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## PROSPECTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF LEARNER-CENTERED ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES

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The article reveals the concept of learner-centered learning; on the basis of the analysis of scientific and pedagogical literature the characteristic features of learner-centered learning of English in technical universities have been identified, namely the emphasis on active rather than passive English learning, focus on advanced studying and understanding, students' increased responsibility and accountability, interdependence between the teacher and the student, mutual respect in the relationship between the instructor and the learner, reflective approach to the learning process on the side of both the teacher and the student, and possibility for the student to develop an independent learning trajectory, "a route map", especially in senior courses.

The author emphasizes that the main goal of the learner-centered approach to teaching English in higher technical education institutions is to organize such a learning environment in which the students themselves will be able to determine the vector of their foreign language learning. The paper determines the technology of teaching English at technical universities to organize effective learner-centered learning: practice-oriented content-centered learning of English, and process-oriented learning content. The author analyzes the advantages and difficulties of applying student-centered pedagogical strategies in the process of teaching English in higher technical education institutions, and concludes that the student-centered approach in the process of teaching English in higher technical education institutions is not fully used today; this is primarily due to difficulties of both organizational and psychological nature. Lack of motivation to learn a foreign language on the side of students is one of the main factors hindering the implementation of the above-mentioned approach; lack of awareness of teachers and students about the benefits of student-centered approach; difficulties associated with the whole traditional pedagogical system, such as assessment and rigid curriculum, and a large number of students in the group – all this also creates serious obstacles to real progress in student-centered learning of the English language in a technical university.

**Keywords:** educational process, learner-centered approach, English language, motivation, teaching method, students' autonomy, technical universities.

**A. Подорожна** «Перспективи впровадження студентоцентрованого навчання англійської мови у технічному ЗВО».

У статті розкривається поняття студентоцентрованого навчання; на основі аналізу науково-педагогічної літератури вирізняються характерні риси студентоцентрованого навчання англійській мові у технічному ЗВО: акцент на активне, а не пасивне навчання; орієнтація на поглиблене навчання та розуміння; підвищення відповідальності та підзвітності студента; взаємозалежність між викладачем та студентом; взаємна повага у відносинах між викладачем та студентом; рефлексивний підхід до процесу навчання з боку як викладача, так і студента; можливість розробки студентом самостійної траєкторії навчання, "маршрутної карти", особливо на старших курсах.

Автор підкреслює, що основна мета студентоцентрованого підходу до викладання англійської мови у вищій технічній школі – організація такого середовища навчання, за якого студент сам зможе визначати вектор свого іншомовного навчання. У роботі визначаються технології викладання англійської мови у вищому технічному навчальному закладі з метою організації ефективного студентоцентрованого навчання: практико-орієнтоване, змістовно-центроване навчання англійської мови, процесуальна спрямованість змісту навчання. Авторка проводить аналіз переваг та труднощів застосування студентоцентрованих педагогічних стратегій у процесі викладання англійської мови у вищих технічних навчальних закладах і приходять до висновку, що студентоцентрований підхід при

викладанні англійської мови у вищих технічних навчальних закладах сьогодні використовується не в повному обсязі, це пов'язано насамперед із труднощами як організаційного, так і психологічного характеру. Відсутність мотивації до вивчення іноземної мови з боку студентів є одним із основних факторів, що перешкоджають реалізації вищезгаданого підходу; недостатня обізнаність викладачів та студентів що до переваг студентоцентрованого підходу; труднощі, пов'язані з усією традиційною педагогічною системою, наприклад, оцінка та жорстка програма навчання, велика кількість студентів у групі – все це також створює серйозні перешкоди для досягнення реального прогресу у студенто-центрованому навчанні англійській мові у технічному ЗВО.

**Ключові слова:** навчальний процес, студентоцентрований підхід, англійська мова, мотивація, методика навчання, автономія студентів, технічні університети.

