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## TOPICAL ISSUES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODOLOGY: E.N. SOLOVOVA'S RESEARCH CONTINUED

***Irina V. Khitrova***

*MGIMO University (Moscow, Russia)*

*i.v.khitrova@inno.mgimo.ru*

***Alexey V. Konobeiev***

*Moscow Pedagogical State University (Moscow, Russia)*

*alexeyvk@titul.ru*

***Dmitry S. Khrumchenko***

*MGIMO University (Moscow, Russia)*

*d.khrumchenko@inno.mgimo.ru*

***Inga V. Treshina***

*Moscow Pedagogical State University (Moscow, Russia)*

*iv.treshina@mpgu.su*

**Abstract:** The paper overviews the IV International Scientific and Practical Conference dedicated to Elena N. Solovova “Teaching Foreign Languages - Modern Problems and Solutions” held on November 6, 2022.

**Keywords:** teaching methodology, conference report, Elena Solovova, EFL, professional education.

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*In memory of E.N. Solovova*

**B**ack in 2004, in her doctoral thesis, Elena N. Solovova foresightfully noted that the changing socio-economic conditions for the development of society and the system of vocational and pedagogical education require the implementation of a comprehensive integrative and reflexive approach to the continuous professional training of a foreign language teacher. At the same time, she emphasised that methodological competence is the core of professional competence, readiness, and ability to solve various professional problems taking into account professional ethics. The use of reflection in the study of various disciplines and courses of professional training of a teacher ensures the transfer of one's own (positive and negative) experience of studying a particular discipline to the formation of general professional skills of teaching the language of future profession, providing the necessary level of autonomy, independence, responsibility for learning results, developing skills of self-control and self-assessment, as well as the dynamics of progress from incomplete knowledge to a fuller understanding of the prospects of individual development in the profession. These ideas, suggested by Elena Solovova almost 20 years ago, have never become obsolete and remain extremely relevant today.

Over the past few years, the professional environment of foreign language teachers has undergone significant changes: new regulatory documents have been adopted, e.g. federal state educational standards of primary general and basic general education (2021). Changes have been made to the Federal State Educational Standards of Secondary General Education (2022), approximate curricula of subjects, including foreign languages, have been adopted, and the Law on Education has been amended. In the shortest possible time, school teachers and university professors were forced to master distance learning technologies and ways to organise not only traditional offline and online lessons but also mixed lessons. What had seemed new and unusual a year or two before ceased to amaze with novelty, and the regulatory framework for education changed significantly.

All the above changes have led to the fact that school teachers and university professors not only began to actively look for new opportunities for professional development but also to strive to share their experiences at various meetings, webinars, and conferences. And from this point of view, one of the best examples of such a tendency is the International Scientific and Practical Conference dedicated to Elena N. Solovova "Teaching foreign languages - modern problems and solutions", held annually on the birthday of the outstanding teacher and scientist - November 6.

Elena Nikolaevna Solovova (1956-2019) is a prominent scientist, outstanding researcher, and teacher, author of numerous scientific works, textbooks on methods of teaching foreign languages, textbooks of English, she made an invaluable contribution to the development of the theory and practice of teaching foreign languages.

Being a graduate of Moscow State Pedagogical Institute named after V.I. Lenin (now Moscow Pedagogical State University), Elena Solovova began her career in 1980 at school No. 63 in Moscow. Then she taught at leading Russian universities: Moscow Pedagogical State University, Lomonosov Moscow State University, and National Research University Higher School of Economics. Under her supervision, the Department of Foreign Languages was established at

Higher School of Economics, and bachelor's and master's programs "Foreign Languages and Intercultural Communication" were founded. Elena Solovova lectured at universities in Russia, the USA, Great Britain, and China, made presentations and reports at international conferences, supported the exchange of best practices and ideas between universities and scientists, being a member of the editorial boards of both Russian and foreign journals, e.g.: "English at School", "Foreign Languages at School", "Foreign Languages in Higher Education", "Asia TEFL Journal". To recognise her outstanding merits, Elena Solovova was awarded gold medals "Laureate of the All-Russian Exhibition Centre", Diploma of Honorary Representative of the State of Arkansas, and Certificate of Honour of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation. Books by Elena Solovova have been published continuously in numerous publishing houses around the country.

