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## **TEACHING PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH TO FUTURE AGRARIANS IN NEW UKRAINIAN REALITIES**

*The article is devoted to the search of innovative ways of making agrarian students be interested in learning professional English in new Ukrainian realities: globalization, virtualization and digitalization processes. Some peculiarities of teaching English to would-be agrarians are described. Special attention is paid to the fact that in the process of digitalization of the whole country it is impossible to build a successful professional carrier without mastering computer technologies. Bearing in mind that most computer programs are written in English the authors prove the necessity of introduction of e-learning combined with professional English no matter what an agrarian student's future profession will be.*

**Key words:** *agrarian students; professional English; new Ukrainian realities; digitalization; computer programs; mastering computer technologies; e-learning.*

**Introduction.** New Ukrainian realities such as positive changes in political and social life after electing a new president and majority of his young followers in the legislative organ open new perspectives for modernizing all spheres of our life and making us closer to the European and world community. The development of higher education in Europe is taking place under the conditions of integration of scientific knowledge, indefinite and unforeseen social situations and constant growth of interdisciplinary problems. As it is stated in Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, «higher education, research and innovation play a crucial role in supporting social cohesion, economic growth and global competitiveness. Given the desire for European societies to become increasingly knowledge-based, higher education is an essential component of socio-economic and cultural development. At the same time an increasing demand for competences and skills requires higher education to respond in new ways» [1].

New world realities are connected with globalization, virtualization and digitalization processes which are considered to be the main trends of updating the world's development. Ukraine's new realities are connected with digitalization and implementation of e-learning in the academic process of higher school.

**The aim of this article** is to concentrate attention on digitalization and introduction of e-learning in the academic process of agrarian universities. Digitalization is regarded as the process of changing from analog to digital form of information. It refers to taking analog information and encoding it into zeroes and ones so that computers can

store, process and transmit such information. It is universally acknowledged that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century technology knows no bounds. This is the phase of radical changes where technology is taking over every niche and corner. Such devices as smart phones, laptops, and tablets are known to every student. Now the education system is evolving for the sake of betterment, as this generation students were not born to be confined by the limits of simple learning; their curiosity is vast and cannot be catered with educational systems which were designed earlier. If we kept teaching students the way we taught them yesterday, we would deprive them of their tomorrow. But it appeared to be not so easy to overcome traditional post-soviet approaches to university education as most of the people who rule the development of higher school in Ukraine belong to the older generation. They are reluctant to introduce any new approaches or modern technologies in education. In the research devoted to modern models of the development of university education in Ukraine O. Meshchaninov underlined that «competitive in the XXI century would be the university systems where there would be not only more professors or books in the library but those where the educators' potential would be more completely supplied by informative and communicative technologies of gaining knowledge with complete integration of the academic community into the world informative environment» [2, p. 395]. Our obsolete educational system lacks the capability to stand a chance under the new conditions. That is why a special attention is to be paid to changes in higher education to bring it to European and world standards.

In this article we are going to stress the peculiarities of teaching professional English to agrarian students as it differs from ESP (English for specific purposes) teaching to students of other non-philological specialties. As most agrarian university students are supposed to live and work in the country side after graduating from the university many of them do not consider a foreign language to be an essential part of their education. They used to think it is quite possible to work in the fields or on the farm without knowledge of English or any other foreign language. Many students would rather learn Polish if they plan to continue their professional carrier abroad. Academician S. Sysoeva underlines that «the main idea of improving higher education in Ukraine lies in reaching a radically new level of the quality of a higher school graduate's knowledge of foreign languages and professional training. Nowadays scientists, practical workers and employers are worried about the contradictions between a large amount of knowledge students gained at universities and absence of practical skills to use the knowledge in professional activity. Getting rid of these contradictions depends on the organization of the academic process at universities and improving the quality of pedagogical competence of university educators» [3, p. 3–11]. Now an English teacher has got additional means of influencing students because no matter where you live you will use a computer whether for everyday needs or for professional activity, and most computer programs are written in English. As it was declared by our new government digitalization of all spheres of life in Ukraine demands common efforts of the whole society especially of the young generation. Learning professional English for the sake of using modern computer programs and digitalizing working processes in agriculture gives students a powerful impact for mastering their foreign language skills.

