COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH IN THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF SPEECH THERAPISTS IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF UKRAINE

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Abstract

At the modern stage of development of society, the number of persons with speech disorders is constantly increasing. At the same time, in Ukraine children and adults with speech pathologies have the right to a necessary medical, psychological, and pedagogical support in the educational, healthcare, and social institutions. So it is getting necessary to train specialists using a comprehensive approach which includes pedagogical, psychological, clinical, psycholinguistic, neuropsychological aspects, and speech therapy. The experience shows that if we make a correct division of theoretical and empirical study hours directed at the vocational training of speech therapists, it is possible to train a qualified expert able to correct speech disorders of every nosology and organize education and correction in the pedagogical and medical educational institutions. Further, more narrow specialization of such experts can be provided with their participation in the seminars, masterclasses, etc. according to their job posts. We consider such an approach as one that can give more assistance in their future job seeking after graduating from HEI.

Our investigation was aimed at learning and characterizing of the system of speech therapists’ training, its advantages, and disadvantages.

HEI must train a speech therapist that would understand theoretical and empirical questions of special pedagogy and psychology, have a necessary basis of medical knowledge, master methods of organization of individual and group lessons with children of different age groups, and adults with speech disorders. It should also be a creative, responsible person, interested in self-realization and capable of adaptation to the modern educational environment that is constantly improving.

Taking this into account, we proceeded from two-stage training of speech therapists that would obtain qualification levels of bachelor and master. A theoretical and empirical analysis of scientific literature showed us specifics of training of speech therapists in different countries. We analyzed the curriculum for the training of speech therapists in Ukraine and defined main directions of their education and disciplines providing them. We also made a sociological investigation to find out positive and negative feedbacks about this way of training specialists.

Basing on the analysis of gathered data, we defined that such broad specialization allows future pedagogues to find a job in different institutions: kindergartens, comprehensive and special schools, rehabilitation centers for different patients, medical and social institutions, Inclusive Resource Centers, etc. We also determined that the curriculum contains a normative and selective part, according to the aspects of speech therapists’ arrangement. It presents variously directed disciplines, which are offered for the study of future speech therapists in the corresponding amount of credits. It contains the normative disciplines necessary for the training of the speech therapist in accordance with the state standards of this specialty and, accordingly, the number of credits for their study and the number of academic hours for lectures, practical, seminar, and laboratory classes, and hours allocated for independent study. We also described the major professional competencies that future speech therapists should master while learning these disciplines. The article contains the characteristics of disciplines of the selective part including those selected by the educational institution, and those selected by the student independently.

Analysis of sociological investigation of graduates who studied in the comprehensive approach allowed to determine the advantages and disadvantages of such education. It also helped us to define major directions of improving the effectiveness of the educational process, and point out ways of improvement of the system of training of such experts.

Keywords: professional competencies, speech therapist, vocational training, master, bachelor.
1 INTRODUCTION

The problem of training speech therapists in different countries has its own peculiarities due to the requirements put forward by the state as a customer of services and by a constantly developing society. Also, the system of education and medicine, on the one hand, and consumers of educational services, on the other hand, have a significant impact on the development of the profession of speech therapist of a particular country. According to this, the requirements for professional qualifications of speech therapists from different countries are also formed in a differentiated way. In particular, the European experience and experience of other foreign countries shows that there is the training of speech therapists in pedagogical and medical universities, which determines the specific focus of the speech therapist in the professional realization.

It should be noted that European scientific thought is not well-informed in the research, scientific developments and practical work of speech therapists in Ukraine. For a long time, the training of speech therapists in Ukraine was associated with the education system in the Russian Federation. However, despite the significant joint development of special education during the Soviet Union, Ukraine has its own traditions and views on the organization of logopedic work and, accordingly, on the training of specialists in this direction.

In Ukraine, in the classifier of professions, speech therapists are considered as teachers, who can hold positions in different educational, medical and social institutions.

At the present stage, children and adults with speech disorders in Ukraine have the right to receive special logopedic services in health care institutions (children's polyclinics and hospitals). In the education system, speech therapy can be provided in pre-school institutions: in special groups for children with disorders of speech development, mental development, locomotor system, vision; in rehabilitation centers. Speech therapists' practices are also open at comprehensive or special schools (by the types of violations) and necessarily in inclusive-resource centers. In addition, the positions of speech therapists are opened in institutions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Policy, for example, special boarding schools for children with moderate and severe mental disorders, psychoneurological dispensaries. Such a variety of speech correction services implies the need for training a specialist-speech therapist using a comprehensive approach.