Elena Solovova's immense contribution to science and education has been reflected not only in textbooks, speeches at conferences, and seminars but also in Ph.D. theses, written and defended under her scientific supervision.

A conference dedicated to Elena N. Solovova is held annually in the areas of her seminal works, uniting all kinds of educational organisations, both experienced and novice researchers, just like Elena Solovova herself united everyone in search of new scientific and practical knowledge to be further disseminated.

The co-organisers of the conference represent a large community of organisations and universities united by the works of Elena N. Solovova. In 2022, the conference was organised by the Department of the English language No. 4 at MGIMO, Titul Publishing House, the Department of Linguodidactics and Modern Technologies of Foreign Language Education at Moscow Pedagogical State University, the Department of Methodology of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Lomonosov Moscow State University, School of Foreign Languages of Higher School of Economics, Military University of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, Moscow Centre for Certification of Qualifications in Education of Moscow City Pedagogical University, Corporate University of Moscow Education and many others.

The conference was attended by specialists in the field of foreign languages and methods of their teaching, linguists, as well as postgraduates and university students (5 doctors of sciences, 1 academician, 38 candidates of sciences, 24 teachers, 8 students, 1 director of the institute, 1 dean, 2 heads of university departments) and more than 1000 participants from Russia, Belarus, Spain, India, Kazakhstan, Egypt, Mexico, Ukraine, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan.

The Plenary session was opened by the co-chairs of the conference: Dmitry S. Khramchenko, Dr. Sci. (Philology), Professor in the Department of English No. 4 at MGIMO University and Editor-in-Chief of the international peer-reviewed journal «Professional Discourse & Communication», and Inga V. Treshina, Cand. Sci. (Pedagogy), Head of the Department of Linguodidactics and Modern Technologies of Foreign Language Education at Moscow Pedagogical State University. They were followed by the Deputy Chairmen of the Conference: Irina V. Khitrova, Cand. Sci. (Pedagogy),



Associate Professor in the Department of English No. 4 at MGIMO University, and Alexey V. Konobeiev, Cand. Sci. (Pedagogy), Associate Professor in the Department of Linguodidactics and Modern Technologies of Foreign Language Education at Moscow Pedagogical State University. Zinaida N. Nikitenko, Dr. Sci. (Pedagogy), laureate of the Russian Government Prize in Education, Professor of Moscow State Pedagogical University, and V.V. Kopylova, Cand. Sci. (Pedagogy), Vice-President of Prosveshchenie Publishing House also delivered their speeches on the current challenges of education. Maxim Solovov, Elena Solovova's son, addressed the participants of the conference and wished everyone fruitful work.

The topics of the reports presented in the conference sections are a slice of the interests and aspirations of a wide range of both school teachers and university professors. Analysis of the topics and content of speeches shows how the needs and aspirations of specialists have changed, and also allows everyone to see the problems faced by secondary and higher education today.

Traditionally, great attention in speeches and reports is paid to teaching various language aspects. While in the previous two years the problems of speeches focused mainly on the use of digital technologies to teach language aspects, in 2022 the interests of teachers conspicuously differ. A significant percentage of speeches were focused on the professional competencies of the teacher: "Teacher training: traditions and new meanings" (I.V. Treshina), "Digital tools of the teacher" (S.B. Ulanova), "Professional development of a teacher in a digital educational environment" (E.V. Usachev), "Analysing the ideas of medical university students about an ideal foreign language teacher" (O.V., Razdorskaya, K.O. Khatefov), "Formation of testological competence of a foreign language teacher: basic theoretical concepts" (A.V. Horizontova), "Implementation of linguistic-cultural competence of a foreign language teacher (based on a new modern textbook of German)" (A.V. Shitikov), "Professionogram of a foreign language teacher at the university" (R.S. Shelekhova), "Competency vs being competent in training translators and foreign language teachers" (Pestova M.S.), "Digital competence of foreign language teachers at MGIMO University" (T.A. Bunakova), "The Italian language teacher: what do you need to know? Necessary competencies" (S.A. Lipen), "Empathy as a professionally significant quality of a foreign language teacher" (A.E. Shirvinskaya, E.E. Ivanova).

