Профессиональное образование

ASPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH-MEDIUM PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: Competitiveness and success of university graduates at a labour market is seen as a key goal of educational programmes, and knowledge of foreign languages, particularly English, is an essential component of such success. As a means of achieving it, TSTU is offering students a possibility to learn a profession and English language within one educational programme. Established in 2004, Centre for International Professional Training provides continuous language and professional training of bachelor, master, postgraduate students and university teaching staff for the purpose of their participation in international academic mobility programmes, joint projects, conferences and professional activities in multinational environment.

The training includes a range of courses taught in English in such areas as humanities, socio-economic and natural sciences, mathematics, technology and business. Intensive language training is at the core of the programme, but what is more important is that content and language learning occurs simultaneously, creating the synergetic effect of building a bilingual knowledge base in a subject and developing linguistic competence along with the increase of academic and professional competence.

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The curriculum also helps students to develop transferable skills that are valued by employers – analysis, research, writing, problem solving, presentational skills, and knowledge of other cultures and languages. Besides, English-medium programmes allow Russian students to experience innovative educational and professional approaches, introduce them to international best practice, and give access to global educational and research resources and facilities (laboratories, databases, libraries, etc.).

The paper discusses questions related to curriculum design, methodology and some challenges of implementing English-medium professional educational programmes.

Introduction. Curriculum design is at the heart of ensuring success and value of an educational programme. It is twice as important when a programme is delivered in a language which is not native for students. Recently there has been an enormous increase in the number of various educational programmers with English as a medium of instruction. The reasons are obvious: English today is de facto a language of international business, science, and thus, education. Competitiveness and success of university graduates at a labour market is seen as a key goal of educational programmers, and knowledge of foreign languages, particularly English, is an essential component of such success. As a means of achieving it, Tambov State Technical University is offering students a possibility to learn a profession and English language within one educational programmer.

This paper discusses what implications English as a medium of instruction has on curriculum design of a professional educational programmer on the example of one of the TSTU programmers.

International profile of TSTU. English-medium education is considered in the context of developing an international profile of TSTU, which is one of its strategic goals. TSTU has been long time working in establishing sustainable international ties with educational institutions from around the world – Austria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, UK, India, China and many other countries. These include research collaborations, student and teacher exchanges, guest lecturing and other forms of cooperative activities.

Since 2001 the university has participated in a number of international projects in the framework of the Tempus program together with various institutions from the EU, and several of these projects involved development of a joint educational programmer between Russian and European universities. Particularly, in partnership with the University of Genoa (Italy), the University of Alicante (Spain), the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (Slovakia) two-year master-degree programmmes in Environmental Law and Policies and in Automation/Mechatronics have been developed. These programmers are taught in two languages, a number of their modules delivered at TSTU in Russian and others at partner universities in English.

Also, starting 2016, TSTU is offering its own master programmers in Financial Management and Civil Engineering taught fully in English [1]. Their curricula are determined by Russian educational standards and the standards of partner universities, and it is assured before the start of the programmer that the incoming students have adequate knowledge of English.

However, curriculum design of further professional education programmers, which aim at integrating language and professional training, presents new opportunities and challenges for programmer developers.

English-medium further education at TSTU. Further education programmers in English are offered by TSTU Center for International Professional Training. Established in 2004, Centre for International Professional Training provides continuous language and professional training of bachelor, master, postgraduate students and university teaching staff for the purpose of their participation in international academic mobility programmers, joint projects, conferences and professional activities in multinational environment. At the moment it offers the following further professional educational programmers: *International Specialist in Science and Technology* and *International Specialist in Economics*. The duration of both programmers is 4 years, 720 academic hours. The training includes a range of courses taught in English in such areas as humanities, socio-economic and natural sciences, mathematics, technology and business.

The main goal of the programmers is that students develop effective oral and written communication skills necessary to carry out their professional activities in English and gain understanding of the international dimension of their field of study (science and technology / economics and business, respectively). It is expected that a successful graduate is able to: research and analyse professionally relevant publications, resources and materials in English; carry out their professional activities in English; plan and organise international cooperation activities and projects in their area of professional expertise; prepare and hold negotiations with international partners; and conduct efficient communication in an intercultural workplace.

