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ENHANCING FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AMONG FUTURE SPECIALISTS IN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

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The article examines the problems associated with the foreign language competence development of future specialists in the field of public administration and management. A foreign language in higher education institutions is more than just a subject within the humanities field; it plays a crucial role in acquiring specialized knowledge and has become an instrument of a modern individual's professional realization. Proficiency and active use of English, the language of international communication and one of the official languages of the European Union in the professional sphere, is an urgent task for future specialists in the field of management and administration, it is simply a current "must have", a necessary and unconditional requirement of the time, because the future manager must play an important role in effective democratic governance, be able to provide public services and contribute to the competitiveness, economic growth of the country and the welfare of its citizens.

The range of problems and their corresponding solutions have been identified. It will contribute to the fulfillment of tasks for the foreign language competence development: adjusting curricula to increase the time spent on learning a foreign language for professional purposes; continuity of English language learning in each course and each semester; enhanced differentiated instruction, selection of educational material for different subgroups within the academic group of students according to the level of their language proficiency, conducting an entrance test to determine the level of language proficiency and, based on the results, dividing students into subgroups; teachers' high linguistic and methodological level of expertise, which they must constantly improve and keep abreast of the latest achievements in the field; maximum attention to the educational material content, based on carefully selected topics from professional subjects and authentic texts and speech situations from the Internet, which, being systematized and logically combined, allow one to create a holistic picture of the future speciality.

Key words: foreign language, foreign language competence, public administration and management, English for specific purposes.

Бойко Л. М. Підвищення рівня ініомовної компетентності майбутніх фахівців публічного управління та адміністрування

У статті досліджено проблеми, пов'язані з розвитком ініомовної компетентності майбутніх спеціалістів сфери публічного управління та адміністрування. Іноземна мова в закладах вищої освіти є не просто однією з дисциплін гуманітарного блоку, яка сприяє оволодінню знаннями за фахом, вона стала засобом професійної реалізації сучасної особистості. Володіння та активне користування англійською мовою, мовою міжнародного спілкування та однією з офіційних мов Євросоюзу, у професійній сфері є актуальним завданням, а для майбутніх фахівців зі сфери управління та адміністрування це просто «must have» сьогодення, необхідна і безумовна вимога часу, адже майбутній управлінець має відігравати велику роль у ефективному демократичному врядуванні, бути здатним надавати державні послуги та сприяти підвищенню конкурентоспроможності, економічного зростання країни та добробуту її громадян.

Визначено коло проблем та шляхів їх вирішення, що сприятиме виконанню завдань щодо розвитку ініомовної компетентності: коригування навчальних планів у бік збільшення часу на вивчення іноземної мови за професійним спрямуванням; неперервність вивчення англійської мови на кожному курсі та в кожному семестрі; посилене диференційоване навчання, підбір навчального матеріалу для різних підгруп всередині академічної групи студентів згідно з рівнем володіння мовою, проведення вхідного тестування на визначення рівня володіння мовою та згідно з результатами розподілення студентів на підгрупи;

висока мовна і методична кваліфікація викладачів, які мають постійно підвищувати свою кваліфікацію, завжди бути в курсі останніх досягнень у галузі; максимальна увага до змісту навчального матеріалу, основу якого становлять ретельно відібрані теми з фахових дисциплін та автентичні тексти та ситуації мовлення з мережі Інтернет, які, будучи систематизованими та логічно поєднаними, дозволяють створити цілісну картину майбутньої спеціальності.

Ключові слова: іноземна мова, іншомовна компетентність, публічне управління та адміністрування, англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням.