In a comprehensive approach, the speech therapist is seen as a specialist who should help parents to provide children with an understanding of language, and speech and communication skills. He should be ready to come to the aid of doctors because it is known that drugs only form the preconditions (open the cells of the brain, stimulate their activity, improve metabolic processes, etc.) to improve physiological processes. The training given by the speech therapist, combined with the medication effect, also acquires a therapeutic value, since it strengthens and enhances the effect caused by the use of special medications. In the education system, the speech therapist is helping the teacher. Adjusting the reasons that cause speech impairment, he forms the readiness for successful learning of educational information, develops oral and written speech, provides effective education in an educational institution.

Under such conditions, the professional training of the speech therapist should be comprehensive, versatile. In addition to special logopedic knowledge and skills, comprehensive training should include basic medical, psychological, neuropsychological, linguistic, psycholinguistic, pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of separate techniques for the formation of educational material of basic school subjects (reading, language, mathematics, etc.), as well as social and legal knowledge.

Therefore, the purpose of our study was to study and characterize the system of training of speech therapists using a comprehensive approach, identifying the advantages and disadvantages of such specialized training.

2 ANALYSIS OF SCIENTIFIC AND THEORETICAL SOURCES

A comprehensive approach to vocational training system was developed taking into account and on the basis of the competencies necessary for the preparation of a speech therapist ready to accept the challenges posed by the state and society.

Y. Pinchuk [1] considers the professional competence of speech therapist and a teacher as an integrative quality of a specialist who is willing to perform diagnostics, corrective and preventive training and personal development of people with speech disorders as effectively as possible.
L. Stakhova [2] believes that the professional competence of a teacher and a speech therapist is determined with the presence of his professional and personal pedagogical qualities. This specialist should harmoniously combine knowledge in the field of speech therapy and related disciplines, methods of realization of professional activity, skills of pedagogical communication, development and self-development of personality.

O. Martynchuk [3] defined professional competence as a dynamic combination of knowledge, habits and practical skills necessary for the effective work of the speech therapist. After receiving the bachelor's degree, it is an assistant teacher and a speech therapist, ready to provide correctional education for children and adults with speech disorders under the guidance of more experienced specialists. After receiving the master's degree, it is a specialist of higher qualification, who is not only ready to provide a correctional process but also to organize, coordinate and implement comprehensive programs aimed at overcoming the violations of speech in children and adults.

N. Pakhomova [4] points to the need to focus, when training speech therapists, on the formation of the personality-reflexive values as a combination of two components: correction-reflexive and reflexive-value. This quality is characterized by three groups of indicators: readiness for professional self-examination of knowledge, the desire for personal and professional self-development and the development of the attitude towards the child's personality as a great value.

Investigations of Ukrainian scientists allow us to state that the professional competencies necessary for the profession of the speech therapist are grouped accordingly in pedagogical, psychological, speech therapy, and medical units. The use of a comprehensive approach in the process of formation of professional knowledge and skills allows training a speech therapist of a broad profile, who can work in various institutions of social, pedagogical and medical types.

3 CONTENTS OF THE TRAINING OF FUTURE SPEECH THERAPISTS IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WITH THE APPLICATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

In Ukraine, a bachelor's and a master's preparation in the direction of "Special Education. The Speech Therapy" follows the curriculum approved by the higher educational institution. It includes mandatory and selective components, which, in their turn, have normative and selective parts. The normative part is formed in accordance with the standards of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and necessarily includes disciplines of the general (Ukrainian language, history, and culture of Ukraine, foreign language, socio-political studies, philosophy, foundations of scientific research, psychology, physical culture) and professional training.

Disciplines of professional training of the normative part are conventionally divided into four blocks: medical, psychological, pedagogical, and logopedic. Here, we characterize the tasks of these blocks for students who acquire a bachelor's educational program.

The task of the medical unit is to form the future speech therapists' knowledge about speech and sensory systems and their violations, structure, characteristics, the structure of the central and peripheral speech and hearing apparatus, and the causes of deviations in their activities, which lead to speech impairment. In addition, specialists must know the basics of neurology and psychopathology, the basis of genetics to understand the causes of different pathological conditions and determine the best methods for correcting and developing speech in such persons.

Students' studying the disciplines of the pedagogical block gives them an opportunity to get acquainted with the programs and methods of teaching children of preschool and school age with normal and violated development. This is necessary for more effective diagnostics and the choice of the optimal and necessary course of training and techniques of correctional speech therapies in one or another period. In the process of study, students write coursework on techniques, and have the practical lessons in preschool and school settings, taking into account pedagogical and logopedic components.

