

чения и в последствие дает свои положительные результаты. Бесспорным становится тот факт, что технические средства обучения в настоящее время являются приоритетными и их роль и значение в образовательном процессе велика и неоспорима.

Европейский опыт инновационной модели построения практического занятия по иностранному языку бесспорно имеет положительную тенденцию. Грамотное применение данной модели на практике и разумная комбинация ее с уже существующими инновационными технологиями в обучении иностранному языку позволит вывести процесс обучения на принципиально новый уровень и выпускать высококвалифицированных специалистов, востребованных не только внутри страны, но и далеко за ее пределами.

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#### **DESIGNING A COMMUNICATIVE 'ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES' COURSE**

The conditions of increasing information flow and technical modernization, broadening exchange of information and cooperation between countries, growing demand for an employee's professionalism influence people's mobility and set new requirements to education. The education objective is not only to train professionals for a certain kind of activities but also help students absorb cultural values, adapt to new situations, creatively express their ideas, accept responsibility. Students should develop certain competences which can help them to become specialists in their chosen field. Not least important in our global world is a foreign language competence which may contribute to student's ability to compete and be in demand in today's labour market.

Learning how to behave linguistically while acquiring profession-oriented knowledge and skills at an institution of tertiary level is a specific phenomenon, which is known as Language for Specific Purposes (LSP). Such a course presupposes the formation of a prospective specialist's communicative competence that will allow them to use a foreign language in main types of speech activities.

We learn a language to be competent. When we teach a foreign language in technical universities we teach students to be linguistically competent in profession-related situations, to use professional vocabulary when discussing professional issues with partners and foreign colleagues. But what does it mean 'to be competent'? Language serves to communicate ideas therefore we ascribe great importance to communicative competence. As H.G. Widdowson points out that there are 'strategies or creative procedures for realizing the value of linguistic elements in contexts use, an ability to make sense as a participant in discourse, whether spoken or written, by the

skilful deployment of shared knowledge of code resources and rules of language use' [4, p. 240]. Communicative competence is often perceived as knowledge and skills necessary for communication, and includes grammatical, pragmatic, discourse, socio-linguistic, strategic competencies [2]. Latest findings in the competence theory show that competence is an individual combination of abilities (which determine individual's readiness for activity) and experience (which includes knowledge, skills and attitude) [3, p. 4].

My observations show that when our students finish their language course many of them find it fairly difficult to communicate and in many situations they can hardly make themselves understood in a foreign language. I have been working with students for quite a time, and not once I heard them say that what they had been taught was quite useless, would not be made use of in their later work on graduating from university and the material was presented not in the way they had expected. Their judgements and overall language competence, my personal observations confirmed me that there was something wrong with the way the whole linguistic education is organized. In reality it happens so that on finishing a language course very few students possess good communication skills. Such state of things is mainly connected with the programme on which teaching is based.

On the other hand, the demand for LSP appears to be growing because learners are becoming clearer about what for and why they want to use English. In today's global economy students not only want to develop skills to read, write, listen and speak fluent English, but they also want to communicate in a way that will be recognized and appreciated by their counterparts, and want their language learning to be targeted to this goal.

In a wider sense, LSP is distinguished by its content, its topics are related to workplace or world of business and it employs specific teaching and methodology. In the majority of cases a foreign language teaching is based on traditional syllabus, which means that linguistic content is primary. In the implementation of this view the material selection is based on a particular theoretical view of the nature of language and a scholar's perception of the way according to which language is acquired. In this approach a language is viewed as a system of building blocks, and language acquisition is understood as a process of habit formation, through imitation and repetition. Unfortunately, in this approach semantic content is ignored, language items are selected solely on the basis of linguistic criteria, grammar and vocabulary are presented in isolated sentences without any thematic thread.

As an alternative, employing a holistic approach to syllabus design may be suggested, which, I believe, will prove more suitable because language is always experienced comprehensively as a whole, not being broken into bits and pieces. As a distinctive feature of holistic approach is the use of whole pieces of language – texts – to prepare the learners for the language they will encounter outside the classroom. A syllabus built on this approach will help students progress from learning about the language to considering how language works in a communicative sense.

Employing holistic approach we adhere to using texts, topics and tasks, placing greater emphasis on meaningful communication. Therefore, the texts we select will be authentic, tasks – communicative, which will make learners more engaged to respond to the texts and topics. In my opinion, this approach is more preferable in teaching English for specific purposes in Belarus, as it focuses on function, fluency and real language which students are more likely to experience outside the classroom.

