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Organisational and Content-Based Approaches to Training Foreign Language Teachers at the US Universities

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Abstract. The relevance of the study is conditioned by socio-cultural changes, according to which there is a need to review the methodological support for professional training of future foreign language teachers based on foreign experience. The purpose of the study is to determine organisational and content-based approaches to the training of future foreign language teachers at the US universities. The study uses a number of general scientific theoretical methods, namely thematic analysis, content analysis, and comparison. The paper analyses foreign scientific and methodological literature in the context of professional training of foreign language teachers, as well as educational programmes of higher educational institutions in the US specialisation. The paper highlights organisational and content-based approaches to training foreign language teachers at the US universities, as well as features of developing the content of educational programmes. It has been established that the content of foreign language teacher education is a symbiosis of requirements for the professional establishment and development of a teacher-philologist, presented in educational standards, visualisation by the scientific and educational community of professional competencies, selection of a repertoire of relevant thematic courses and interests, needs of students and local communities. The paper presents for the first time quantitative characteristics of curriculums of educational programmes for training philological teachers in American universities. It was determined that the most popular disciplines are methods of teaching a foreign language, linguodidactics, scientific research, assessment/monitoring in teaching a foreign language, the use of information technologies in teaching a foreign language, planning a foreign language educational process. The practical value of paper consists in identifying and systematising the features of American education with the further application of positive experience in training Ukrainian specialists in foreign language education

Keywords: future teacher, foreign languages, teacher education, educational content, curriculum, university, USA

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Організаційно-змістові підходи до підготовки вчителів іноземних мов в університетах США

Анотація. Актуальність дослідження обумовлена соціокультурними змінами, відповідно до яких виникає необхідність у перегляді методичного забезпечення професійної підготовки майбутніх вчителів іноземної мови на основі зарубіжного досвіду. Метою роботи є визначення організаційно-змістових підходів до підготовки майбутніх учителів іноземних мов в університетах США. У дослідженні застосовано низку загальнонаукових теоретичних методів, а саме тематичний аналіз, контент-аналіз і порівняння. Проаналізовано зарубіжну науково-методичну літературу в контексті професійної підготовки вчителів-мовників, а також освітні програми вищих навчальних закладів за спеціальністю США. У статті висвітлено організаційно-змістові підходи до підготовки вчителів іноземних мов в університетах США, а також особливості укладання змісту освітніх програм. З'ясовано, що зміст іншомовної педагогічної освіти є симбіозом вимог до професійного становлення і розвитку вчителя-філолога, представлених в освітніх стандартах, візуалізації науково-освітньою спільнотою фахових компетентностей, добору репертуару релевантних тематичних курсів та інтересів, потреб студентів і місцевих общин. У статті вперше представлено кількісні характеристики курикулумів освітніх програм підготовки вчителів-філологів в американських університетах. Визначено, що найпопулярнішими дисциплінами є методика викладання іноземної мови, лінгводидактика, наукове дослідження, оцінювання/моніторинг у навчанні іноземної мови, застосування інформаційних технологій у навчанні іноземної мови, планування іншомовного освітнього процесу. Практична цінність наукової роботи полягає у виокремленні та систематизації особливостей американської освіти з подальшим застосуванням позитивного досвіду в підготовці українських фахівців іншомовної освіти

Ключові слова: майбутній учитель, іноземні мови, педагогічна освіта, зміст освіти, навчальний план, університет, США

Problem Statement

The modern Ukrainian educational process, in particular the methodology of training future specialists in foreign language education, requires a qualitative update in accordance with internationally recognised standards. Such a change in the scientific pedagogical paradigm leads to the updating of research on the foreign experience of advanced Western countries, which are characterised by a high level of professional qualification of specialists. In this case, it is advisable to turn specifically to American foreign language teacher training programmes as examples of a multicomponent educational system. In the educational and political discourse of the American society, the problem of the quality of teacher education and professional and pedagogical activity for a long period is recognised as key in solving strategic tasks for the development of the national educational system. According to L. Darling-Hammond, American teachers have learnt a practical and empirically proven lesson well: the introduction of innovative ideas is entrusted to practical teachers, so the success of school reforms depends entirely on their competence [1].