**Recent research analysis.** Nowadays computer sciences and new technologies are developing so rapidly and dynamically that it is difficult to keep up with the demands they are offering to the would-be specialists. That is why new competences such as self-study and autonomy need to be developed. To research the ways an ESP teacher can influence agrarian students and motivate them to learn professional English different pedagogical and psychological methods were used. In the research concerning the assessment of professional activity of a foreign language teacher I. Zvarych outlines that «the process of assessment of teachers' professional activity supposes taking into consideration all aspects of their pedagogical work – macro- and micro indexes» [4, p. 293]. To macro indexes this scientist included students' final results in learning, credits and exams; teacher's creative achievements and qualification enhancement. Micro indexes were defined by current students' academic results, their attitude to learning, individual personal characteristics. Special attention was paid to the teacher–student relationships as they greatly influence the teaching process in general and teaching ESP to future agrarians as well. Many foreign scientists researched the motivation basis of ESP learning. R.Griggs suggests that people who are intrinsically motivated are more creative and frequently present unusual ideas and new creative solutions [5]. R.Gardner researched integrative motivation

in ESP teaching and supported the idea that intrinsic motivation provides students with a long-lasting interest in language learning, so they start to demonstrate better academic results [6]. They study the language on their own initiative and have a greater readiness for fulfilling any tasks. We share the opinions of these both scholars but in our case the number of intrinsically motivated students is not so numerous as we should like it to be. That is why we should constantly think how to motivate our students to master their skills in ESP.

**Research results.** The system of higher education in Ukraine has come through many changes, a lot of different decrees and laws were adopted, new approaches to teaching were implemented, computerization of all educational establishments was introduced. But because of absence of common understanding of current requirements for modern education and a single systematic approach to educational reforms, constant changes of ministers of education and science with their personal vision of necessary reforms the system of Ukrainian higher education remains obsolete and far from leadership position even among the post-soviet countries saying nothing about international ratings. More over it had lost the best features of soviet traditional educational system and has not gained new modern parameters. At the beginning of this century it was believed that total computerization of all educational processes would be able to better the situation in academic and scientific spheres. But in the course of time it became clear that to install computers and teach students and teachers to use them is not enough for bringing new ideas in reforming the system of education. Ukrainian universities were too dependent on the state decisions and their activity was regulated by constantly changing decrees and instructions. At that time most of Ukrainian higher educational establishments were reorganized from regular institutes into universities without any changes in their internal structure, requirements towards the level of teaching, concentration on the quality of students' knowledge etc.

A lot of efforts to improve the situation in our higher education have been made but the results are rather poor. The Law of Ukraine «About higher education» adopted in 2014 was aimed at changing the existing rules but it came into contradiction with the interests of conservatory oriented Ukrainian politicians, state employees and universities managers. As the ex-minister of science and education of Ukraine S.Kvit states in his «The road map of reforming higher education in Ukraine» the mechanisms of honest academic competition did not work and professional reputation still has not become the main capital in the system of higher education. Some of the points of academic autonomy were successfully implemented but financial autonomy of higher educational establishments had been blocked. The economic situation at Ukrainian universities was not changed. As a result there were no qualitative changes in academic life and our best universities still have no visible perspectives to occupy leadership positions in the famous international ratings [7].

On the part of universities it should be mentioned that their will to change the situation and make young people get education in Ukraine is not supported on the state

level where the idea of internationalization of education became very popular. This idea really opens unlimited perspectives for our university graduates but who will build prosperous society in Ukraine if young, talented and purposeful people stay in the West? Thinking about the future of our country university authorities understand that only bettering the quality of our higher education it is possible to bring students back to Ukraine after their training in European countries.