In terms of qualification, these are further educational programmers, supplementary to the level of higher education. But at TSTU they are often referred to them as bilingual as they build on the knowledge and professional skills students develop within their Russian-language studies and supplement it with English-language knowledge. Although the programmers are open to anyone with a first-cycle university degree, the majority of students are mastering the programmers in parallel with their Russian-language course of education.

Such bilingual training has a number of advantages:

1) a simulation of the natural English-language learning environment yields a synergetic effect of simultaneous acquisition of professional and linguistic competences;

2) for certain academic fields English medium education can be said to be indispensable, as they originate and widely develop in countries over the Russian border in languages other than Russian. This is especially important for engineering science. In such branches of engineering as Computer-Aided Engineering, Mechatronics, etc. up-to-date literature is available mostly in foreign languages, particularly in English. Having the opportunity to study it within the bilingual curriculum students will receive "first-hand experience" of those disciplines. The same applies to some branches of economics, for example, Stocks and Investments, Marketing, the need to study which has arisen due to changes in the Russian economic system;

3) besides, integration of mostly interactive in its nature language learning with subjects traditionally taught in transactional manner can intensify introduction of new methodological approaches to teaching those disciplines;

4) and last but not least, bilingual educational programmers serve as an excellent framework for students and teachers academic exchanges. International mobility of students and teachers contributes to the overall internationalization of university life, which is nowadays globally understood as good practice in higher education.

Implementing CLIL methodology in English-medium programmers. As there are two main focus points of the programmer – English skills and professional knowledge, we have sought a pedagogical approach that would be dual-focused too. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) has emerged as a solution. CLIL refers to any dual-focused educational context in which an additional language, usually not the first language of the learners involved, is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content. CLIL classes can be content-driven or language-driven, depending on whether the attention is predominantly on subject-specific content or language, but both are always accommodated.

In many countries CLIL has been actively used in primary and secondary education, but it is relatively new to tertiary education.

There are many advantages to the CLIL approach: it develops confident learners and enhances academic cognitive processes and communication skills. Based on the principle "Use language to learn and learn to use language", it emphasises the idea of learning by doing, and aims to develop students' thinking skills. And research shows that learners become more sensitive to vocabulary and ideas presented in their first language as well as in the target language and they gain more extensive and varied vocabulary: "CLIL induces the learner to be more cognitively active during the learning process" [2].

CLIL is a challenging approach both for students and teachers, as it calls for a close integration of language learning pedagogy with content-oriented teaching. Thus, the more attention had to be paid to curriculum design.

Designing the programme's curriculum. The main points we have considered when developing curricula for our programmers are the following:

1) students' main motivation is better English knowledge; taking into account the fact that Initial language level of students is usually B1+ and the expected level at graduation is B2-C1, there is urgent need for extensive language block in the curriculum;

2) students come from various L1 degree programmers, thus there should be a variety of compulsory and elective courses in the programmer;

3) studies (for instance, [3]) show that professionals with English knowledge are often required in managerial roles, so there is a need for communication and management training;

4) as a further education qualification programmer, it should offer added value beside language skills development, which calls for addition of courses not included into L1 curriculum.

Taking into account these considerations we have identified the following subject cycles in our curriculum:

1) language cycle;

2) general scientific and humanitarian disciplines – expanding their background knowledge of such fields as history, science, developing vocabulary, and bridging to more specialized academic subjects;

3) general professional and specialization subjects;

4) communication and management training.

The distribution of these cycles across a four-year course of study is presented in Fig. 1.

The disciplines of the language cycle provide extensive training in different aspects of English: GE, EAP, ESP, specialized writing and speaking courses. All these courses are compulsory for all students, however, there are some elective language courses too – English for Academic Mobility, Preparation for International Exams (IELTS, PTE).

The aim of general science and humanities courses is to develop students' confidence in using English, expand students' academic vocabulary, introduce them to English academic discourse, help them adapt to English-medium lectures and tutorials through less academically challenging disciplines. They are also invaluable in developing students' cognitive skills within the framework of bilingual teaching methodology (see, for example, [4]). Besides, such courses as British and American Culture and Theory of Intercultural Dialogue provide an element of intercultural training at this stage of the programmer, as a bridge to further, more profound training in intercultural communication.

