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LEARNING ENGLISH IN A TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY AS THE QUESTION OF CURRENT INTEREST

Innovations in the field of electronics and widespread electronic media as the most rapid means of information served as an incentive for the expansion of the English language. Mass media such as the Internet, television and the press give unlimited access to getting new information and new spheres of knowledge. And the most important thing is that 80 % of the overall information is published in English. In modern conditions it plays a crucial role in the internationalization and integration of research, generating new knowledge, innovative ideas and the creation of more productive technologies.

The reasons for the popularity of the English language can be easily explained by the historical processes and patterns of science development in England and the United States. War actions of England in the 18-th century were designed to meet commercial and colonial interests of the British bourgeoisie. England was able to oust Spain, Holland and France from many of their domains and to create the British colonial empire. England brought India and other colonies under control. That fact created agreeable conditions for accumulating capital and played a significant role in the preparation of the industrial revolution. Cultural achievements of the colonized peoples and the availability of cheap labor, the dominance of the world market and the monopoly of sales sphere of low-quality goods at inflated prices accelerated the industrialization. As a result the development of science in England and the English-speaking countries had been provided.

The growth of the number of English-speaking population became natural, especially among the nations having been colonized by the former British Empire. Currently English is the mother tongue of 322 million people and the second language for 180 million people. The English language allows you to feel the world culture better than any other language [1].

Knowledge of English will help you find a common language with foreigners while being abroad. During your trips abroad and excursions

there it will also give you the opportunity to understand the story of the guide without the assistance of a translator. If you know English you will never get lost in any country and in any unfamiliar environment. You can easily find the attractions of the city; and, ultimately, it is better to know the country in the process of communicating directly with its inhabitants.

Obviously, the higher the level of English before coming to the country the easier it will be to adapt to the nuances of language in emigration. For example getting education abroad – in any English-speaking country or your desire to immigrate obliges you to take an examination. Mainly, this examination is IELTS (International English Language Testing System) that is recognized by the majority of British, Australian, New Zealand and Canadian educational institutions. The test is designed to assess the knowledge of people who are not the native speakers. IELTS tests all skills that are necessary for living, studying and working in an English speaking environment. It consists of four parts: listening, reading, writing, speech (max – 9 points). For immigration you need to get a grade below 6 (and for some not less than 7) in all four parts.

Tomsk Polytechnic University, TPU, is an institution that pays special attention to learning a foreign language, English in particular. Currently it has agreements on cooperation in education and research with 130 universities in 30 countries, and has bilateral agreements with 23 of 57 universities included in CESAER, and 9 of the 12 universities that are members of CLUSTER [2].

The University has 55 agreements on the organization and the conditions of academic student exchanges with foreign universities, including 44 agreements with European universities, 24 of them have technical focus (technical, technological universities, universities of applied sciences, etc.). Within the short-term programs of academic mobility you may have the opportunity to participate in cultural and language training, practices (language/training/industrial/undergraduate) in foreign universities or in foreign enterprises in the period from one week to two months. The implementation of academic mobility programs is a strategic course on international cooperation in TPU. Participation in most academic mobility programs requires a certificate of language proficiency level B2 on the European scale [3].

In the practical part of the article there is given a survey of students' opinion on the necessity to study English at a technical college. The 1st year students (62) and the 2d year students (69) of the Institute of Cybernetics of Tomsk Polytechnic University have been interviewed.

The following results have been obtained:

- The first part of the research (the first-years students of TPU – 62):
- 25 % (16 students) learn English to communicate during a trip abroad;
 - 18 % (12 students) learn English for the purpose of self-development;
 - 15 % (10 students) learn English for successful employment in Russia;
 - 15 % (10 students) plan to work in a foreign company;
 - 12 % (8 students) plan to study abroad;
 - 9 % (6 students) plan to emigrate to English-speaking countries.

The second part of the research (the second-years students of TPU – 69):

- 26 % (18 students) – learn English to communicate during a trip abroad;
- 19 % (13 students) – learn English for the purpose of self-development;
- 17 % (12 students) – learn English for successful employment in Russia;
- 16 % (11 students) – plan to work in a foreign company;
- 10 % (7 students) – plan to study abroad;
- 12 % (8 students) – plan to emigrate to English-speaking countries.

There were more options in learning English suggested by students themselves such as an opportunity to teach English to their own children, a possibility of successful career growth and an opportunity to read technical literature in English especially those pieces that have not been translated into Russian due to some interpretation and translation difficulties.

Thus, we can conclude that 100% of the students having been interviewed are aware of the need to study English for their further growth and development. The survey results reported that learning English is the issue of current interest. Thus, we have seen that the English language truly presents an international culture. The knowledge of this language is the key to a successful life in modern society. But having conducted a survey among the 1st and the 2d year students of TPU, we can see that the 1st year students find it necessary to master English for their successful career-to-be but later they change their opinion on the point. In the process of learning the 2d year students begin to realize that English is not a necessary factor for their self-development any more though it is still of importance.

Studying technical disciplines in universities is closely related to the study of technical English which is very specific. Technical documentation for various foreign instruments is written in technical English that is why technical texts in English are required to be studied. Technical literature in English is characterized by being sophisticated and having complex grammar forms, e. g. passive constructions, infinitives, inversions, etc. It should be remembered that technical texts (books) in English are to be translated so that any expert in a particular technical area keeps up with what is going on in scientific sphere. That is why a translator presumably must not know only English, but also should possess some technical knowledge. All this confirms the need to learn English in technical universities which is repeatedly supported even by our own experience [4].

References

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