

## **FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS IN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES**

The educational system in the third millennium complies with the ideology of a hard pragmatism and intensifies narrow specialization. People with a new world outlook, able to see the perspective of their own future and society taken as a whole, are the main factor for the effective development of the modern society. Nowadays thousands of highly-skilled and qualified researchers in bio-and nanotechnologies, space, information, communications, oil and gas fields are urgently needed in the country. Graduates of technical colleges and universities are to be able to work with new information technology products as well as to collaborate in a team. The Humanities play an important role in education, influencing the mind and thoughts of a person.

In technical universities teaching of a foreign language means training of the students to establish personal, scientific and cultural contacts with native speakers. It is mostly learning of the professional communication for effective experience exchange in practice.

A foreign language at the technical faculties is not a major subject. Usually freshmen enter the University having different levels of foreign language knowledge. Consequently, mastering of the language, defined as the process of receiving, semantic processing, keeping of acquired knowledge, is not done properly. To find out the causes of a poor progress in English the first-year students were asked to respond to the following questions:

- What place among other subjects does the foreign language take?
- You think that knowledge of a foreign language is important for your career, don't you?
- How can you assess your knowledge level of a foreign language?
- Are you satisfied with the teaching methods?
- What kind of difficulties do you face in the process of foreign language learning?
- Would you like to increase the number of hours of foreign language learning?

The survey data analysis has revealed the level of a cognitive interest in the subject «Foreign language». Undergraduates want to learn a foreign language; they understand the importance of a good foreign language command for a modern well-qualified specialist. Some students (30 %) put it first in the list of different subjects, others – after major sub-

jects (59 %), but there are some students (11 %) who think that this subject is not important. Among reasons for a poor progress are: bad language training at school – 58 %, lack of time – 27 %, there are some students who honestly admitted in the human factor – laziness – 15 %. The methods of foreign language teaching are satisfying, but students don't like to have the number of foreign classes increased, especially in place of major subjects.

The main objective of a foreign language course at a technical university is training of a highly-qualified specialist. It means that the language learning process doesn't serve as an independent discipline, but as a discipline subordinated to major subjects. The content of a foreign language training program as a Language for Special Purpose (LSP) was developed in accordance with the key directions of the development of foreign language education in the Lisbon and Bologna conventions. Pan-European standards and competency levels of proficiency in a foreign language are the basis for the multi-leveled model of the foreign language education, with uniform requirements to the level of language teaching for all European countries. There are six training levels in this model: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2. Level B2 and the LSP are adopted as standards for technical universities.

This concept of the foreign language learning is based on the principles of continuous and sustainable education. The international standards include the principles of individual orientation and professionalization.

In the new structure the objective of the foreign language teaching at the 1 and 2 courses of the University (the 1 stage) is mastering of the basic foreign language skills in accordance with the requirements of the European standard ( level A1). Students are to be able to keep the conversation going, read, listen to and understand the content of a foreign language text and express their thoughts in written form. The first step includes learning grammar and phonetics rules, formation of the reading and translation skills. Students learn to make up phrases and sentences using new words, try to retell texts, do written exercises on the studied material. So they carefully study all the aspects of the language and then concentrate on the speech activity.

At 3 and 4 courses (the 2 stage) the objective is to master the foreign language for special purposes in accordance with narrow specialization (B1 +). The main goal is a sufficient level of LSP as a "tool" for intellectual and social challenges in the future professional activities with an intercultural perspective.

At the second stage personally-active approach is widely used. It allows students to work with information, select necessary facts, arrange them in logical order, put forward arguments and counterarguments. And these are the skills that are necessary for young professionals in dealing with their foreign colleagues, when it is necessary to express their thoughts clearly and logically and be able to correspond in a foreign language. Under this approach, several very effective methods can be used: research and search techniques as well as project-based method which is currently highly relevant.

All the listed-above teaching methods used at the 1 and 2 stages have both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, each method is effective in developing certain skills and abilities, but, on the other hand, these methods taken individually are not always effective in achieving the objectives set, it follows that their integration into the process of foreign language learning is required.