**Problem statement.** The development of the global educational space, wide cultural exchange, intensive search and implementation of learner-centered approach to educational practice require rethinking the current forms and content of higher technical education. Greater awareness of the above-mentioned changes helps to define the strategy and tactics of building an innovative educational process in the universities, based on learner-centered approach, involving educational aims in the context of developing students' ability to solve problems in the sphere of professional activity; organization of the educational process, based on individual educational route or individual development trajectory, aimed at developing subject-subjective interaction, establishing conditions for the development of students' experience of independent solutions of cognitive, communicative, organizational, moral and other problems of future professional activity in the context of learner-centered educational paradigm.

The current paradigm change in university education involves a focus on learner-centered outcomes, in which learning results play leading role and become the main outcome of the training process for the student as part of knowledge, understanding, and abilities, rather than the learning means and methods, used by teachers to achieve these results. An English language proficiency at a sufficient level is a necessary part of the training system in a technical university. Knowledge of a foreign language gives future specialists access to foreign information sources, contributes to the expansion of the boundaries of professionally oriented communication, without which the activity of a specialist in any profile is impossible today. The relevance of the student-centered approach is caused by its importance for the whole system of training of qualified personnel, as the key competencies that a graduate of a higher educational institution should have, have been highlighted and largely determined the increased requirements for higher technical education in general and for foreign language teaching in particular.

**Literature review.** Learner-centered approach was proposed by F.H. Hayward in 1905. Having been further developed in the scientific work of D. Dewey (1956), in the 1980s this concept was transformed into a theory of education by Carl Rogers. SCL is also related to the works of Jean Piaget (developmental learning) and Malcolm Knowles (self-directed learning). V. Melnichuk and N. Ogorekova in their works have analyzed learner-centered approach and defined it as a process of achieving planned results according to educational standards.

According to V. Prokopyev, learner-centered approach is a tool to upgrade the quality of education. L. Kosmacheva, E. Korovushkina consider above-mentioned training as the most perspective system of higher education. Moreover, learner-centered approach is considered in the scientific papers of foreign researchers as a factor, having a direct impact on the quality of education (Wahlen S., Curvale B., Dearlove R., Crozier F., Pehu-Voima S., Laufer M., Brockerhoff L., Huisman J., Lenn MP etc.).

Despite the interest of scientists and methodologists in learner-centered learning in the context of English language teaching, many technical universities in Ukraine still use traditional methods of English language teaching (subject-centered learning), where the teacher has the main position and not always is ready to give up their traditional role in the context of teaching English language and give students the autonomy and freedom of action.

**The purpose of the article** – to analyze the concept of learner-centered approach, to identify the benefits and challenges of applying student-centered pedagogical strategies in the process of English language teaching in technical universities.

**The statement of the main material.**

The traditional model of technical university education is based on pedagogical technologies, which proved to be ineffective in modern socio-economic conditions. Lectures, practical and laboratory classes under the guidance of a teacher

when students perceive information passively can no longer prepare an engineer graduate for future professional life[4]. Classical methods aimed at memorizing, cramming and revising the educational material proved insufficient for the development of competencies required for a future highly qualified specialist. Modern pedagogy requires a shift of focus from the English teacher to the student in the framework of using the principles of learner-centered approach. In most Ukrainian technical universities, the idea of learner-centered English language teaching is widely discussed, but the implementation of this paradigm presented a multitude of challenges.

Learner-centered learning is the main principle of the Bologna reforms in higher education, implying a shift of focus from the knowledge translation by the teacher to the active educational activity of the student. The focus on educational outcomes makes the student "the central figure of the educational process and his/her interests and educational needs are the basis for the professional and educational program development. This is ensured by the possibility of building a student's flexible and individual educational trajectory. Learner-centered learning is considered as a complex holistic psychological and pedagogical system, having its own structure that takes into consideration the interdependence of form and function. This system is characterized by ambivalent nature and is a behavior model of a teacher and a student in constantly changing conditions. The above-mentioned system, on the one hand, includes the construction and reconstruction of knowledge by students for more effective learning; the process of qualitative changes, happening with him/her as a continuous process of transformation, which aims are to enhance the student's capacity, develop his/her creative abilities, facilitate the transfer of skills, including problem solving, critical and reflective thinking. On the other hand, the system requires a qualitative change in the teacher's activity, providing great opportunities for self-development, providing flexibility in the development of course or program component tools and in the application of new teaching or research tools. Based on the analysis of scientific and pedagogical literature, we can identify the following characteristics of student-centered learning: an emphasis on active rather than passive learning; a focus on deep learning and understanding; increased student's responsibility and accountability; interdependence between teacher and student; mutual respect in the

relationship between teacher and student; reflective approach to the learning process by both teacher and student; opportunity for students to develop an independent trajectory of learning, "route map," especially in the last year of studies.