The subjects that constitute the professional cycle are numerous, they make up the bulk of the programmers. In each programmer there are designated core subjects, for example, Physics for engineering students and World Economics for business students, and there are a number of elective subjects, so that a student has an opportunity to choose their individual learning path. What is more, engineering students can choose to study courses from the business curriculum, for instance, Human Resource Management, and vice versa, some business students are highly interested in such engineering courses as Multimedia Technologies and Web Design. We believe that such practice enhances acquisition of transferable skills by our students [5].

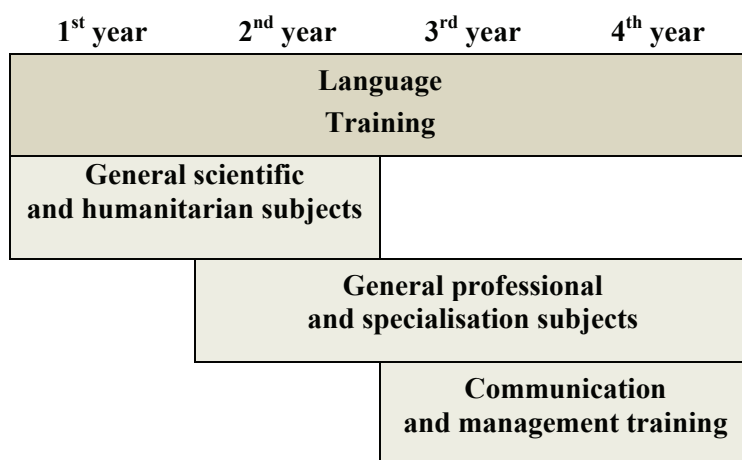| 1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year
Language Training			
General scientific and humanitarian subjects			
		General professional and specialisation subjects	
			Communication and management training

Fig. 1. Subject cycles in English-medium further educational programme

Disciplines of the communication and management cycle aim to develop students' skills necessary for successful communication in multicultural organizations, for example, to introduce them to intercultural aspects of communication, to acquaint with the tools to analyse cross-cultural conflicts in professional environment. Specifically for engineering students we offer a course in Management in Engineering, which combines a foundation in engineering with business values and skills for future management or creation of engineering-oriented businesses.

Assessment is an extremely important issue for any educational programmer. In content and language-integrated learning, assessment leads to much discussion: should content knowledge or language skills be given a priority, or should we assess both and how? In our programmer, we have decided that there will be both formative and summative assessment for every subject. It can be in oral or written form, depending on specific objectives of a course, but it any case it must be dual-focused.

Additionally, at the end of the programmer students have to carry out a final project in English, directly related to their particular field of study. They then present – defend – their project in front of the board made of both content and language teachers, and they are evaluated in terms of their project's quality and their linguistic ability. And again, English language offers added value, e.g. international outlook of the project, the use of English language resources, conceptual novelty for L1, etc.

Conclusion. In conclusion it should be reiterated that the attractiveness of English-medium educational programmers lies in the integration of content and language learning. Such programmers also develop transferable skills that are valued by employers – analysis, research, writing, problem solving, presentational skills, and knowledge of other cultures and languages. However, they require careful selection of educational approaches and subject content, and special attention to curriculum design, assessment and evaluation procedures.

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Особенности разработки профессиональных образовательных программ на английском языке в контексте интернационализации высшего образования

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Ключевые слова: интернационализация; образовательные программы на английском языке; разработка учебных планов.

Аннотация: Конкурентоспособность и успех выпускников университетов на рынке труда рассмотрены как ключевая задача образовательных программ, а знание иностранных языков, особенно английского, – важная составляющая такого успеха. В качестве средства достижения данной цели ТГТУ предлагает студентам возможность изучать специальность и английский язык в рамках одной образовательной программы. Центр международного профессионального обучения, основанный в 2004 году, обеспечивает непрерывное языковое и профессиональное обучение бакалавров, магистров, аспирантов и преподавателей университетов в целях их участия в международных программах академической мобильности, совместных проектах, конференциях и профессиональной деятельности в многонациональной среде.

Обучение включает в себя ряд курсов, преподаваемых на английском языке в таких областях, как гуманитарные, социально-экономические и естественные науки, математика, инженерия. В основе программы лежит интенсивная языковая подготовка, но важнее то, что одновременное изучение предмета и языка дает синергетический эффект создания двуязычной базы знаний по предмету и развития лингвистической компетенции одновременно с увеличением академической и профессиональной компетентности.