Accordingly, the psychological unit, which includes general, developmental and pedagogical logopsychology, psycholinguistics, neuropsychology, social logopsychology, developmental psychology with disturbed ontogenesis, practical psychology in special and inclusive education, orthopsychology, organization and content of psychological assistance, psychology of education, enables students to master diagnostic and psycho-correctional tools for working with children and adults with developmental disorders. The same block includes disciplines aimed at forming the professional qualities of the speech therapist, and also provides practice in educational institutions and writing coursework.
The main unit - logopedic - includes a significant amount of hours for speech therapy. The curriculum for the study of this discipline is 900 hours or 30 credits. It is studied for 6 semesters at a bachelor's and 2 semesters in a master's education. Except for the speech therapy, the logopedic unit includes disciplines of logorhythmics, games in logopedic work, logopedic massage, therapy of the systemic speech disorders, speech diagnostics and others. The speech therapy unit also includes the practice and writing of course work on speech therapy.

Describing the educational and professional program of the masters of speech therapy, we should note that here most of the disciplines of the normative, and the selective part relate to the speech therapy unit. The following disciplines allow for more information on methods of speech therapy with different categories of children and adults who have both primary and secondary speech impairment: the methodology of speech therapy with children with combined disorders; speech therapy practice: listening; alternative methods of formation of written speech; logopedic correction of specific disorders of school skills; the theory of speech activity in speech therapy; logopedic correction with autism spectrum disorders; method of correction of articulation motility; method of professional activity of speech therapist; logopedic gymnastics; workshop on the formation of professional qualities of speech therapist. When obtaining a master's degree students write a scientific work on speech therapy and the university organizes its open defense. Also, students undergo logopedic practice in medical and social institutions.

Provided that professional training is carried this way, the scope of employment is quite extensive. The positions of the speech therapist are open in special (for children with severe speech disorders) and inclusive groups of preschool institutions, in comprehensive pre-school institutions, in comprehensive schools at the rate of one speech therapist for 20 elementary forms, in special schools for children with severe speech disorders, in special schools for children with other disorders (except for schools for hearing impaired children), in educational-rehabilitation institutions, in speech therapy offices, out-of-school educational institutions, educational complexes, social-rehabilitation and medical institutions. According to the legislation of Ukraine, graduates of the specialty "Special Education. Speech therapy" are recruited as assistant teachers of secondary schools with inclusive education; special institutions teachers; assistant teachers and speech therapists (bachelor); teachers and speech therapists; speech therapist (master). Further refinement of their professional skills will be carried out according to the narrow specialization, the position occupied and the individual needs of the speech therapist.

4 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF OBTAINING HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE SPECIALTY "SPECIAL EDUCATION. SPEECH THERAPY" WHEN APPLYING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

To determine the effectiveness of the training of speech therapists with the application of a comprehensive approach, we have organized research through an online survey. For this purpose, a questionnaire was developed, which included 27 questions aimed at studying the disadvantages and benefits of vocational education through the application of a comprehensive approach. The study was attended by 165 speech therapists.

According to gender, 93.9% of the survey participants are women, 6.1% are men. This is logical because the profession of a speech therapist is more interesting for female representatives. Men usually fall in this work by accident, rather than logically. According to the age, the participants of the survey marked themselves in one of four categories: 21-25 years - 42.4%, 25-35 years - 39.4%, 35-45 years - 9.1%, 45+ years old - 9, 1%. As you can see, more than 80% of respondents are young people under the age of 35 who work on the positions of speech therapists in different institutions. Such indicators are due to objective (the desire to get acquainted with the new, express their opinion and their vision of the problem) and subjective (older people do not master information technologies on the necessary level, often underestimate the importance of the computer in the work of the speech therapist, demonstrate a lack of confidence related to everything new and unusual) reasons.

To the question "What is your attitude towards the education you received?" 75.8% of respondents answered that it was positive, 24.2% - neutral. There was no negative feedback on the received education. On the question "how many years passed after graduation?" 45.5% indicated that it was the first year, 24.2% - up to 5 years, 15.2% - from 5 to 10 years, 12.1% - from 10 to 15 years, 7.7% - more than 15 years.

To the question "What did you rely on when choosing a profession?" 57.6% answered - on their vocation; 33.3% - on the recommendation of parents, 5.6% - on the advice of friends and only 3.5% - on media.
information. Such answers show that the choice of most respondents was due to internal positive motivation and the advice of parents, indicating a certain continuity of generations in this profession. And only a small percentage of respondents chose their profession through media information. This is evidence of an inadequate familiarity of the society with this profession and its importance for the social environment.