The central goals of the realization of foreign language professional training of future engineers in a higher education institution:

- to provide motivational orientation of the student's personality to develop foreign-language professional competence based on understanding its role in the professional engineering activity, a strong need to master it, activity and independence in its development, in particular taking advantage of the opportunities of non-formal, informational education;

- to ensure the integration of substantive (humanitarian, technical, pedagogical, foreign language training) and activity (training, educational, research, practical, independent work) components of professional training based on the analysis of potential, the definition and strengthening of the content, taking into consideration the principles of continuity, consistency in mastering education of future engineers professionally significant information in a foreign language;

- to apply interactive technologies in the development of components of foreign-language professional competence of students (linguistic, professional-communicative, pragmatic) during formal, non-formal, informational training of a specialist;

- to create organizational and pedagogical conditions for optimum and effectiveness of the process of English language professional training at all its stages (bachelor's and master's levels of students' training);

- to provide monitoring of changes in the development of English-language professional competence of the future engineer, correction at different stages, if the need arises.

The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature on the subject of the study allows us to emphasize the absolute advantages of student-centered learning, aimed at obtaining quality training of future specialists in the field of a foreign language, the effective organization of the teaching process: students plan the choice of useful modules and disciplines on their own; the individual qualities of the students in the process of educational activities are taken into account by making up personal curricula; students are given the opportunity to build a personal individual educational trajectory; there is no need to repeat

courses taken in school; analysis of own progress and achievements; increased student and teacher mobility; interdisciplinary approach; opportunity to study selected disciplines in a short period of time.

As a result, the perceived expectations for students are increased responsibility for the educational process; development of self-organization and self-control abilities; setting clear learning goals; development of learning strategies, including in-class work and projects; assessment of the achievements in the educational process. The expected result is a specialist, a professional with creative thinking, orientation to continuous self-development, self-organization, focused on innovative activities.

The main goal of student-centered approach to English teaching in technical universities is the organization of the learning environment, in which students can determine the vector of their English learning by their own. In this case, there is a lack of students' self-confidence for active participation in foreign language activities [3]. Students often do not make enough effort to develop their foreign language communicative skills, which have been formed during in-class learning classes. The process of English learning is complex; as a rule, class hours are not enough, considerable efforts and focused practice as part of independent work are required. Due to the lack of clear learning objectives, students are more comfortable doing the usual types of tasks offered by the teacher. In our opinion, that is because many students find it difficult to get out of the habit of being only recipients of knowledge and stop perceiving the teacher as the leading link in the learning process. All of which contribute to students' lack of initiative and acceptance of a passive role.

The structure and content of English learning are not restricted to clearly defined forms of training, but they are changed depending on the goals of the students. Interdisciplinary or interdepartmental cooperation can become a perspective type of activity in the structure of learner-centered learning. In this case, the student receives not a single piece of information on a particular subject, but develops a holistic system of knowledge.

Generally speaking, teachers divide English teaching into traditional didactic units: reading, speaking, listening, and writing, developing only one skill in each separate topic. The student-centered work program provides for the development in the complex and in the context of the future specialist's professional competencies development. An important element in the