In addition, using a holistic approach will allow to produce a student-centred language course which is focused on communication, and where language items are selected on the basis of learners' needs, and linguistic material is a sample of genuine everyday language (rather than more formal and bookish which we find in available textbooks), where speaking activities will occupy as much time as reading, where students will be communicating effectively in order to complete the task – all this will resemble more the natural language learning process by concentrating on the content, meaning of the expression rather than the form.

The use of holistic approach will let us achieve one more goal – the development of students' critical thinking, which is of extreme importance now because in the conditions of the formation of a democratic society it is essential to arm young people with skills of adequate interpretation of different phenomena, selection of optimal ways of behaviour in concrete life situations. By means of a foreign language we can contribute to forming competitive and in-demand individual who possesses critical thinking, able to put to doubt set opinions and judgements, capable of maintaining a dialogue, able to see the essence of a problem and find alternative ways of its solution, distinguishes a fact that can be checked from a supposition and personal opinion. It is acknowledged that a student may receive full-fledged knowledge only on condition of developing critical thinking.

Such an improved foreign language course can be a kind of break-through in forming critical thinking in future professionals which conditions of a technical university is held in check by stereotyped ideas of a specialist as a person possessing a totality of knowledge, skills and abilities. And exactly this goal could be achieved by way of developing, introducing and implementing a holistic foreign language teaching programme, which it will be possible to successfully form high intellect, self-organization, striving for self-development, creative approach, responsibility in our students.

Selection of teaching material, its further analysis, methods of work with it will allow to engage students into classroom activities which are connected with the necessity to critically comprehend and analyse this material. All this will undoubtedly contribute to the development of interest and motivation in a foreign language learning.

Holistic approach with task-based classroom activities can help overcome students' boredom, get them involved into the sessions, engage them into what is going on in the classroom, involve every single student in class activities, thus making learning more enjoyable. Task-based teaching will offer students opportunities to actively engage in communication in order to achieve a goal or complete a task.

One of the merits of the advocated improved syllabus may be the fact that it will be better suited to develop students culture-specific competencies that can help individuals behave in a more culturally appropriate manner, which is of prime importance for employees who are in jobs with some international scope. Task-based teaching will help develop knowledge, cross-national skills and abilities (in today's students and tomorrow's executives) which may be needed to perform the activities of global leaders. This language course may provide the right developmental opportunities to young people, thus helping to produce leaders who can effectively carry out global leadership tasks and activities, 'effectively manage through the complex, changing, and often ambiguous global environment' [1, p. 219].

In order to work out a communicative ESP syllabus it is necessary to make the following steps:

1. to conduct a comprehensive analysis of learner's needs and expectations;
2. to set up program goals and objectives on the basis of needs analysis;
3. to collect and analyze data on language use in the workplace;
4. to transform program goals and instructional needs into performance objectives;
5. to work out appropriate framework for developing specific materials building programme content and sequencing topics;
6. to develop program specific materials;
7. to develop appropriate evaluation mechanisms for formative and summative assessments.

Involving native speakers may significantly help in selecting better samples of language material. They may be very helpful in choosing certain situations for developing students' workplace-related skills, sharing their experience in organizing task-based teaching.

In order to collect sufficient amount of necessary data for elaborating the program, I believe it is useful to attend economics teaching sessions which will allow to select authentic program-specific language materials which in the long run will help engage students in the practice of work-related skills and abilities. After preliminary program-related work is finished, it may be beneficial to organize 'Round table' discussion with all the stakeholders to evaluate discuss the goals, objectives, principles of selecting topics and tasks, their sequencing, etc.

Working out a language course based on a communicative syllabus has a number of positive aspects. Designing a holistic syllabus may significantly improve the quality of students' foreign language training. Following the above stages and principles of syllabus design will help to produce a well-balanced syllabus. As a result of all this scrupulous work and invaluable help on the part colleagues who teach major economic subjects such a language course may be built.

This fruitful collaboration which will produce an improved communicative language course will contribute to the improving of language training in technical university. But the major outcome of all these efforts and implementation of this syllabus will be increased students' acquisition of practical language skills, development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, increase in their cross-cultural competence, promotion of cross-cultural interaction and mutual understanding.

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