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications

The foundation of professional competence is laid during university studies, which, according to quantitative and qualitative indicators of the research, determines the success of professional development of a future teacher [2]. The main developments on the problem of forming the content of teacher education, in particular the study of curriculums of foreign language teacher training programmes belong to such American scientists as K. Graves [3], K. Johnson [4], J.R. Yates [5], M. Reid [6], F. Huijboom [7], M. Freeman [8], etc. Scientists see the solution of important tasks of the outlined problem through the prism of the professional knowledge base of educational programmes [9] but there are not enough studies devoted to the analysis of curriculums of existing educational programmes for training teachers of philology, which led to the choice of the purpose of the research.

The Purpose of the Paper

To cover organisational and content approaches to the training of future foreign language teachers at the US universities.

Research Results

The essence of teacher training programmes is their content, which in the United States is reproduced in the curriculum that outlines the goals, mission, tasks, thematic content, learning results, educational and methodological support for educational processes of teacher education programmes, etc. Based on the analysis of the source base, it was identified that American researchers in the study of educational content are guided by the conceptualisation of professional knowledge of the industry, that is, what a future philology teacher should know and be able to do [3-5].

The professional knowledge base is defined as the leading criterion for accreditation of higher education institutions, in particular by the National Council for accreditation of Teacher Education. The content of educational programmes is formed considering the requirements of the profession, philosophy, and mission of the educational institution, the needs and interests of society, based on empirical and practical experience in the field of training teachers-philologists [10, p. 762]. Thus, the standards of the council for accreditation of teacher training establish the primacy of careful selection of the content of pedagogical education according to the professional subject and psychological and pedagogical knowledge and practical training [11]. At the same time, it was established that these documents are only advisory, outlining the main areas of necessary professional knowledge, while didactic ways of implementing the knowledge base are specified by each educational institution individually.

Turning to the practices of training future foreign language teachers, it is worth noting that American researchers D. Goldberg and E. Wells established that in 11% of American higher educational institutions, the training of foreign language teachers falls within the competence of foreign language faculties or departments, in 45% of cases, the responsibility is shared by foreign language and pedagogy departments (school of education), at the same time, in 42% of institutions, the professional and pedagogical component of training falls within the competence of departments

of pedagogy [11, p. 189]. For a long time, the system of training teachers of philology in the United States was characterised by relying on applied linguistics [12] but now the curriculums of educational programmes include an expanded range of disciplines of the psychological and pedagogical cycle and pedagogical practice. Now balancing the linguistic and psychological and pedagogical components is one of the most urgent tasks of teachers' training.

The study of organisational and content approaches to the training of foreign language teachers in the United States was carried out based on a detailed analysis of the educational and methodological documentation of 15 bachelor's programmes in philology of the pedagogical area, 25 master's programmes in the relevant field, and 5 certificate programmes of higher educational institutions located in different US states. In the process of thematic, discourse, and content analysis of educational documentation, which reproduces the content component of the foreign language teacher training system, it was established that during its establishment, American teachers proceed from the visualisation of the professional group of knowledge base and professional competencies that a future pedagogical specialist needs to acquire, as well as the requirements of standards for training foreign language teachers, the assessment of which is a cross-cutting element of teachers' professional establishment and development. Accordingly, the components and content configuration of the curriculums of educational programmes for training teachers are a reflection of the individual interpretation of these requirements by leading representatives of the teaching staff of the university, which determines the variability of the content and volume of training courses.

The structure of the content of training foreign language teachers is multicomponent, integrating general education, social and humanitarian, foreign language, linguistic, literary, cultural, information technology, psychological and pedagogical, and linguodidactic components. Analysis of curriculums of foreign language bachelor's programmes identified that the listed content characteristics are represented by the following blocks of disciplines (Fig. 1):

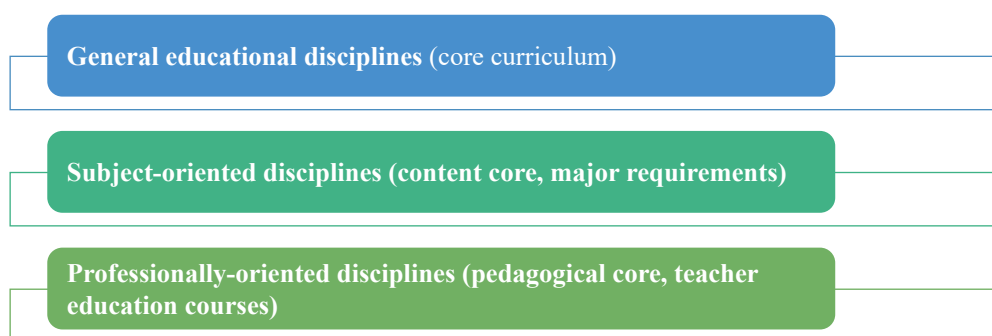


Figure 1. Blocks of programme disciplines for training bachelors in foreign language

