and literature in teacher training at the University. The authors of the concept are the professors of Kazan Federal University. The Concept contains a description of the history of higher philological education in the region, indicates the main problems of its development at present, and proposes a strategy for its development in modern conditions. The need for such a document is determined by the fact that the situation in higher philological education, despite obvious problems in its implementation, not attracted such wide public attention, as the teaching of Russian language and literature at secondary school. Along with the reform of the higher education system in the field of Russian Philology across the Russian Federation, it is necessary to implement this process in Tatarstan region. It should be based on a number of concepts and principles, named in the article. These objectives of higher education in the field of Russian Philology in the Tatarstan Republic are: 1. To format scientists in the field of Philology. 2. To prepare teachers for secondary and high school. 3. To prepare persons high level of education for state activities. 4. To prepare persons high level of education for the formation the cultural level of society. Only a clear awareness of the goals, not abstract "philological education" can lead to success.

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Keywords: The history of philological education in the Republic of Tatarstan; Kazan University; Federal state educational standard of the third generation; a two-level education, undergraduate; graduate.



1. Introduction and problem statement

The need in such special document as «The Concept of higher philological and pedagogical education in the Tatarstan Republic» is determined by the fact that the situation in higher philological education, despite obvious problems, does not attract such wide public attention, as the teaching of Russian language and literature at secondary school. The goals and objectives, lists of required reading at secondary school for over two years are the subject of active discussion between professionals and in special commissions of the State Duma. However, to solve those questions without addressing the problems of higher education in the field of Philology is impossible. Only several works are devoted to that problem (Bushkanets, L. & Machinina, N. & Nasrutdinova, L. & Sidorova, M., 2015; Yellina, E. & Kovtun, E. & Rodionova, E., 2015; Kim, I., 2015; Kovtun, E., 2007; Kovtun, E., 2015; Melnichuk, O., 2013)

Along with the reform of the higher education system in the field of Russian Philology in Russian Federation, it is necessary to implement this process in the Tatarstan Republic. It should be based on a number of principles.

In spite of the declared (at the state level) necessity in humanization of society, the attitude to the philological education as a whole raises serious concerns. It is significant that none of the faculty of Humanities is among the priority directions of development of Kazan (Volga) Federal University. The number of budget places for the direction of training «Philology» is reduced: in 2015 / 2016 academic year, the opportunity to receive free education had 20 students. 20 years ago we had 75 students. The reduction led to the abolition of the direction of training «National Philology», that is the rejection of the classical philological education, which has in Tatarstan three hundred years history.

Educational model of the direction of training «Pedagogical education» also has a number of problems. First, the current Federal educational standard divides educational discipline «Russian language» and «Literature». Therefore, the curriculum cannot include simultaneously the discipline of two profiles. This is contrary to the requests of schools which need teachers who can teach concurrently Russian language and literature. Secondly, the bachelor graduates are not eligible to teach in high school that breaks existing Russian educational tradition, when the teacher accompanies pupils from 5 to 11 levels (classes). That problem could be resolved through the active development of the master course. However, we have so few free places and can't open a sufficient number of master's programs that meet the needs of society.

It allows speaking about the urgent need to reform the system of higher philological education in Tatarstan Republic. The creation of the Concept is the first stage which must determine the main directions of our activities.

2. Research methods

We used several methods to analyze the problems and to determine some urgent solutions.

The method of system approach allows avoiding one-sidedness and schematic manner in the interpretation of reported problems.

The method of statistical analysis makes it possible to identify problems of the existing model of education from the point of view of its participants.

The analytical method allows discussing existing curricula and identifying how they align with public needs.

Comparative-historical method allows us to trace the genesis of the educational model of philological education in Tatarstan Republic.

A method of updating allows us to build scientific-based forecasts revealing on the leading trends.

3. Findings and results

The creation of the Concept was based on the significant preparatory stage, designed to study the history and the current state of higher philological education in the Tatarstan Republic. Developers organized the monitoring of opinions of the participants of the process of higher philological education: undergraduate, senior students, school teachers, University professors. We created a questionnaire oriented to each group of respondents. The questions were designed to stimulate analytics in the answers. 150 respondents were interviewed. The following results were obtained.

Only two undergraduate students from nearly 50 respondents refer to the opinion of their parents as the fundamental factor in their choice of the faculty. According to sociological research, the choice of the school leaver depends on the views of his parents about the prestige of their future profession. Therefore, the authority of a literary education in the public consciousness is low.

Only 4 % of respondents associate their professional future with the academic study of philological disciplines. Almost 70 % say that they decided to enter the Department of Russian and foreign Philology due to their interest in reading. We can conclude that their understanding of the essence of Philology has nothing to do with reality.

It is not surprising that the question about the discipline they wish to study caused difficulties to the respondents. A clear answer to this question could be given only by those who associate their future with the teaching profession (23 % of undergraduate students) and some senior students.

More than 80 % of senior students declare the failure of their education to their successful future professional activity. Only 15% say they are satisfied with the existing model of education.

The main complaints of the respondents were directed to the curriculum adopted nowadays. For example, they speak about a misbalance of classroom time on social-economic disciplines and professional disciplines. Less than 20% of respondents believe that the training they have got provides a holistic view of Philology as a science.

The disadvantages of a literary education are especially estimated by school teachers. More than 80 % of them indicate the lack of courses on methods of teaching, that's why they had to acquire their skills already in teaching activities.

4. The history of teaching Philology at Kazan University

The traditions in highest philological education in Tatarstan have, in contrast to the other regions of Russia, two centuries of history. The Department of Philology was established in Kazan University in 1804.

During the first decades of his existence, the University has defined two objectives of the higher philological education.