The speeches analyse the components of the professional competence of the teacher not only in terms of methodological knowledge but also in terms of personal and professional qualities. Meanwhile, digital technologies are already considered not from the point of view of organising the lesson, but based on solving very specific problems - for example, using infographics in preparation for the State Exam (E.S. Kapturova), using LearningApps.org as a tool to prepare students for the written part of the English exam (K.N. Bobrova), using the Exam Simulator as an interactive method of teaching speaking in preparation for the oral part of the State Exam in English (I.V. Khitrova, N.S. Zvereva). In other words, there has been a shift in the perception of digital technologies from the means of communicating the content of learning to students to tools to solve the most pragmatic problems.

There has been a noticeable increase in the development of students' thinking and the formation of their necessary professionally-related competencies: critical thinking (O.A. Kravtsova), soft skills (L.V. Kerova, V.N. White), self-assessment skills, and means to increase motivation (I.I. Gospodarenko).

The issues of personal development of both the student and the teacher are beginning to come to the fore. The topics of reports also included the problem of professional burnout (S.V. Sannikova), self-identification through familiarisation with foreign language culture (M.A. Bocharnikova, Yu.A. Orlova), ways to avoid speech manipulation (D.S. Khranchenko), peculiarities of teaching English in a particular country (India - Evangeline Priscilla B.).

Analysing the content of reports suggests that in the 2022-23 academic year school teachers and university professors are interested in what modern teachers should be able to do, what qualities they should possess in the ever-changing conditions, what qualities and competencies a student should have in addition to subject knowledge, skills and abilities, how modern pedagogical and digital technologies can be used to develop thinking and form the cultural identity of the student. It is very likely that in the coming years the trend will not only continue, but also get intensified: it is obvious that now there are serious issues concerning the need to develop students' thinking, the problem of revising the sociocultural content of foreign language teaching and, accordingly, the formation of civil identity of students through a foreign language, and at the same time there is an active search of new digital technologies to deal with these challenges. The academic community is trying to develop common views and a common understanding of the current situation as well as common approaches to solving practical problems.

New realities and new tasks require the development of approaches to their solutions and, thus, beginning with the next year the organising committee of the conference has decided to add new conference formats, i.e. the introduction of practical master classes into the program and the «Start in Science» section, where young researches, undergraduates and postgraduates will be able to present their innovations.

The conference, conceived as a tribute to the memory of an outstanding teacher and scientist, as a reflection on her scientific heritage has been growing stronger with every passing year, expanding its geography, uniting more and more colleagues and like-minded professionals.

### **About the authors:**

Irina V. Khitrova, Cand. Sci. (Pedagogy) is Associate professor in the Department of the English Language #4 at MGIMO University (Moscow, Russia). ORCID: 0000-0002-7954-817X

Alexey V. Konobeiev, Cand. Sci. (Pedagogy) is Academic Director at Umschool Academy and Associate Professor in the Department of Linguodidactics and Modern Technologies in Teaching English at Moscow Pedagogical State University (Moscow, Russia).

Dmitry S. Khranchenko, Dr. Sci. (Philology) is Professor in the Department of the English language #4 at MGIMO University (Moscow, Russia). ORCID: 0000-0003-3038-8459

Inga V. Treshina, Cand. Sci. (Pedagogy) is Head of the Department of linguodidactics and modern technologies of teaching foreign languages at Moscow Pedagogical State University (Moscow, Russia). ORCID: 0000-0002-6198-2488