structure of English learning is quality assessment of knowledge. The student-centered approach assumes an external evaluation. English teachers view it with some apprehension because external auditing is associated with limiting the teacher's role in the training process. We believe that independent assessment can lead to an overall improvement in the quality of education and become the starting point for the transition from the traditional to student-centered paradigm. Learner-centered educational technologies change the functions of both English teacher and the student: the teacher becomes a tutor-consultant of educational interaction rather than simply a performer of informational and controlling functions. The student has more autonomy in choosing the ways of learning English material. Learner-centered educational technology promotes differentiation and individualization of students' learning activities, implementation of individual learning trajectory. Configuration of roles in pedagogical assistance shifts to the student. However, it can lead to the fact that English teachers can face discipline problems in the class, where there has always been a strict subordination. Under such circumstances, students have the opportunity to influence the learning process and freely express their opinions, so both students and teachers are likely to feel uncomfortable, which can lead to conflict situations. Contact will not be established if the instructor dominates in English class and considers himself or herself the main educational resource. It is important to clarify that the teacher is not the only source of knowledge, that students are also a provider of information, and this can facilitate knowledge exchange. In this context, the English teacher needs to change his or her role from expert to facilitator.

Based on the analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature under the theme of research, it may be argued that the requirement to be a learning consultant for the professional training of an English teacher is not entirely new. In defining the content of this concept scholars often refer to studies in psychotherapy and educational psychology [4].

The ability to be an advisor, a consultant as a basic element of student-centered learning involves:

- the ability to detach from one's own normative ideas about English learning;
- the tendency to consider the student as a subject of learning and to approve the ways of English learning chosen by him/her;

- ability to visually and accessibly characterize possible forms and methods of language work (authenticity, transparency, concreteness). Compared to traditional English learning, based on teacher's transfer of knowledge, the student-centered approach focuses on the creative process. In this case, students not only gain knowledge, but also try to share their personal visions of the subject matter, using the background information available. Student-centered learning motivates students to participate in English classes and discussions more actively. The exchange of knowledge serves as a means of organizing a common space, giving an opportunity to present their own ideas as well as to express their own point of view. Students cease to be a passive object of influence from the teacher and become an active subject of the teaching and learning processes.

In addition, foreign language teachers face difficulties in motivating students to be creative during their studies. In order to motivate students to be active, more efforts are required from English teachers. The students' low motivation is closely connected with the fact that they are not ready to work in groups and teams (group learning), and this is a major problem for students to implement of student-centered approach.

Scientists have proven that one of the most effective ways to increase motivation to learn English in a technical university is the professional orientation of the learning process. According to G. Savchenko [2], Consideration of professional skills necessary to carry out professional activities and organization of training in such a way that a future engineer would master a foreign language in the process of carrying out activities close to the future professional one, is the most perspective direction of training specialists in a technical university. Using the potential of organizing professional training as a quasi-professional activity of the student provides awareness of the place and role of foreign language competence in the performed functions of a future specialist, and therefore motivates to increase the level of this ability.

Thus, one of the main conditions for the development of foreign-language professional competence of students is to provide positive motivation for mastering foreign-language communication skills (professional and cognitive interest, positive attitude to learning, the need for professional self-improvement) on the basis of the development of awareness of the importance of learning a foreign language for the future

profession and understanding the level of responsibility. In order to develop motivation in students, N. Melnik points out the necessity of selecting interesting material to be used in the class (for example, an interesting English text for professional purposes, video extracts from documentaries and feature films in English, etc.). Special attention should be paid to methods of organizing the interaction of future engineers in English class, as follows: using team and group forms of work (games-contests, role-playing and business games, playing dialogues, etc.).[1].

The student-centered strategies involve students taking the lead in the learning activities and the teacher's role is limited to supporting them. They can be implemented both in small learning groups and in English classes with a sufficiently large number of students. It is important that the tasks to be evenly distributed among the group members. Group training in an English class is effective when:

-It should be a *positive interdependence*: the students in the group should understand their need to learn from each other in order to complete the task. This is achieved through joint assessment, mutual goals, allocation of resources, and assignment of roles.

-*Individual responsibility*: Individual student contributions need to be monitored and their results need to be communicated to individual group members and the group as a whole. This can be done through individual tests or by requiring each member of the group to demonstrate what they have learned or to answer questions.

-*Group interaction*: students support each other in the learning process. They explain, discuss, and let others know what they have learned.

- *Social skills*: Teachers need to develop these skills for effective group work. Among them are practical guidance, finding solutions, the establishment of relationships of confidence, communication and conflict management.