Content blocks are aimed at forming professionally important competencies according to the requirements of the accountability system (accreditation, licensing, and certification) and meet the leading tasks and missions of educational programmes. Thus, the block of subject-oriented

academic disciplines is designed to develop subject-professional competence (linguistic, speech, socio-cultural, linguocultural, literary, research, etc.). The professionally-oriented block of academic disciplines serves to form general and specialised psychological and pedagogical competence,

linguodidactic/methodological competence. The block of general educational academic disciplines develops competencies of universal importance that distinguish an educated specialist in the humanities: communicative, ideological, motivational-value, social, cognitive, reflexive, etc.

Based on the study of curriculums, it was established that subject-oriented and professionally-oriented academic disciplines bear the greatest credit load of philological teacher training programmes, and the block of general educational training courses bears the least. For example, the bachelor's programme in foreign language education at *The New York University Steinhardt* offers the following division between the content blocks: 48 units are the study of general educational academic disciplines, and 80 – specialised, among which there are: subject – 28 units (practical foreign language courses, linguistics, literature, culture, etc.); psychological and pedagogical – 21 units; linguodidactic – 16 units; disciplines of free choice of students – 15 units [13]. The foreign language teacher training programme in *The University of Kansas*, which is one of the top ten educational programmes in the United States (U.S. News and World Reports Best Public Education Schools), allocates 55 credit hours for studying a block of general educational disciplines, and 65 – for specialised courses that include

subject-oriented courses: practical foreign language course, fundamental philological disciplines; psychological and pedagogical, linguodidactic courses, and school pedagogical practice [14]. A transparent element of the programme is teaching practice, which begins with the first year of the bachelor's programme and provides for 60-80 hours at the end of the third year, that is, before the start of teaching practice. In total, 800 hours are allocated for school teaching practice [14].

The curriculum of the foreign language teacher programme in *The University of Southern Maine* provides for 76 credit hours for the study of specialised disciplines, of which 51 credit hours are allocated for the subject block, namely for foreign language practical courses, linguistics, literature, etc., 25 hours – for the study of psychological, pedagogical, and linguodidactic disciplines [15]. The entire fourth year is allocated for school teaching practice, where students are trained to teach, while at the same time listen to a cycle of linguodidactic disciplines [15].

It is advisable to identify what subject courses are offered to students in the three selected blocks of curricula of foreign language teacher training programmes at the bachelor's level. The block of subject-oriented disciplines includes (Fig. 2):

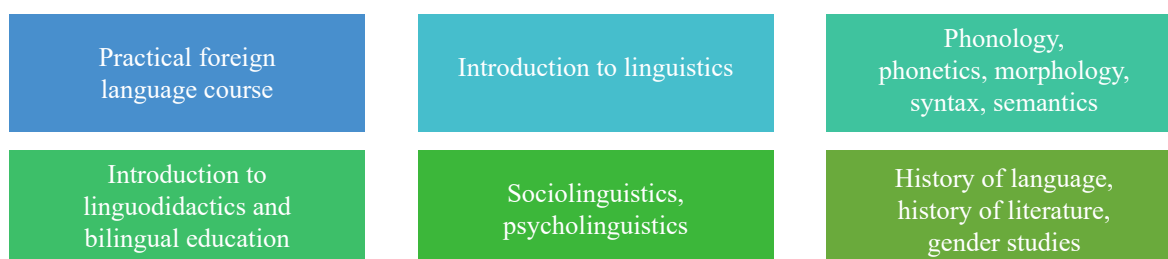


Figure 2. The structure of the block of subject-oriented disciplines at the bachelor's level