Formulation of the problem. The basis of effective democratic governance is a well-established and well-functioning public administration. Such governance determines the ability of public administration to provide “accessible and high-quality administrative services, manage public financial resources and property and control their use”[1] and contributes to the country’s competitiveness, economic growth and the well-being of its citizens. A civil servant, in turn, must, among other things, “constantly improve the level of his/her professional competence”[1]. Despite the martial law and the ongoing war in the country, Ukraine is systematically pursuing European integration, trying to implement crucial reforms, and constantly conducting a dialogue on joining the European Union. Here public administration and management professionals play a crucial role in this process because they are its direct participants. They need to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in response to evolving circumstances, and in this regard, proficiency in foreign languages, particularly English, which is a language of international communication and one of the EU official languages, plays a pivotal role. Thus, the ability to communicate in English is becoming a necessary and unconditional requirement of the times, so foreign language training for future public administration and management professionals is one of the significant issues facing ESP teachers. Hence, identifying the problems and determining their effective solutions for teaching English to students majoring in Public Management and Administration is relevant.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The issues of ESP teaching have been studied by such foreign and domestic researchers as T. Dudley-Evans, J. Swales, D. Belcher, J. Flowerdew, R. Hryshkova, M. Gordienko, V. Danylchenko, O. Zabolotska, S. Kolomiets, L. Morska, O. Pometun, S. Nikolaieva, N. Skliarenko and others.

The importance of English teaching methods for public administration and management professionals found expression in the works of N. Kolisnichenko, O. Ivanko, T. Romanenko, and S. Shestopalova. However, there are some issues that have not yet been covered in the literature and require further study.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the problems of developing foreign language competencies of future public administration specialists and ways to solve them based on the practical work with students of this speciality.

Presentation of the main material. Proficiency in a foreign language has become a mandatory characteristic of a modern specialist; significant qualitative changes are necessary in organizing the educational process for teaching foreign languages.

According to the Laws of Ukraine “On Education”, “On Higher Education” and other regulatory documents, a foreign language in higher education institutions is more than just a subject within the humanities field, it plays a crucial role in acquiring specialized knowledge and has become an instrument of a modern individual’s professional realization.

Recently, the current contradictions between the elevated expectations placed on university graduates, the social order for highly skilled professionals to possess proficiency

in at least one foreign language, the necessity to enhance the teaching process of foreign languages, considering the unique characteristics of organizing the educational process within higher education institutions have become clear.

There are several objective and subjective obstacles and problems here. In recognition of the significance of changes in the demands placed on higher education graduates in Ukraine, there has been an unwarranted tendency to reduce classroom hours of foreign language in the new curricula to one or two hours per week for three semesters, while higher education institutions are able to add hours for learning a foreign language at the expense of elective courses.

The next problem pertains to the arrangement of the educational process at universities. Students are expected to master scientific and highly specialized vocabulary in English, as well as read literature in their field of study, which implies that they have basic knowledge in this area. But traditionally, foreign language learning takes place in the first years of study. In turn, the study of specialized disciplines begins in the third year. This discrepancy significantly reduces the effectiveness of learning and student motivation.

The solution to this problem is to introduce a course in ESP starting from the first year of students' university education. It is believed that a high school graduate should have a B1 level of foreign language proficiency [2], and thus be ready to learn a foreign language for specific purposes. However, there is also a problematic situation here: not all secondary school graduates are proficient in English at the stated level. The reasons for this can be both objective and subjective. Therefore, the teacher needs to divide students into subgroups according to their level of proficiency, i.e. apply a differentiated approach.

One of the organizational problems of teaching English was the lack of compulsory foreign language classes in the third and fourth years after the basic course that did not allow students entering the Master's program to maintain their language level during this period and successfully pass the English entrance exam. A characteristic feature of learning a foreign language is the principle of continuity. This is one of the main principles in mastering a foreign language in the absence of a language environment.

In the absence of foreign language classes, the knowledge gained at school and in the first years of university exhibits a tendency to be transferred to passive memory or be forgotten altogether. Such a long break in learning English put students at risk of failing the entrance exam for a Master's program in a foreign language after receiving a Bachelor's degree. The solution to this problem was the introduction of additional elective hours of English language study in every first semester of each year of study at the first (Bachelor's) level.

