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**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF ENGLISH TEACHERS  
AS A PROMOTER OF INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION**

ABSTRACT. The article gives a brief history of the interrelation of the American, British and Ukrainian methodological and pedagogical schools during the years of the Ukrainian independence. These relations are demonstrated by the example of the NTUU “KPI” (*National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”*) teachers’ membership in different international organizations. The problems of notions basis, coincidence of conceptual approaches and implementation of new methods and techniques into the Ukrainian practice of specialist training are discussed. The authors also give attention to the dynamics of the American and British pedagogical and scientific ideas’ impact on the introduction of new theories and practices into teaching foreign languages in Ukraine. Special attention is given to the shift to the student as the key element in the process of foreign languages teaching.

English language teaching has acquired greater attention in the context of its status as a global language. The challenges English teachers are facing can’t be met within one approach, method or technology without sharing ideas, experiences, thus bridging the gap between theory and practice.

The primary focus of this paper will be on the role of international cooperation of English teachers in bringing innovations in Education. It is claimed that any innovation is felt or observed to be a new thing for someone or some people (society), both as a result of invention or discovery. Invention is a human creation that doesn’t exist before, discovery is a creation of something which has already existed, but its existence has never been realized.

It is international cooperation with such organizations as British Council, American House, TESOL that promoted many discoveries Ukrainian English teachers have made taking part in numerous seminars, conferences, summer schools.

Long-lasting experience of our own participation in numerous International projects and programs gives us the possibility to determine the main points of positive influence of such collaboration on the improvement of teaching foreign languages at the NTUU “KPI” (*National Technical University of Ukraine “Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”*).

The innovative strategies we have formulated and implemented during the period are worth being analyzed under the following three aspects:

- harmonization of the notional basis;
- clarification of the conceptual approaches;
- implementing effective approaches, methods and techniques of the English language teaching into the practice of language training.

Harmonization of the notional basis of the English and Ukrainian pedagogical discourse is of vital importance for the development of globalized educational environment. Let’s consider this thesis on the example of interpreting and understanding the Ukrainian term «навчальна програма». This

widely used in Ukraine term can correspond to two English equivalents: **Curriculum** and **Syllabus**. In the meaning of the state standard in the Ukrainian realities we have term **National Curriculum**. But in terms of modern situation of the autonomy of higher educational institutions in Ukraine when programs and standards are worked out not in the ministries but by universities and institutes themselves this term has acquired some new meaning that corresponds to the English **Syllabus**. Understanding the essence of the term itself, and consequently, the principles of formation and the content of the regulatory documents affect directly the quality of language education. It must be underlined that at the VI National TESOL conference held at the KPI the question of educational programs development was a separate topic of discussion resulted in fruitful discussions. The ideas and approaches having been discussed were later implemented in the educational programs and then in the branch standard at the Faculty of Linguistics.

For the technical universities lecturers the question of professional communication is of vital importance. Such communication presupposes a particular sphere where not only the common fund of knowledge is shared but the terminology system as well. That is why it was very important to standardize the notional apparatus, which can promote successful professional

communication. For example, Ukrainian national methodology widely uses such terms as ‘sub-language’ and a newly one ‘professional language’. British and American methodologists use term «language for special purposes» (LSP) to indicate the language of a particular field of knowledge or industry. As a result of international activity of English teachers term ESP is accepted in the Ukrainian methodological community.

The second aspect of innovative strategies we have formulated is clarification of the conceptual approaches. It deals with the compatibility of national and foreign conceptual approaches in the process of foreign languages teaching. National methodology underlines the importance of teaching both the language and the culture<sup>1</sup>. Such approach simplifies the process of getting more interested in the learning as one of the American scientists R.L.Oxford calls «acculturation of individuals into a learning community»<sup>2</sup>.

At the TESOL-Ukraine conferences the basic approaches to the English language teaching have been always discussed: among them communicative,

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<sup>1</sup> Методика навчання іноземних мов і культур: теорія і практика: підручник для студентів класичних, педагогічних і лінгвістичних університетів / [Бігич О. Б., Бориско Н. Ф., Борецька Г. Е. та ін. / за загальн. ред. С. Ю. Ніколаєвої]. – Ленвіт: Київ, 2013. – 590 с.

<sup>2</sup> Oxford R. L., *Language Learning Strategies. What every teacher should know.* / R. L. Oxford. – Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 1990. – 342 с.

constructivism, *learner-centered*, functional/ESP and interdisciplinary approaches. Very fruitful and interesting were ideas on the three types of communication in the process of teaching – cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and interaction –, as well as the discussions on the constructivism approach, that was in the focus of the American researchers. Social constructivist approach sees the educational process as the process of the constructive development of students who are the active members of the process of acquiring knowledge. The basic principles of this approach were reflected in the published materials of the conference. Besides, the idea that any knowledge is built and formed under the influence of social and cultural factors has the right for the existence, and logically the student must be the center in the process of education. According to this theory, student is considered as «complex and multidimensional element of the system which also includes such elements as: instructor, subject, process and collaboration»<sup>3</sup>. In ESP teaching the most promising is considered to be functional and interdisciplinary approaches. The main issues of the functional approach which Ukrainian teachers have taken from their foreign colleagues and which they are

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.tesol-ukraine.com/publications/newsletter/>.

implementing into teaching practice, thus enriching them with new ideas and experience are:

- 1) the focus is on what the students need the language for, that's why careful students' needs assessment is carried out, typical situations of professional communication, linguistic context, communicative functions being specified;
- 2) materials and teaching procedures are developed in keeping with the needs analysis;
- 3) authentic language materials are used for teaching.

