

LANGUAGE TEACHING IN TECHNICAL SCHOOLS: TENDECIES WORLDWIDE

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‘Globalization’ must be one of the most popular words in many spheres of human activity nowadays. This trend requires acceptable communication skills, fast information processing, multitasking, and at the same time, it opens new horizons and gives access to ideas and experiences that people can modify and implement in problem-solving according to the given circumstances in each separate country or state. It goes without saying that English remains the most suitable means of international communication owing to its historical distribution and relative simplicity (in comparison with Chinese and Hindi, for instance). That is why numerous universities around the world choose English language training as one of the priority points in their curricula.

Though it has been a long-term tradition to point out the students’ lack of interest and motivation to gain knowledge, the situation with the educational process in Ukraine, indeed, got a lot more complicated recently due to the present general state crisis. A large number of students transferred from the other high schools, making language groups bigger and the contingent more diverse as for the level of language competency.

In order to deal with the difficulties that arise from that, we have to look for the reasons and Dr. Jaya Mishra from the Humanities Department, Chhattisgarh Technical University, India, has pointed out several interesting problems in language accusation which the teaching staff faces at their university at a regular basis [1]: lack of conductive environment at home or school level – most of student, especially those who come from rural areas, have rudimentary knowledge of the language, which causes a huge knowledge gap with some city students; strong influence of the mother-tongue – Ukrainian belongs to a different language family than English as well as any Indian language; inadequate vocabulary – most people in India read popular press, while Ukrainian students can read more fiction, but still both sides show lack of language competence in scientific and technical environment; apathetic attitude of parents; psychological blocks – which some students tend to develop due to differences in the level of knowledge; lack of practice, self-motivation and interest.

The suggested way to solving these problems is the close focus on developing self and group modes of activity. The former includes everyday reading English news, individual writing and speaking on the topic of their choice, etc, while the latter has the elements of pair and large-group activities with the abundance of quizzes and discussions.

Some other aspects of language learning in technical schools have been noted by Mark Warschauer and Carla Meskill, who conducted a thorough research on the topic in the United States of America [2]. Teachers and students are specifically ‘warmed up’ to use computer technologies in the educational process. But it is not the

point to get to know technologies or the Internet better – these are simply the means to get in touch with one's foreign colleagues to discuss the co-projects. It can be done via email, forums, satellite TV, both in classroom and at home, as the Stanford University of California does in teaching Polish, and Western Reserve University in Ohio in teaching French. The students understand that the language itself is not the aim, but essentially the device people need to achieve something. This socio-cognitive approach in language learning can be applied in classrooms as well as for the long-distance information exchange, and the subsequent accessing resources and publishing students' articles and thesis on the World Wide Web. One other thing we are not to forget is that the Internet and laptops are not complete, ready-to-use methods of learning, they are machine and environments we can use to our advantage; and don't forget to teach your students to write emails along with the essays.

From the point of view of Bogdan Pavliy from the center for Student Education Resources of Shizuoka Institute of Science and Technology, Japan [3], creative approach in teaching foreign languages in technical universities is also very important to increase the students' motivation. This includes: streaming video in your classroom; more music and literature (which is far from being applicable in official technical language, but can be used more extensively during the first years of study) in the curriculum; wide use of tele-conferencing tools, like Skype, to partner with the schools abroad; creation of interactive exercises, etc. The author then mentions interactive whiteboards, personal podcasts, and easy access to the Internet anywhere on campus, though these seem to be far off from the reality Ukrainian teachers and professors have to face on their daily basis. Judging from the present economical situation it'll be at least a decade before we lay our hands on a new technology like that, moreover, other devices might appear by that time. Thus, Ukrainian teaching staff must get even more creative under the circumstances, improving the course organization, variety and relevance of the material, appropriate difficulty level and, sure enough, instructor's enthusiasm.

The Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Communication in Brno University of Technology plans to modify the curriculum according to the present-day needs of foreign language competency [4]: for instance, the Master's course is supposed to have two compulsory exams in English, while the number of hours of English for the Bachelors is to get double. The necessity arises from the international demand for engineering specialists on the labour market.

The tasks that the language teachers face in technical schools around the world are as difficult and challenging as ever before, but absolutely feasible when using creative mind and available technologies.

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