Another problem is related to the above-mentioned one – preparation of Bachelor's and Master's graduation projects in English. Of course, not all students want to defend their Bachelor's and Master's projects in a foreign language, but for those who want to deepen their knowledge of the speciality and learn how to speak in public (which is an absolute requirement for public management and administration professionals) in a foreign language, a course of English for specific purposes and its instructors should provide such skills.

Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) aims to help students master the language as a means of communication at a professional level and to familiarize them with international experience in the sphere of public management and administration for further use in their future practical work in their field.

The ESP Core Curriculum content is focused on professional communicative competence, regarded as language behaviour specific for academic and professional

environment. The language behaviour requires the acquisition of linguistic competence (language skills and language knowledge), and the socio-linguistic and pragmatic competences needed for performing study and job-related tasks. The development of communicative competence relies on the students' ability to learn, on subject knowledge and prior experience, and occurs within a study and specialism related situational context [3].

One of the problems pointed out by T. Hutchinson and A. Waters in 1987 is that there is a mismatch between the learners' conceptual/cognitive capacities and the learners' linguistic level. ...the second language learner is someone who is conceptually and cognitively mature, but is linguistically an infant [4]. This problem concerns not only future public administration specialists, but all those who study English for specific purposes in higher education institutions. Therefore, English language teachers at Kherson State Agrarian and Economic University have developed and are conducting an entrance test for first-year students to determine their level of foreign language proficiency in order to create basic and advanced language learning programs for them, respectively, which will help create a flexible learning model.

To foster foreign language competence among students mastering in non-philological specialities, English teachers, according to R. Hryshkova, should "adhere to the principle of early professional orientation of teaching foreign language communication; introduce a cultural approach to teaching; ensure that foreign language teaching meets European standards; observe the motivated nature of the teacher's and students' speech actions; change the role of the teacher in communicating with students; create a positive emotional atmosphere in foreign language classes" [5].

Contemporary education is inconceivable without the utilization of the Internet, where new materials appear faster than in textbooks. Therefore, the problematic issue here is the constant enrichment of the professional vocabulary of students and teachers with terms and concepts from the speciality. The selection of topics for studying in the classroom is also a significant issue. In ESP (English for Specific Purposes) classes, the instructor must initially choose professional subjects for learning purposes and then select situations that are adequate for professional communication. The concept of a topic is fundamental for the entirety of foreign language instruction in higher education.

For specialists in public management and administration, the following topics are relevant for consideration and study of terminology:

- State Governance and Better Policymaking;
- Efficiency of the State's Organization and Service Delivery;
- Digital Public Administration;
- Judicial Systems;
- Fight against Corruption;
- Human Resources.

Governance and Public Administration Policy [6]. In our opinion, these are the key topics that, if systematized and logically combined, will create a holistic picture of the future speciality. In this regard, it is proposed to work in cooperation with the lecturers of graduate departments who would provide thematic plans for theoretical courses in the specialty, recommend the works of prominent scientists and specialists in the relevant field of knowledge, and help outline the range of mandatory topics in the field of study.

The source of professional information on the presented topics is texts selected from the Internet, the lexical material from which should be mastered for further use in communication. This is especially true for professional texts, since without mastering the professional information contained in them, further foreign language professional communication among students will become impossible [7]. Texts from the Internet

should be authentic, taken from professional websites in English-speaking countries, and should represent topics and situations of typical foreign language communication.

Conclusions. The development of foreign language competence of students majoring in Public Management and Administration depends on the instructor's ability to organize classes so that students will be interested in learning English for professional purposes; to motivate them, to solve problematic issues in the selection of educational material and its presentation. The topics covered in the classroom should be selected in cooperation with the lecturers of professional disciplines based on the principle of relevance to future professional activities. The authenticity of the educational material, the source of which is the global Internet, is of great importance. The teacher himself should constantly work on improving his professional level, enriching the professional vocabulary of the speciality.

Further scientific investigations on the mentioned subject may be linked to the utilization of innovative technologies in distance teaching of English for Specific Purposes.

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