In our research modern approaches to teaching professional English were analyzed and practically implemented for making a right decision concerning the most appropriate approach to teaching ESP to future agrarians. Students' needs were researched and generalized in order to know for certain what students are really interested in. Contents of English text books and manuals for various agricultural specialties were under the researchers' consideration for better understanding how they correspond to modern approaches and students' needs.

It appeared that most traditional text books do not include the latest achievements in agricultural science; they simply describe the situation in this field of economy without any critical analysis or perspective ways of its bettering. That is why the English teachers of the foreign languages department at Mykolaiv National Agrarian University decided to more actively use computer technologies and introduced electronic learning (e-learning). It means students were given electronic addresses websites to look for necessary updated information and its further usage in auditorium. Electronic gadgets and various applications allow students to have access to fresh information no matter where they are: at home, in transport, at the university. Now it is not necessary to go to the library as students have e-library in their gadgets. Electronic text books will very soon replace paper books as they are compact, contain updated information and are available here and now. E-learning orients students on the new style

in education and opens vast perspectives of autonomous continuation of self-study. Constant usage of electronic devices in educational process gives students unlimited possibilities to exchange information not only with their group mates in this country. With the help of different applications they can come in touch with young people abroad to get to know what and how they learn at other universities. This step very soon proved its effectiveness as students got interested in getting professional information not from outdated books but from the newest sources. Many students did not even pay attention to the fact that most information was in English: they needed it and were ready to look up unknown words in a dictionary or ask the teacher but in any case it was a qualitatively new step in teaching English. Some students considerably improved their English by means of using the internet in group and working independently. Now it is not necessary to encourage students to learn foreign languages as they are motivated by their own interests and it is clear that a person's inner motivation is the engine on the way to further knowledge.

**Conclusion.** To summarize the materials mentioned in the article it is necessary to underline that only some steps on the way to teaching agrarian students professional English in new Ukrainian realities have been done. They are mostly connected with the idea of digitalization of all life spheres and implementation of e-learning. Electronic text books will soon replace paper books as they are compact, contain updated information and are available here and now. E-learning orients students on the new style in education and opens vast perspectives for self-study. Having comprehended the necessity of all-round computerization students understand they have no future without using computer technologies. ESP teachers are to use this idea for their benefit and more actively stimulate students' interests in IT technologies for teaching professional English.

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#### НАВЧАННЯ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ МАЙБУТНІХ АГРАРІВ У НОВИХ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ РЕАЛІЯХ

*Стаття присвячена пошуку інноваційних шляхів підвищення мотивації студентів-аграріїв до вивчення професійної англійської мови у нових українських реаліях, до яких авторами віднесено глобалізацію, віртуалізацію та діджиталізацію. В основному увагу зосереджено на процесі діджиталізації, оскільки він вимагає широкого використання нових комп'ютерних технологій, застосування яких неможливе без знання англійської мови. Автори пропонують упроваджувати електронні*

навчальні посібники і доводять, що електронне навчання з використанням сучасних гаджетів сприяє підвищенню мотивації студентів до вивчення професійної англійської мови.

**Ключові слова:** студенти-аграрії; професійна англійська мова; нові українські реалії; електронне навчання; діджиталізація; комп'ютерні програми; оволодіння комп'ютерними технологіями.

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#### **ОБУЧЕНИЕ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОМУ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ БУДУЩИХ АГРАРИЕВ В НОВЫХ УКРАИНСКИХ РЕАЛИЯХ**

Статья посвящена поиску инновационных путей повышения мотивации студентов-аграриев к изучению профессионального английского языка в новых украинских реалиях, к которым авторами отнесены глобализация, виртуализация и диджитализация. В основном внимание исследователей сосредоточено на процессе диджитализации, так как он подразумевает широкое использование новых компьютерных технологий, внедрение которых невозможно без знания английского языка. Авторы предлагают внедрять в учебный процесс электронные пособия и доказывают, что электронное обучение с использованием современных гаджетов способствует повышению мотивации студентов к изучению профессионального английского языка.

**Ключевые слова:** студенты-аграрии; профессиональный английский язык; новые украинские реалии; электронное обучение; диджитализация; компьютерные технологии; компьютерные программы.

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