The first is the training of officials in the public service: graduates from the University officials were not required to pass the special exam to have their regular appointment and had advantages in obtaining new ranks. The literature Professor was to teach Slavic language, the «beauty of the Russian language» on the bases of «model» writers. The teaching had a syncretic character and the study of language and literature was practically indivisible. It is significant that the subject «Russian literature» was obligatory for first year students of all faculties.

The second is the teacher for schools. The University was to coordinate the work of all educational institutions of the «Kazan region»: to provide methodological assistance, to prepare textbooks, to engage teachers in the professional development, to check written works, and etc.

The University as the structure needs a synthesis of education and science, and therefore another third task assigned to the Department during the second half of the XIX-th century was philological studies. Kazan scientists constantly had close relations with scientific centers of Russia and Europe, published their articles in Russian and foreign academic journals, actively participated in the work of the scientific societies of Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Kharkov and other cities. Many of Kazan literary scholars and linguistics were elected as a full member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The increase of the scientific level in the field of Philology led to an increasing interest among students to the philological education in Kazan University. This defined another goal of higher education in the field of Philology – scientific training.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the fourth goal was defined: the philological knowledge which determined the cultural level of society, and its value system. The efforts of professors and teachers of Russian language and literature at the Kazan University made it the center of intellectual city life. Scientists read public lectures, participated actively in Kazan periodical press. Scientific literary societies were created. Their activities were of great importance to the development of literature, criticism, local history in the Volga region.

The four strategic objectives of philological education are relevant in our time and Concept of higher philological and pedagogical education must be based on them.

5. Discussions

By the end of the twentieth century, we had a good system of higher philological education. We had specialists that graduated from such areas of training as «Philology» and «Pedagogical education». Educational process was provided on the scientific and methodological basis of the Kazan State University. Tatar State Pedagogical Institute and Yelabuga Pedagogical Institute and others provided

the needs of the region in teachers. According to the specificity of the region, additional competences were released – teachers of Russian language and literature and Tatar language.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century the existing system was destroyed. There were of course some positive reforms. But this is not enough.

It seemed that the transition to two-level (bachelor and master) education system will provide opportunities for universities, to receive the status of Federal, to develop their own educational standards and educational programs and curricula, taking into account the specifics of the region, the level of students, and economics of the University, etc.

But the introduction of Federal educational standards limited these opportunities. Recently opened additional specializations which provided a variety of curricula were cancelled, curricula of different professional fields were standardized, and that is absurd. As a result, the undergraduate students in the sphere of «Philology» get averaged higher education, where philological component among the total number of educational subjects barely exceeds 50 %. Students of «Pedagogical education» in addition to social and economic disciplines are intensively studying the pedagogical and psychological discipline. But basic discipline, as «Russian language» and «The History of Russian literature», are introduced in the curriculum of 1-2 courses. This approach is fundamentally contrary to the thought that a good teacher should be, first of all, a good specialist in his professional field. Now a specialist, possessing the basic competences of the teacher, does not have sufficient deep knowledge in the field of Philology. The trend «away from academic education» will inevitably lead to the destruction of Philology as a sphere of scientific knowledge, and hence as scientific and methodical base for the training of philologists and teachers.

Reduction of training period from 5 years to 4 also called the necessity of revising the curriculum and reducing the number of hours to study the basic disciplines. For example, the folklore and Old Russian literature are taught simultaneously, whereas for an adequate understanding of the history of literature you must have a basic understanding of the national epic. We also have a reduction in hours on History of Foreign literature. There is no doubt that to study national language and literature identity we need a wide context.

Now education becomes superficial: students have General idea about the existence of a number of literary and linguistic disciplines, but are not prepared for the decision of specific professional tasks. Particularly acute to this problem is for graduates of the direction of training «Pedagogical education», their specificity of professional activity does not involve a period of gradual mastery of skills during practical activity, doesn't leave the young specialist the «right for mistake».

6. Conclusions

First, it is necessary to take into account the specificity of humanitarian education. Unification of requirements for humanitarian and technical, natural science, mathematical profile is not possible due to the specificity of each one and will lead to a deterioration of educational outcomes.

Secondly, the Federal state educational standards of new generation must balance the need to maintain social and ethical and cultural uniqueness of each region. In particular, the Tatarstan Republic

as a multi-ethnic region has developed a tradition of higher education in the field of Russian Philology with over two centuries of activities of Kazan University, with its own scientific and methodological schools. These traditions should be preserved. However, Tatarstan as a multi-ethnic region has developed long-standing approaches and principles of education in the field of Russian Philology for those whom Russian is not their native language.

Thirdly, the region like Tatarstan, highly developed in scientific, cultural, social and political spheres, need specialists that can support the achieved level and realize its further increase. Ensuring this is possible through the strengthening of humanization of education. We must note that public perceptions of what is moral and immoral, about the values of the Constitution, the importance of the human person, etc. do not occur by themselves, they are formed by humanitarians and philologists on the basis of Russian and world literature. Without the continuing work of the scholars in society, that society degrades and destroys itself.

Fourthly, the disadvantage of most Concepts in the field of secondary and higher humanitarian education is their general character. They do not consider that it is impossible to give each student all possible competencies. Wide scholarship must be combined simultaneously with specialization, which is driven by the needs of society. The specificity of this concept is that it allows you to use the possibilities which are given by Federal state standards, but to subject them to the aims of education in the region. The purpose of higher philological education, historically formed in the region, should determine the curriculum, a list of competences that are formed for this particular student. These objectives are: 1. To prepare scientists in the field of Philology. 2. To prepare teachers for secondary and high school. 3. To prepare persons with high level education for State activities. 4. To prepare persons with high level education to form the cultural level of society. Only a clear awareness of the goals, not abstract «philological education», will lead us to success.

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