Due to the considerable autonomy of the US higher educational institutions, the range of courses offered and the credit volume of the subject-oriented block differ significantly from university to university. At the same time, the profile-oriented block of disciplines is characterised by a wide range and involves the study of psychological, pedagogical, and linguodidactic training courses. For example, within the cycle of psychological and pedagogical disciplines, such courses as pedagogical psychology, age psychology or developmental psychology, introduction to the teaching profession, training students with special needs, education as a social institution, learning and teaching research, language acquisition in a multilingual and multicultural environment, comparative and international education, prevention of violence/drug, alcohol addiction, social responsibilities of a teacher, inclusivity, diversification and equality, information technologies in education, curriculum planning, educational management, the role of culture in education, pedagogical ethics, development of basic learning skills, development of language skills and literacy, cross-cultural personal development, work with gifted

students, research of pedagogical effectiveness, critical pedagogy, applied research in education, and many others. The list of linguodidactic courses is somewhat narrower than the previous one but it is also marked by a variety of subjects: theory and practice of foreign language teaching, a foreign language lesson in primary and secondary schools, teaching foreign language in middle and high schools, approaches to teaching a foreign language, linguodidactics (*second language acquisition*), acquiring foreign language grammar and vocabulary, forming a pedagogical portfolio, forming a curriculum for foreign language teaching, foreign language teaching methods, linguistic analysis for teachers of English as a second/foreign language, etc. The general education cycle for future foreign language teachers can include both humanities (history, literature, cultural studies, sociology, philosophy, art, etc.) and natural sciences (algebra, biology, statistics, physics, etc.). For junior students, within the framework of this cycle, some universities hold introductory courses in pedagogy, such as introduction to the pedagogical profession, problems of education [13; 14; 16].

In the course of the study, it was identified that the grouping of disciplines by blocks, the division into mandatory and elective courses, the order of their study, and the credit load vary among American universities, due to the decentralisation of management and considerable autonomy in the choice of organisational and content approaches to training teachers of philology, as well as considering the correlation between the *major and minor* specialisations, *double major*, etc. The principle of academic freedom, which is observed in the development of the content component of the teacher educational system, allowing the future teacher to improve according to the individual learning trajectory, choosing the educational programme, specialisation, branch of specialisation, training courses, and university in which they want to master the course, is applied to even greater heterogeneity of the content of professional training.

Despite the considerable differences in the curricula of universities, the study of practical foreign language courses in the first and second years is common to the vast majority of foreign language teacher training programmes at the bachelor's level, which provides for the development of foreign language competencies by all students of foreign language faculties without considering further specialisation,

introductory courses in linguistics and pedagogy belonging to the disciplines of *lower division*. At the beginning or end of the second year, students officially confirm their intentions to receive a teacher education. In the senior years, the acquisition of specialised disciplines continues; in the fourth year, the main pedagogical practice at school is added, which lasts for two semesters with simultaneous study of linguo-didactic and psychological-pedagogical disciplines in the seventh semester. The eighth semester is mostly devoted entirely to teaching practice in the programmes (15-16 weeks).

The development of the content of master's educational programmes in the field of foreign language pedagogical education is determined based on the requirements for the competence of specialists of the appropriate educational qualification level, the purposes of the educational institution, the conceptualisation of high-quality professional and pedagogical activities, as well as the field of specialisation of educational programmes, of which there are several only in the field of training linguistic teachers. For example, at *The University of Pittsburgh* at the master's level, foreign language teachers are trained in four educational programmes (Fig. 3) [17]:

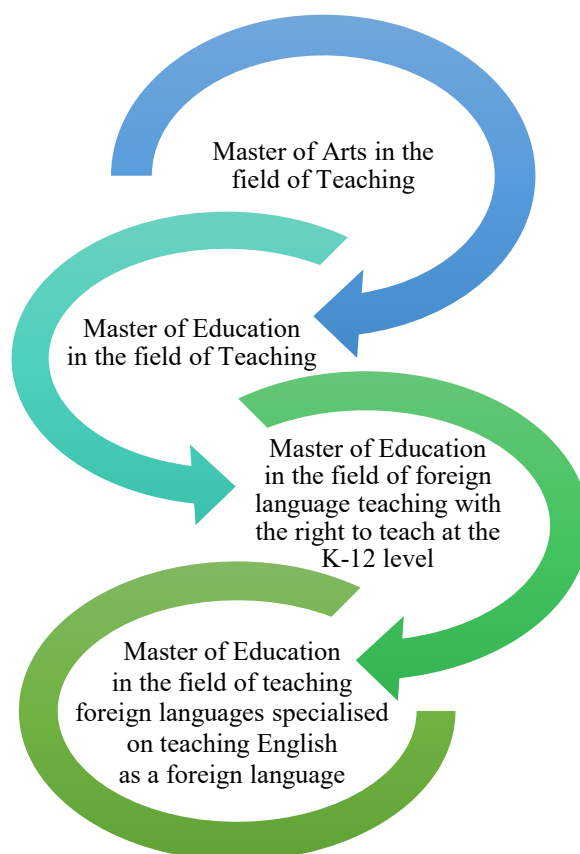


Figure 3. Master's degree programmes for foreign language teacher training at the University of Pittsburgh