Realization of the functional approach tasks is greatly facilitated by means of interdisciplinary approach on the basis of interdisciplinary connections between the departments of professional education and the departments of foreign languages. Interdisciplinarity is the integral part of the educational process organization at higher technical school. It is known that contrary to the monodisciplinary principle of education the interdisciplinary approach promotes training professionals able to solve a wide range of problems moving from one knowledge field to another. Such specialists will be oriented on the life-long updating their knowledge. Integrated education and content-based second language instruction have influenced greatly the theory and practice of interdisciplinary principle implementation. Interdisciplinarity links are an

important didactic component in the professional training of translators. In the “Ukrainian pedagogical dictionary” interdisciplinary links are determined as a didactic means that presupposes complex approach to the developing education. And this, in its turn, makes possible to put into life the interconnection between different scholar disciplines with the aim of more fundamental and wider consideration of the most important notions and phenomena<sup>4</sup>. According to the authors interdisciplinary links demonstrate the complex approach to the education enabling to state not only the major elements of the content of the education but interconnections between the disciplines as well. Thus the attention is given to the interdisciplinary usage of knowledge and skills<sup>5</sup>.

In the process of translators training the interdisciplinarity is fulfilled through the interconnections of such subjects as history and theory of translation; fundamentals of translation study; practical courses of ESP translation; translation of scientific and technical literature; basics of proof-reading; translation of business and commercial correspondence; translation of

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<sup>4</sup> Гончаренко С. У. Український педагогічний словник. / С. У. Гончаренко. – Київ: Либідь, 1997. — 376 с.

<sup>5</sup> Коломієць С., Кулезньова С. «Сучасні підходи до навчання перекладу як міжкультурної взаємодії». Науковий вісник Східноєвропейського національного університету імені Лесі Українки, Філологічні науки. Мовознавство, 2016, № 6 (331). С. 212-216.

business and technical documents; stylistic, socio-linguistic and pragmatic aspects of translation of texts belonging to different genres, etc. Besides, to master the scientific-technical competence students of the first and second years are delivered the fundamental notions of scientific and technical subjects by the lecturers of the corresponding departments of the NTUU 'KPI'. It is the interdisciplinary approach that builds up the *background knowledge*, that is, the general (basic) information both for the author and the translator without which the adequate translation is impossible. In the translation of ESP texts the key role is tied to the background knowledge in terms of subject matter and the corresponding terminology competence. The development of this competence is directly connected with the level of interdisciplinary connections of language and technical departments of any technical university<sup>6</sup>.

Undoubtedly the national methodology of languages and cultures teaching has been influenced by the approach where the central place is given to the *learner-centered approach*. In the soviet methodology teacher had the central and dominant role, it was the role *teacher-controller* and *teacher-resource of knowledge*, while the main teacher's roles in the American methodology of

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<sup>6</sup> Коломієць С., Кулезньова С. «Сучасні підходи до навчання перекладу як міжкультурної взаємодії». Науковий вісник Східноєвропейського національного університету імені Лесі Українки, Філологічні науки. Мовознавство, 2016, № 6 (331). С. 212-216.



teaching languages are the roles that obligatory take into account the level of foreign language knowledge, student's personal traits and stages of mastering foreign language. "If we are to provide effective and sensitive error correction, it would seem that, as a very basic prerequisite, we need to have a very clear idea of the preferred learning styles and the learning priorities of our learners"<sup>7</sup>. According to the American authors the teacher's behavior during the educational process changes under the frame of two opposite sides: from *controller* to *facilitator*, and these two concepts present the opposite sides of the continuum: control and freedom. That is why it is only logical the changes of the teacher's roles depending on the activity and the topic of the lesson, as well as students' level. Thus the pallet of teacher's roles expands from *teacher-controller* to *teacher-assessor, organizer, prompter, participant, resource and tutor*<sup>8</sup>. It should be emphasized that this approach is nowadays considered to be the principal one in the national education. But as practice shows it still needs implementing into teaching processes of Ukrainian universities.

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<sup>7</sup> Donovan S., *How people learn: Bridging research and National Academy of sciences*, [Электронный ресурс] / S. Donovan, J. Bransford, J. Pellegrino // Retrieved January 10. – 2008. – Режим доступа до ресурсу: <http://bob.nap.edu/html/howpeople2/>.

<sup>8</sup> Harmer J., *The Practice of English Language Teaching* / Jeremy Harmer. – London & New York: Longman, 1991. – p. 239.

That brings us to the third aspect of innovative strategies formulated in the course of our participation in English teachers' international cooperation, namely implementing effective approaches, methods and techniques of the English language teaching into the practice of language training. First of all let's focus on one of the main ESP issues, namely, material development.