To the question "Has your attitude to the chosen profession changed after the beginning of professional activity?" 66.7% indicated that they had changed it to the positive side, and 33.3% - that it did not change. There were no answers about the attitude changed for the worst. To the question "Would you choose this profession again?" 72.7% answered positively, 12.1% would change the profession and 15.2% abstained from the answer.

The study contained the question "If you were offered training in a narrow specialization - speech therapist, or in the broad specialization - speech therapist and preschool educator, speech therapist and special psychologist - which one would you choose?" 69.7% of the respondents chose a broad specialization, 27.3% were for narrow, and 3% answered that it did not matter.

To the question "Why do you choose a broad specialization?" 84% of respondents answered that it allows seeing the complex reason for the violation and expands the possibilities of correctional work. 32% of respondents indicated that broad specialization expands employment opportunities, which is especially needed in villages or small towns. 20% indicated that the broad specialization makes the specialist more versatile since it allows the use of knowledge in related areas of training a speech therapist.

To the question "Why do you choose a narrow specialization?" 33.3% of respondents said that in their professional activity they use only a limited range of knowledge from the speech therapy and it's enough for them. The answer "It's easier to study" was not selected by any respondent. Other choices had the same percentage (8.3%): "For better understanding and providing the necessary speech therapy"; "It is better to master one profession, but perfectly"; "A narrow specialization provides an in-depth knowledge"; "You can get more information from speech therapy"; "Gives the opportunity to learn deeper and more qualitatively"; "I like to be a speech therapist and nobody else."

When asked where they would like to work after leaving the institution, 64.7% would like to open their own practice, 32.4%, and 29.4% would work accordingly in public and private institutions. 11.8% of respondents expressed their desire to engage in research activities. Such responses show that the profession of speech therapist provides an opportunity for wide employment and choice of employers, which is also very relevant at the present stage of community formation.

Are you satisfied with your university studies? 52.9% answered this question affirmatively, 35.3% said they were rather satisfied than dissatisfied, 11.8% of respondents indicated dissatisfaction with their studies. The last two groups of respondents identified, among the reasons of their dissatisfaction, the low level of teaching of certain subjects (81.3%), the quality of provision with the educational literature (31.3%), the level of lecturers' professional qualities (25%) and the nature of relations with professors (25%). 18.8% of respondents noted that dissatisfaction with university studies in this specialty was due to the lack of guarantees to obtain after graduation the job post that would ensure a fairly high standard of living. 12.5% of the respondents pointed to the lack of lecturers' expectations, disappointment with the future profession and insufficient use of IT technologies. The answers were offered - a large academic load, a complex program, excessively demanding lecturers, the nature of relationships in the training groups - but none of them were chosen by respondents. As we see, the most dissatisfaction lays in the unprofessional teaching of some disciplines, and in all cases, these are non-specialized studies, the teaching of which the professors conduct without taking into account the specificity of the training of speech therapists.

100% of respondents indicated the need for permanent mobility - participation in conferences, seminars, master classes, internships, qualifications and acquaintances with related professions. At the same time, when answering the question whether university studies were tiring, 44.1% answered that the study load was sufficient, 41.2% indicated that some general training courses were not necessary, 8.8% indicated difficulties while studying, 5.9% said that some of the subjects of professional training were superfluous.

If it were possible for students to choose disciplines independently, what recommendations would they be guided by? 61.8% indicated trust in the professional competence of the professor, 32.4% - the trust of the choice of the higher educational institution, 11.8% - the recommendation of the employer, and only 2.9% - the recommendations of other students. Also, in this block, there was a question, knowledge
of which disciplines they needed most. The students responded to it as follows: the disciplines of the speech therapy unit - 85.3%, the disciplines of the psychological unit - 79.4%, the disciplines of the teaching unit - 67.6%, the disciplines of the medical unit - 52.9%, the disciplines of the neuropsychological unit - 50%.

We also asked the experts whether a sufficient number of hours, in their opinion, were included in the curriculum for pedagogical practice. 55.9% of respondents answered that this quantity was sufficient to consolidate theoretical knowledge; 35.3% indicated that there was a shortage of time allocated for practice to consolidate theoretical knowledge; 5.9% indicated that they were practicing independently or additionally under the direction of lecturers during the educational process; and only 2.9% indicated that it did not matter how many hours had been put into practice.