Additionally, students of the master's programme of American universities are given the opportunity to receive a general pedagogical education with a research emphasis. In the first case, there is theoretical and practical professional

training of future foreign language teachers; in the second – students study according to an identical curriculum with an emphasis on the development of research competence, practice in performing creative research individual and group

works, projects, improving in writing a master's project [18]. The total number of credits required for students of foreign language master's degree programmes is approximately 30 (Auburn University), 42 (Lewis University), and more credits. Most of the programmes require acquiring 36-37 credits. It is important that students at the bachelor's level can accumulate credits that will be included in the total credit volume during their master's degree studies [17].

In the process of analysing the documentation of master's programmes, it was established that the curricula consist of 2-4 main blocks of disciplines, such as *subject area*: linguodidactic and applied linguistics courses; *psychological and pedagogical*; *teaching practice*; *preparation of research work* (master's thesis, master's project, paper) [13; 14; 16]. For example, at Columbia University, students of master's programmes in the field of foreign language education study the following thematic blocks: general professional courses (applied linguistics, linguodidactics); basic professional courses (foreign language teaching methods, school pedagogical practice); elective courses; additional courses in related fields of knowledge. The educational programme of *The New York University Steinhardt* includes five blocks: the main subject (applied linguistics, 3-9 credits); psychological and pedagogical, 8 credits; elective courses and linguodidactics, 5-11 credits; foreign language teaching methods and other linguodidactic courses, 13 credits; teaching practice, 6 credits [13; 19; 20]. For the most part, educational programmes that train foreign language teachers offer two main blocks of disciplines, namely psychological and pedagogical and linguodidactic [21-23]. At the same time, in some educational programmes, students study only the cycle of linguodidactic disciplines [18; 24; 25].

A detailed study of the curricula of master's educational programmes for training teachers of foreign language has shown that the cycle of linguodidactic disciplines and applied linguistics includes the study of methods of

teaching a foreign/second language at different educational levels, linguodidactics/second language acquisition (SLA), pedagogical grammar, the development of a curriculum and educational materials in the field of foreign language education, assessment in foreign language education, *task-based language learning*, intensive foreign language learning, methodological foundations of the organisation of immersion programmes, the use of information technologies in teaching foreign languages, motivation in teaching foreign languages, reflection in foreign language education, the basics of foreign language education, linguistics for foreign language teachers, research, research in action, training students who study English as a second/foreign language, planning the educational process, evaluating the foreign language educational process, applied linguistics and research, pedagogical linguistics, sociolinguistics and education, text/discourse analysis, lingual socialisation, school discourse, linguistic analysis for teachers of English as a second/foreign language, etc. The psychological and pedagogical block includes the study of such thematic courses as pedagogical psychology, developmental psychology, educational process management, bilingual education, multicultural education, intercultural communication, curriculum planning for bilingual education, history of urban education, sociology of urban education, teaching and learning in a multicultural environment, philosophy of education, education in a diversified society, principles of curriculum development, pedagogical research, anthropology, foundations of learning and teaching, working with talented students, etc.

Based on the thematic analysis, it was identified that the content design of foreign language teacher training programmes is characterised by considerable variability and diversification. However, the use of content analysis allows studying the quantitative characteristics of the curricula of educational programmes included in the sample of research (Table 1).

