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FEATURES OF THE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN AGRARIAN UNIVERSITIES

Summary: The article provides for the preconditions, which force universities to implement innovations in the process of foreign language teaching to meet present-day students' needs and expectations. The main innovative organizational and methodological measures implemented by agrarian universities to enhance efficiency of the process of foreign language teaching have been identified. In particular, pride of place is given to the student-centered language teaching practice, the development of pragmatic competence for professional communication, the use of active and interactive methods such as discussions, case studies, project development, round tables, debates, forums, brainstorming, and case-method to make the studies more efficient, the formation of the student's self-motivation that is required to successfully learn foreign languages, etc. A special focus is placed on the techniques and materials used to foster motivation to learn foreign languages among students, the promotion of the balanced development of all kinds of language activities such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Furthermore, the author has identified the additional activities being implemented under the innovative approach to foreign language teaching in agrarian universities.

Keywords: foreign language teaching, innovations, innovative approach, agrarian universities, higher education.

Statement of the problem. The overall globalization and technological advances, as well as the generation and implementation of new technologies in the agrarian sector show a clear need for agrarian universities to be innovative in their approach to preparing students for making their way up in a fast changing business

environment. Such competitive business environment forces universities to equip current-day graduates with the proper skills to meet employer demands. Nowadays, a certain pride of place is given to international rankings of universities, and high-quality student recruitment is a key determination of such league ranking, in addition to scientific and pedagogical potential quality, quality of research and scientific activities, resource and infrastructure provision, etc. One of the ways of employability enhancement is the provision of graduates with foreign, in particular, English, language skills. This raises the challenge of acquiring sufficient proficiency in English as it is considered a global tongue and increasingly perceived across the globe as the basic skill that is essential for those interested in carving out a career for themselves. In light of this, a plenty of agrarian universities have redesigned their curriculums and programs, and extended the scope of English provision by introducing the courses “English for Occupational Purposes”, “English for Specific Purposes” etc. The students who have attended these courses will adapt to their work conditions and employ in their field of expertise more easily and in less time. “Their command of the English language must be such that they can reach a satisfactory level in their specialist subject studies” [4, p 396].

Analysis of recent research and publications. The issues of the application of innovative approaches to foreign language teaching in universities have been highlighted by a great number of domestic and foreign authors. In particular, N. Halikova, A. Shchukin, I. Kudriavtseva, O. Alekseeva associate the introduction of innovations in the process of teaching foreign languages primarily with the implementation and application of new techniques, technologies, and methods of teaching foreign languages. Such Ukrainian scientists as V. Bondarenko, O. Vasylenko, R. Hryshkova and H. Zakharov focus on the innovative aspects of the application of interactive methods in learning foreign languages. The works of N. Bondarenko, E. Kravchenko, O. Litvynova, L. Lychko are devoted to the innovative communicative approach to foreign language teaching.

The foreign researchers such as E. Aurebach, B. Bjorkman, J. Richards, E. Roulet, F. Sierra focus mainly on the competency-based approaches to foreign

language teaching. M. Butler-Pascoe has identified the main models of teaching English for specific purposes.

Highlighting previously unsolved parts of the general problem. In view of the foregoing, the issue of improving the application of innovative English teaching approaches is understudied and of particular interest nowadays. The difference between the general foreign language approach and innovative approaches to foreign language teaching is left in abeyance.

Goal of the article. The main goal of this article is the identification and analysis of the innovative approaches to foreign language teaching in agrarian universities.

Presentation of basic material of the research. Following the lead given by the Ukrainian government, 2015 has been declared the Year of English Language, and since that time a very impressive series of activities and initiatives aimed at promoting foreign language teaching and fostering linguistic diversity have been implemented by agrarian universities. From this standpoint, the application of innovative approaches to foreign language teaching to improve student language practices in universities is considered to be crucial to training professionals in the agrarian sector and facilitating the graduate employability in a fast-paced world. It will help improve the quality and effectiveness of educational process by broadening teaching potential and motivating students.

First and foremost, the indispensable prerequisite for efficient implementation of innovations in the process of the foreign language teaching is the creation of a favorable communicative environment, which could stimulate the students' interest in interacting in their target language, and offer vast practice opportunities.