The intensification of foreign language teaching, deals, first of all, with the use of teaching aids and information technologies. The use of teaching aids causes optimization and activization of the learning process, disclosure of the students reserve capacity. A good command of a foreign language can affect employment opportunities due to information technology development. A highly qualified specialist in a modern society can not work effectively just using knowledge gained at the University. A specialist or a scientist is to be aware of the latest developments in his/her field. He/she has to work with scientific and technical literature in a foreign language in order to get some specific experience.

As for the graduates of technical universities, they are to master basic lexical-grammatical constructions of a foreign language, be able to recognize them and use for communication. Moreover, they need to get a certain set of special language competence, which is a conglomerate of knowledge on all aspects of their chosen specialty including Special Literary-Bookish Vocabulary, Special Professional Vocabulary, etc.

Study of a foreign language in parallel with student's own specialty allows him/her to succeed in mastering professional field knowledge as well as foreign language vocabulary. Student can supplement their knowledge of electronic resources in a foreign language. Students have an opportunity to participate in practical training, seminars and lectures held by foreign specialists from leading European universities. Besides, they can take part in cooperation projects with foreign partners.

In its turn, implementation of «Multilevel model of foreign language education» principles allows solving many problems of the foreign language training.

For example:

- lack of the professional interest in mastering a foreign language among students of technical universities;
- different skill levels among the students having finished village, urban or special schools;
- lack of qualitative teaching and methodical educational products for students that is needed to ensure required level of training for students to provide them skills for communication and work in a multilingual environment.

In this context, a set of special language skills should be quite extensive, associated with their possible use in the future. It presents considerable difficulties in foreign language teaching as a teacher is not only to have pure linguistic knowledge, but also be able to navigate in a variety of special items. A teacher has to understand the specifics of a profiling discipline. Hence, there is an importance of interdisciplinary connections between foreign language and special disciplines teaching.

It should be reiterated, that only at the early stages of education (1, 2 and sometimes 3 semesters) foreign language teaching is aimed at improving basic language lexical-grammatical skills. At the later stages (3–5 semesters) foreign language course is professionally and communicative-oriented, and its tasks are defined by cognitive and communicative needs of basic profile specialists.

The main objective of organizing Language Center at the University is further improvement of student professional competence. To achieve the objective it is necessary:

1) to improve the level of foreign language knowledge of bachelors, undergraduates, doctoral candidates for participating in international programs, competitions, international conferences;

2) to conduct the courses of foreign language skills improvement for both students and staff;

3) to organize a course «Foreign language as a second language» (German, French, Chinese, etc.) for all comers;

4) to open interest clubs (movies, conversation club, exhibitions, competitions, student theater);

5) to hold free summer international linguistic-cultural programs for undergraduates with the participation of tutors of the leading European universities;

6) to hold training workshops and consultation for teachers who read lectures in foreign languages;

7) to set up a Translation Centre.

Foreign language like no other discipline is intended to develop a competent specialist, who not only has certain knowledge, skills and abilities, but also applies them practically; is able to go beyond the frames of his/her profession; has certain creative potential for self-development.

A foreign language needs to be taught as a specialty language at the technical universities because students are to take part in international symposia and conferences; participate in international grants and scholarships; apply for writing diploma thesis abroad. They also need to use electronic data resource in a foreign language and to be, as a result, competitive and in demand at the labor market.

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### **DIGITAL STORYTELLING FOR ENGLISH LEARNING**

Nowadays it is impossible to imagine our life without different electronic gadgets such as PDAs, mobile phones, tablet PCs and other devices that we permanently use. These devices became not only a part of our everyday life but also became a part of the learning and teaching process. This penetration of digital technology causes the development of new methods and ways to make learning more interactive and creative. With the emergence of mobile technologies, teaching methods have changed. Many methods of teaching foreign languages actively use various information technologies. Language learning often began to use various online resources, games and tests on a computer, computer presentations. However, the most interesting, creative and unusual method is digital storytelling.

Digital storytelling is a compelling activity for the language classroom. Easy to use for both writing and speaking practice, digital storytelling can be a good way to motivate students to use the language both inside and outside the classroom. Many teachers report high motivation