Table 1. Representation of the disciplines of the profile block in the curricula of master's foreign language teacher training programmes in the USA

Subject course	Quantitative indicators
Methods of foreign language teaching	100%
Linguodidactics	80%
Research	77%
Assessment in foreign language teaching	67%
Application of information technologies in teaching foreign languages	58%
Curriculum development	56%

In particular, it was established that the most popular courses in the profile cycle of disciplines are the methodology of teaching a foreign/second language, which is taught in all educational programmes for training foreign language teachers included in the sample. Although the name of the discipline is sometimes presented in a slightly different wording, familiarisation with its subject based on a thorough

analysis of the curricula of 25 universities indicates that this refers to an identical or very close in content field of knowledge. The second discipline in terms of frequency of inclusion in the curricula of these educational programmes is linguodidactics (*second language acquisition*). The group of disciplines related to research, organisation and implementation of monitoring in foreign language

education, the use of information technologies in educational processes, in particular in teaching foreign languages and planning/organising the process of teaching foreign languages is somewhat inferior in the number of inclusions in the curriculums.

Notably, it is impractical to generalise the obtained empirical data of the research since the sample is represented by a relatively small number of educational programmes. The data obtained are based on curriculums for only one academic year (2019/20) so the presence or absence of a particular discipline may vary. Students also can choose training courses that are not included in the main curriculum, which also provides for the probability of studying mentioned disciplines.

After completing their studies and meeting the requirements prescribed in the educational programme, students of some universities [17; 24] take the general master's exam or write a research qualification paper in several variations, or pass the specified exam and prepare a research. Options for creative research are a master's thesis or its equivalent, a master's project, or a paper. Special certificate programmes allow future and practicing foreign language teachers in the United States to achieve greater professional perfection at the master's educational qualification level. The popularity of such programmes is growing every year due to the social mandate for teachers in the field of foreign language education, as well as due to the increasing number of non-English-speaking students. The condition for access to certificate programmes is mainly a master's degree in a related field of knowledge. At the same time, certificate programmes for bachelor graduates also function based on American universities. Since certificate programmes are based on the idea of serving the interests and needs of local communities, as well as based on the professionogram of relevant specialists, their organisational and content features are very variable. Credit volumes of certificate programmes range from 12 to 30 credits lasting mainly 2 semesters [17; 18; 26]. The curricula of certificate foreign language teacher training programmes have a pronounced subject and practical orientation, including the study of cycles of linguodidactic, psychological and pedagogical disciplines, and applied linguistics. All the analysed programmes involve taking a teaching internship, and the vast majority – writing research projects. Attention is drawn to the fact of a significant practical orientation of certificate programmes in the field of foreign language education.

Conclusions

Developing the content of programmes in the field of foreign language teacher education in the United States is subject to the general strategic goal of training a competent,

highly educated, comprehensively developed pedagogical specialist capable of high-quality performance of their professional duties, contributing to the growth of students' academic performance through effective professional and pedagogical activities. It is established that the American scientific and educational community in the selection of the content of foreign language teacher training relies on the conceptualisation of branch scientific knowledge and their practical use. Currently, the relevant branch developments in professional literature are presented in the paradigm of professional competencies that future teachers-philologists acquire in the process of professional development. The content of modern philological and pedagogical education is a symbiosis of requirements for their professional establishment and development, presented in educational standards, visualisation by the scientific and educational community of key professional competencies, selection of the repertoire of thematic courses necessary for their development, as well as personal interests and needs of students and local communities.

The content of teacher training in the field of foreign language education is structured according to the blocks of general educational, profile-oriented, and subject-oriented disciplines. Among the teacher training programmes of different educational and qualification levels, the greatest variability in credit volumes was distinguished by certificate programmes (with a total number of credits from 12 to 30), master's programmes (30-42 credit units) and the smallest – bachelor's programmes, which require an average of 120-128 credits. The variability of subject staffing of curriculums is an essential feature of educational programmes. The widest range of academic disciplines is presented at the bachelor's level, which is somewhat inferior to master's and certificate programmes. The content design of bachelor's programmes is marked by subject orientation since the corresponding block of disciplines is the largest in terms of credit volumes.

Based on the content analysis, quantitative characteristics of curriculums of master's programmes for training foreign language teachers in American universities are presented. The most popular disciplines are the methodology of teaching foreign languages (100%), linguodidactics (80%), research (77%), assessment/monitoring in teaching foreign languages (67%), the use of information technologies in teaching foreign languages (58%), planning the educational process/development of the curriculum in teaching foreign languages (56%). The authors consider the prospects for further research in this field to be the identification of opportunities for modernising the Ukrainian system of foreign-language teacher education by borrowing progressive ideas from the American experience in concluding curriculums of educational programmes.

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