The innovative strategies of teaching English to specialists of University management had been discussed and practiced by a group of teachers of NTUU "KPI" within the Program Tempus TACIS (1995-1998). The cooperation with our foreign colleagues resulted in the text book *Higher Education goes European*<sup>9</sup>, the main principles of which may be summarized as follows:

1. Response to Learner' needs and interests both in terms of their specialism and level of skills in English;
2. A whole-language approach in which all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are taught;
3. The main principle of the book is "From text to talk";
4. Communicative approach was realized by means of:

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<sup>9</sup> Svetlana Kolomiets, Svetlana Kulezniove and Ninel Pepelova. *Higher Education goes European*. Edited by Victoria Appelbe and Svetlana Kolomiets. Copyright @ 1997 Svetlana Kolomiets, Svetlana Kulezniove and Ninel Pepelova. 129 pages. This book was printed at TU Ilmenau (Ilmenau University of Technology), Germany.

- a) modeling the situation – students who had a part-time job in a Publishing House got interested in the articles dealing with University Management issues;
- b) pair-work and group discussions;
- c) final Role play.

The approaches the text-book is based on reflect all the spectrum of approaches mentioned above, among them ESP/Functional approach, Learner-centered approach.

Mention should be made about interactive teaching foreign languages at technical universities. Role play as the form of interactive teaching is widely used in the text-book.

Another innovative strategy in national education was International cooperation in teaching Business English in Ukraine that was realized in the mutual project of Ukrainian Ministry of Education and British Council “Teaching Business English in Ukraine”. The main tasks of this project was: 1) to inform Ukrainian teachers about the main methods and techniques for teaching English as a second language; 2) to share the experience of the British methodology in this sphere; 3) to give any possible literature for the Ukrainian teachers; 4) to help Ukrainian philological institutes and faculties develop

modern curricula and syllabi to master English under the new circumstances of market economy.

The quality of education can be determined as a multi-dimensional phenomenon that, on the one hand, depends on the level of social, cultural and economic development of a society and, on the other hand, is a huge motivation and background of its improvement.

That is why it is impossible to isolate (not to take into account) the results of 25-year cooperation of the foreign, English-speaking and Ukrainian pedagogical societies in the sphere of foreign languages teaching based on the numerous programs, trainings, projects, seminars delivered by foreign specialists in different fields of economics, and the direct and indirect influence of all of this on the quality of the Ukrainian national education.

Nevertheless, if we focus on the foreign languages studies (English in particular), it is worth mentioning first of all that among the most influential organizations in the BANA countries (Britain, Australasia, North America), especially under the aspect of such American-Ukrainian scientific international association as TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). TESOL is known as one of the most popular organizations in this sphere and it includes 109 national associations, one of which is TESOL-Ukraine. Scientific

and methodological conferences TESOL have been one of the factors of improving English teachers qualification. Among the conferences participants you can always find KPI lectures. Thus, it was the initiative of the teachers of the Department of Theory, Practice and Translation of the English Language to host VI National TESOL conference **“The Way Forward to the English Language and ESP Teaching in the Third Millennium”** that was held in January 2001 in Kyiv at the Faculty of Linguistics, NTUU “KPI”.

The ideas shared by English teachers were reflected in the published materials of the conference. The practical results of the conference were implemented in such techniques as on-line learning, case-studies, role-plays, simulations, project work into teaching practice.

The last among mentioned above issues of the effective influence of international collaboration of English teachers on the improvement of the quality of English language teaching is sharing the experience of implementing effective approaches, methods and techniques into the practice of language education.

Every year of building Independent Ukraine has put new tasks for the national educational system considering internal and external needs for changes. For example the fact that Internet space has grown and the number of its users

has increased has made Ukraine face new challenges and, at the same time, has given new powerful possibilities for the national educational system. All these changes are now reflected in the main questions being discussed at the numerous national and international conferences: using of modern technologies in the foreign language teaching, Internet role in the acquiring foreign language, foreign language as a component of the notion 'long-life learning', English language learning in the process of globalization, etc. The modern stage of the development of Ukraine has put new goals for KPI staff (lecturers of the non-language departments) to improve their English language knowledge with the task to be more dynamic in the process of entering global scientific and educational world. These tasks are determined in "Strategies of development of international cooperation of the KPI for the period up to 2020". The English teachers' experience gained in Ukrainian-American and Ukrainian-British scientific and methodological collaboration is one of the key elements to put these strategies into life.

The perspectives of the future development of international pedagogical and methodological cooperation we see in more detailed discussions devoted to the problems of language training of professionals in different spheres of Ukrainian economy.

Summing up it is also important to point out that the quality of the language preparation is not static but a dynamic category that is constantly influenced by numerous objective and subjective factors. It is always seen as the generalized marker of the society development at one particular stage. This marker reflects the dynamics of changes and characterizes the development of one particular country in the context of the global development tendencies. The role of international cooperation in languages teaching in Ukraine is enhanced in the context of global changes by considering the English language to be the language of scientific communication and by the fact that the year 2016 is the year of the English language in Ukraine.

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