- *Group process*: students analyze how well they achieved their goals.

In order to organize effective student-centered learning in the process of English teaching at a higher technical educational institution, it is appropriate to apply the following forms of teaching:

- practice-based approach to English teaching, involving special exercises where students focus their attention on grammatical rules and forms of expression of English definitions only implicitly. Foreign language learning is

natural process, as students work with authentic materials. Therefore, this type of learning is based on the principles of constructivism:

a) *integrated approach* to learning content, carried out through the using authentic materials;

b) *building on current reality* - training sessions have a project-oriented character;

c) *cooperative learning* - group forms of work predominate.

- content-centered teaching of a foreign language implies that it is authentic and motivates the student. Bilingual learning could be taken as an example (teaching a special subject in English), in which there is a connection with reality, real life through the content of a special subject, the knowledge of which is necessary for the professional activities of the student;

-procedural orientation of the learning content is based on the data of communicative didactics, which, in turn, focuses on the development of the following types of speech activity - speaking, reading, listening, writing. These types of speech activities are mental processes, implying the use of special learning technologies, for example, technologies for constructing a plan of expectations, revealing the meaning of unknown lexical elements in listening and reading, planning technologies, technologies for correcting mistakes in the process of speaking and writing.

Therefore, the application of the above-mentioned technologies should be a necessary part of student-centered English classes in higher education. However, it should also be emphasized that teacher-centered classes are used when students have not yet mastered the learning strategies necessary to master the learning material. In these cases, the teacher, for example, can explain grammar or vocabulary material, serving as a model for how to apply English lexical or grammatical constructions into practice and extend the students' foreign language learning strategy.

Application of student-centered approach in the process of English teaching should be carried out when students have well mastered the necessary learning strategies and use them correctly. Students should be taught how to manage their own learning process, how to evaluate its effectiveness, and how to make the right choice of learning technologies. If the class is introduced to a variety of learning technologies, the student can choose matching tools to his/her learning style and the problem addressed.

We also wish to emphasize that the effectiveness of the student-centered approach in

the process of English teaching in technical universities could be shown when additionally using the information technologies and the Internet. Students use search engines when collecting information in English, using network they can publish their works, looked through by the teacher and groupmates, discuss their research in Internet chat room.

Accordingly, the following goals are being achieved:

- Students are directly involved in the process of goal setting.

- Students independently search for scholarly sources and authentic material in a particular area of knowledge to research, develop, and present findings in English to the group.

- Students work in teams, small groups, and have personal responsibility; they communicate as a group; they solve problems together; there is interpersonal communication; and there is a facilitating relationship.

- Students are introduced to a student-centered approach to learning and discover the possibilities of the Internet.

- students actively participate in the class, taking into consideration the interests of the group and the framework conditions.

The teacher works as an assistant, helps to select English material, coordinates the work, advises when problems arise, discusses the selected material with the students and helps to set goals for the work. The teacher also evaluates students' work, and ways of assessing can be discussed with students. The teacher should keep students informed of all tests and other forms of control during the semester.

**Conclusion and further research prospects.** The reorientation of the higher technical education system toward student-centered technology, which is an active learning method, allows intensifying English learning process. Studying ceases to be reproductive in nature and turns into an arbitrary internally determined activity of students to develop and transform their own experience and competence. Applying active teaching methods, cognitive motivation appears and, having emerged, turns into a factor of intensification of the learning process and learning efficiency. With the emergence of cognitive motivation, there is a restructuring of perception, memory, thinking, reorientation of interests, and activation of the student's abilities, which creates the preconditions for the successful performance of the activity.

However, it should be mentioned that the student-centered approach in English teaching in

higher education institutions is not fully used today; this is due primarily to the difficulties of both organizational and psychological nature. Lack of students' motivation to learn English is one of the main factors preventing the implementation of the above-mentioned approach; insufficient awareness of teachers and students

about the benefits of the student-centered approach; difficulties associated with the whole traditional pedagogical system, such as assessment and inflexible curriculum, large number of students in the group - all these also create serious obstacles to achieve real progress in student-centered teaching.

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