At the present stage, the main innovative organizational and methodological measures implemented by agrarian universities to enhance efficiency of the process of foreign language teaching are as follows:

- a focus of the process of foreign language teaching on the creation and development of both written and oral professional communication skills, the development of pragmatic competence for professional communication, the effective

self-study arrangement in leaning foreign languages by means of the learning and teaching support network, the learning and teaching kits and programs that claim to be inquiry-based, by constructing high-quality teaching instruments and tools, and providing teaching materials available in the learning management system, other information and materials available in the Internet that support the students' learning process and exceed academic standards, a communicative teaching emphasis on the task-oriented, student-centered language teaching practice, the implementation of the activities that integrate listening-comprehension with speaking skills;

- the use of active and interactive methods such as discussions, case studies, project development, round tables, debates, forums, brainstorming, playing techniques and case-method to make the studies more efficient, the formation of the student's self-motivation that is required to successfully learn foreign languages; the development of a set of techniques used to foster motivation to learn foreign languages among students; the promotion of the balanced development of all kinds of language activities such as listening, speaking, reading and writing by creating communicative language classrooms, promoting megacognitive thinking, enhancing critical thinking skills through reading comprehension; enhancing the students' ability to express their thoughts freely and facilitating higher-order thinking skills; mastering the most critical functional elements of the language system; altering teacher incentives to achieve teaching quality and to enhance student learning;

- the definition of the teaching goals and objectives, content, methods and techniques; the development of training programs taking into consideration assessment and learning objectives, learning styles, delivery modes and methods, delivery style, timelines, course content through proper selection of linguistic materials, measurement of the training effectiveness; the development of training programs with regard to the students' performance level and catering to their needs, especially the students who have had the internship work in other countries with the aim of gaining some experience in their field of expertise, and regarding the student's participation in language immersion, future prospects meeting the requirements of the European recommendations for foreign language proficiency and teaching;

– the introduction and implementation of such principles of foreign language teaching as the consideration of individual learning experience of each student, the differentiation of level qualification and learning outcomes, the consideration of the age related factors in language learning and the age related differences in students' motivation to learn English, their freedom of choice, the promotion of self-study and independence of mind and thoughts, the conditions of development of the creative potential of a future agronomist, the actualization and assessment of expected learning outcomes [2; 3];

– the design of the psychological and pedagogical conditions that would develop the teacher's metacognitive competence, the students' cognitive and creative potential;

In addition, the innovative approach to foreign language teaching provides for:

– application of innovative pedagogical methods based on foreign language self-tuition and dissemination of leaning outcomes;

– creation of the conditions for language learning and teaching flourishing;

– enhancement of skills to use learner-centered teaching methods and techniques that promote transversal competencies;

– delivery of material based on real situations and topics which are relevant for students;

– development of teacher-training materials, programs and curricula which reflect best practice across the EU;

– promotion of skills to use open and digital learning resources, facilitating the development of digital skills, increase in the capacity to deliver material using ICT;

– generation of the ready-to-use materials and ideas, and problem-solving techniques to support the application of interdisciplinary and holistic approach to foreign language teaching;

–development of teaching techniques and methods for working with heterogeneous classrooms where students have a wide range of previous academic achievement and performance and different levels of oral and written proficiency in foreign languages;

– development and enhancement of appropriate high-level skills such as critical and creative thinking, metacognition and other basic competences by means of applying innovative teaching methods, boosting the quality of learning languages;

– implementation of the activities aimed at reducing low achievement in basic competences, the promotion of peer exchange and active participation under the joint language learning projects;

– development of instruments and tools for language learning, teaching and skill assessment;

– identification and planning of personal learning and professional development needs and competences, promotion of confidence in the processes of innovative education/teaching responsive to social and cultural diversity;

– promotion of sharing the experience of colleagues in improving the situation in the educational sphere, engaging in cross-cultural learning experience, exchanging ideas and creating a network for future international cooperation;

– development of broad understanding of practices, policies and systems of education of the countries of target languages, intercultural sensitivity and awareness and common educational and training opportunities;

– improvement in foreign language competencies, enlargement of professional vocabulary, and promotion of the EU linguistic diversity;

– provision of teaching staff members with the opportunity to improve their language and pedagogical skills and to undertake in-service training in the countries of target language;

– promotion of correspondence and exchange between students of the countries of target language to broaden students' horizons;

– incorporation of performance criteria into the curriculum for creating the assessment system [2; 4].