This group of questions was summed up as follows: "Was the number of hours allocated for vocational training disciplines sufficient?" Here, the opinions of respondents differed slightly: 44.1% indicated that it was sufficient, 55.9% - that it would be better if more time was given to professional disciplines. The next was the proposal to suggest the disciplines that would be desirable to study in more detail or to name new ones. The largest number of respondents (68.3%) indicated a lack of hours of logopedic massage; 56.4% - of speech therapy, in particular, they mentioned the need to increase in the number of practical exercises on teaching sounds; 45.6% - of special psychology, logopsychology; 44.3% - of neuropsychology; 24.8% suggested introducing discipline about the cooperation of speech therapist with parents; 18.6% considered it appropriate to reduce the number of hours for general training disciplines and due to this increase them in vocational training. Also, 18.6% consider it necessary to expand the practice and organize it in the institutions for the adults - social rehabilitation centers, social assistance centers, psychoneurological dispensaries, medical institutions, etc. 12.4% of respondents consider it necessary to introduce disciplines that would disclose the techniques of work of foreign specialists in this field and work with modern speech therapy equipment using IT technologies.

In the questionnaire, we also offered to evaluate on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 - the lowest score, 10 - the highest score) the quality of training specialists in the speech therapy institution, where they studied. The highest score of 10 points was noted by 35.3% of the respondents; 9 points - by 8.8%; 8 points - by 23.5%; 7 points - by 14.7%; 6 and 5 points - by 5.9%; 4 and 3 points - by 2.9%; 2 and 1 points - by nobody. However, this is rather a subjective assessment, since the highest and lowest score was given by respondents who graduated from the same university and even almost at the same time.

The questionnaire had a question: "What was your progress during your studies? What did it depend on?" Respondents noted that 38.2% had mainly A; 47.1% - mainly B; 11.8% - preferably C; 2.9% - mainly D. 76.5% of the respondents noted that it depended on their own efforts in studying the material; 52.9% - on the methodology of explanation of the material by professors at lectures and practical classes; 41.2% - on the attitude of the lecturer to the student; 17.6% - from the moral and psychological climate in the group; 2.9% - from educational and methodological support.

Lecturers have the greatest influence in the process of studying at the university for students - 73.5%, group members - 8.8%. Coursemates, senior students, students of other specialties, a family, an independent choice - each of these parameters was noted in their responses by 2.9%.

When answering the question "Who motivated you to study?" (it was possible to select no more than three variants of the answer) 70.6% said it was the family; 58.8% - lecturers; 14.5% - self-motivation; 8.8% - peers, group members; 8.8% - children with special needs; 2.9% - scholarship and 2.9% - mass media. Thus, it is clearly seen that the motivation to study in this specialty is formed by the family and lecturers, and, accordingly, thanks to their ability to bring the material to the students, to interest them, to form professional skills and to show the advantages of this specialty.

The last question was how the professional knowledge gained at the university influenced their adaptation in the work team. "It was easy" - 47.1% of the respondents answered; "Rather easy, than difficult" - 35.3%; "Rather difficult, than easy" - 14.7%; "It was difficult for me" - 2.9% of the respondents. This question also is of a certain subjective character, as an adaptation to the group is often influenced not only by the level of professional training but also by the personal qualities of each person.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the analysis of the results of our study showed that the vast majority of respondents support a comprehensive approach in obtaining vocational education in the specialty "Special Education. Speech therapy". As the practical experience of people working on posts of speech therapists shows, this
approach forms first of all basic knowledge that helps them to determine the model of diagnostics and correction of speech disorders in most cases. In conditions of inclusiveness, which actively develops in the education system of Ukraine, when we include in the educational environment children with severe speech disorders, combined violations, mental disorders, hearing, vision, locomotor disorders, violations of the emotional and volitional spheres, speech therapist must be ready to face the challenges of the society.

Also, this approach shapes the readiness of the speech therapists to engage successfully with parents, teachers, educators, and doctors. And, as you know, the participation of a team of experts maximizes the effectiveness of the conducted correctional training.

It is determined that many speech therapists have a need to self-refine their knowledge. A lot of respondents indicate the need for the in-depth study of the features of the logopedic massage, the techniques for the formation of the proper pronunciation of the phonemes; to receive neuropsychological and logopsychological knowledge for the formation of the psychological and logopedic characteristics of children with speech disorders, prediction of difficulties in studying, etc. The same needs have speech therapists working in comprehensive schools and pre-school institutions, medical institutions, special educational institutions.

Our research also showed that most respondents are not ready to acquire knowledge themselves, working with scientific and methodological sources. They need to be participants in the educational process, get knowledge when observing the practical activities of others, obtaining information provided that they participate in lecture classes.

Of course, our study does not exhaust all aspects of the problem and may be continued in the study of international experience.

REFERENCES