It is immediately apparent from the foregoing that all the above innovative activities in foreign language teaching being implemented by universities will enable to meet students' needs and expectations easier. Moreover, these measures should be

aimed at the acquisition of foreign language skills, which are not “once and for all” but updated over a lifetime.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. Nowadays, the generation and implementation of new technologies in the agrarian sector forces agrarian universities to introduce innovations in their approach to preparing students for making their way up in a fast changing business environment. One of the ways of employability enhancement is the provision of graduates with foreign, in particular, English, language skills. This raises the challenge of acquiring sufficient proficiency in English as it is considered a global tongue and increasingly perceived across the globe as the basic skill that is essential for those interested in carving out a career for themselves. In light of this, a plenty of agrarian universities have redesigned their activities and initiatives aimed at promoting foreign language teaching and fostering linguistic diversity to meet students’ needs and expectations.

The above findings could direct further research that seems essential for better understanding of the innovative methodologies and tools for teaching English in agrarian universities.

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ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ІННОВАЦІЙНИХ ПІДХОДІВ ДО ВИКЛАДАННЯ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ В АГРАРНИХ УНІВЕРСИТЕТАХ

Резюме: У статті висвітлено передумови впровадження аграрними університетами інновацій у процес навчання іноземним мовам студентів аграрних спеціальностей. Визначено та схарактеризовано основні інноваційні організаційно-методичні заходи, що здійснюються університетами для підвищення ефективності процесу навчання іноземним мовам. Особлива увага приділяється застосуванню особистісно-орієнтованого підходу в процесі викладання іноземних мов, застосуванню комунікативного підходу для формування прагматичної компетенції при вивченні іноземної мови, використанню активних та інтерактивних методів, таких як дискусії, кейс-стаді, розробка проєктів, круглі столи, диспути, форуми, мозковий штурм, кейс-метод, з метою формування у студентів мотивації до вивчення іноземних мов. Особливу увагу приділено матеріалам, що використовуються у процесі

навчання з метою стимулювання студентів аграрних спеціальностей до вивчення іноземних мов, а також збалансованому розвитку всіх видів мовної діяльності, таких як аудіювання, говоріння, читання і письмо. Крім того, визначено додаткові заходи, що впроваджуються в рамках інноваційного підходу до викладання іноземних мов в аграрних вишах.

Ключові слова: навчання іноземним мовам, іновації, інноваційний підхід, аграрні університети, вища освіта.

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ОСОБЕННОСТИ ИННОВАЦИОННЫХ ПОДХОДОВ К ПРЕПОДАВАНИЮ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ В АГРАРНЫХ ВУЗАХ

Резюме: В статье освещены предпосылки внедрения аграрными университетами инноваций в процесс обучения иностранным языкам студентов аграрных специальностей. Определены и охарактеризованы основные инновационные организационно-методические мероприятия, осуществляемые университетами для повышения эффективности процесса обучения иностранным языкам. Особое внимание уделяется применению личностно-ориентированному подходу в процессе преподавания иностранных языков, применению коммуникативного подхода для формирования прагматической компетенции при изучении иностранного языка, использованию активных и интерактивных методов, таких как дискуссии, кейс-стади, разработка проектов, круглые столы, диспуты, форумы, мозговой штурм, кейс-метод и т.д., с целью формирования у студентов мотивации к изучению иностранных языков. Особое внимание уделено материалам, которые используются в процессе обучения с целью стимулирования студентов аграрных специальностей к изучению иностранных языков, а также сбалансированному развитию всех видов речевой деятельности, таких как аудирование, говорение, чтение и письмо. Кроме того, определены дополнительные мероприятия, внедряемые в рамках

инновационного подхода к преподаванию иностранного языка в аграрных вузах.

Ключевые слова: обучение иностранным языкам, инновации, инновационный подход, аграрные университеты, высшее образование.