

**THE ROLE OF ILAN COURSE
IN INTERNATIONAL SPECIALIST TRAINING
AT TAMBOV STATE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY**

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Represented by a Member of the Editorial Board Professor V.I. Konovalov

Key words and phrases: academic mobility; Bologna process; ILAN course; three-component system; two-stage training strategy.

Abstract: The paper presents the experience of ILAN course application for the training of international specialists. The aim of the course is to stimulate academic mobility in the frameworks of Bologna process. The positive influence of ILAN course on the training quality at two stages of English-medium three-component system of international specialist training is demonstrated.

Introduction

International integration of educational systems, a desire to comply with the international educational standards, and opportunity to develop academic mobility through the Bologna process, call for the development of innovative training courses, programmes and teaching materials that foster the improvement of higher education. We still associate the terms 'bachelor' and 'master' mostly with western educational systems. In order to gain a better knowledge of those systems, to prepare oneself to study and to work abroad, and to improve the level of English language knowledge at the same time, a training course "English for Students, Lecturers and Administrators of Technical Universities" has been developed. It aims at three target groups of English language learners – master and postgraduate students, teachers and administrative workers of technical universities. This training course was developed within the framework of the Tempus project "Innovative Language Curricula in Technical Universities (ILAN)". Six institutions of higher education from Austria, Sweden and Russia, including Tambov State Technical University, have taken part in this project.

ILAN learning pack includes a coursebook, a learner's guide, a scenario of "International Conference" role-play, a teacher's guide and a multimedia supplement.

The course has been tested with participation of 42 learners from Russian partner universities representing different target groups. Both the learners and the teachers working with the course gave very positive remarks after the testing session.

1. Two-Stage Training Strategy at the TSTU Centre for International Specialist Training

Based on the successful results of testing it has been decided to implement all elements of the course in the training of students at the TSTU Centre for International Specialist Training (CIST). The main task of CIST is training international specialists in engineering and economics with the use of bilingual educational technologies.

Over the six years of the Centre's work a two-stage training strategy was developed which corresponds to various categories of learners: first stage – undergraduate students; second stage – postgraduate students and young teachers of TSTU. To pursue this strategy at the first stage, a concept of international specialist training has been formulated. The main point is a combination of three components: engineer/economist with a foreign language knowledge – university teacher – researcher. It must be mentioned that at CIST all lecture courses and practical classes concerning each of the three components of international specialist training are held in English.

An important feature of ILAN is its multi-functionality: it can be used both at the first and at the second stage of training strategy realisation, as it is well-elaborated thematically and oriented to several categories of learners. Also, the use of the course contributes to the realisation of all components of the developed concept.

2. ILAN in Training of Engineers/Economists with a Foreign Language Knowledge

Let us consider the implementation of ILAN in the training of engineers/economists with a foreign language knowledge. The importance of foreign language fluency in any professional area can hardly be overestimated. It is particularly topical for engineers and economists. Nowadays it is them who have greatest opportunity for international collaboration, professional development and self-realisation both at home and abroad. ILAN aims at the learners who already know English language at Level B1-B2 by the CEFR. The training objective is improvement of the four types of speech activity. The full course involves 300 academic hours, 150 of which are reserved for students' self-study. At CIST students study the course partially. Which topics are covered depends on the category of learners and their area of concentration.

As the course is modular-structured, it is possible to vary the programme according to the needs of each group of learners. For example, the modules on student exchange programmes and the structure of European universities would be of interest for the first category of learners. For young technical teachers it is important to study the modules connected with problems of engineering education in Europe and international cooperation in engineering education. Some topics concern all categories of learners: the role of English language in the modern world, the Bologna process and its impact on academic mobility. Such a selective study of modules does not diverge from the main concept of the course; on the contrary, it supports its main aim – to be of practical use allowing to select those study elements that help to promote academic mobility within a specific group of learners.

Each thematic unit contains a reading text which proposes topics for discussion and exercises that help to memorize vocabulary. Listening comprehension activities include a mini lecture and a dialogue on the topic. The writing skills section teaches to compose job application letters, discusses business letter and e-mail layout.

Multimedia supplement is an integral part of the course. It may be used both in the classroom and for students' self-study. It allows not only reading a text from the reading section of the coursebook on the computer screen, but listening to it at the same time. In reading comprehension exercises that follow the text students may immediately see their results and redo an exercise correcting mistakes, if necessary. The multimedia supplement gives students an opportunity to practice the thematic vocabulary through multiple choice, fill-in-the-gaps and matching exercises, as well as listen to the correct pronunciation of the words and learn their Russian equivalents. It also contains additional exercises in writing and listening comprehension.

A definite advantage of the multimedia supplement is video clips. These are interviews with students, teachers and administrative staff of European higher educational institutions. Learners may give their opinion on the topics in question and compare Russian and European approaches to various problems.

3. ILAN in the Training of University Teachers and Researchers

What concerns the implementation of the ILAN course in the training of university teachers and researchers (second and third components of international specialist training), it can be used in teaching senior undergraduate students and postgraduates and young teachers.

A section on academic writing that can be found in the Learner's Guide will be of interest to future university teachers. It provides guidelines and recommendations on essay writing. First-level learners (undergraduates) will acquire and improve skills in lecture note taking, which they can immediately put into practice.

Writing scientific articles and participating in international conferences are indispensable part of university teacher's work. Thus, Learner's Guide contains a separate section on abstract writing. After studying this section one may try his hand in composing an abstract in English for a real-world conference. Teachers may act not only as authors of a publication but as experts of a conference abstract and article reviewing committee. To help them with this task the course includes activities in which teachers set selection criteria for paper abstracts and then analyse and assess the abstracts of their peers according to these criteria. The classes are held in English using project-based approaches.

Participating in the "International Conference" Role-play, which also forms part the course, learners have the chance to perform roles of coordinator, committee chairman, presenter, expert, etc. A detailed scenario of the conference has been written and each participant receives a prepared role card.

Nowadays many teachers and researchers take part in various international projects. A positive trend is a steady increase in the number of such projects, which means that more and more Russian university teachers receive an opportunity for self-development, professional growth and establishment of international links. The course provides information on the existing exchange schemes and requirements for participation, particularly foreign language knowledge requirements. Besides, in the Learner's Guide one may find practical advice on establishing first contact with potential project partners and on drawing a collaboration or academic exchange agreement in English.

Conclusion

The implementation of the "Innovative Language Curricula in Technical Universities (ILAN)" training course at two stages of English-medium three-component system of international specialist training has been discussed. High results of the course

students, their interest in learning, and positive remarks of the teachers working with ILAN course prove that it is a topical and efficient tool for bilingual professional education.

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Роль учебно-методического комплекса ILAN в подготовке международных специалистов в Тамбовском государственном техническом университете

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Ключевые слова и фразы: академическая мобильность; Болонский процесс; двухуровневая стратегия подготовки; трехкомпонентная система; учебно-методический комплекс ILAN.

Аннотация: Представлен опыт использования учебно-методического комплекса ILAN в подготовке международных специалистов. Цель курса заключается в стимулировании академической мобильности в рамках Болонского процесса. Показано положительное влияние учебно-методического комплекса ILAN на качество двухуровневой подготовки международного специалиста, основанной на трехкомпонентной системе обучения на английском языке.

Rolle des lehrmethodischen Komplexes von ILAN in Vorbereitung der Innerspezialisten in der Staatlichen Technischen Universität

Zusammenfassung: Es ist das Verfahren der Benutzung des lehrmethodischen Komplexes ILAN in der Vorbereitung der ausländischen Spezialisten. Das Ziel des Kurses ist die Stimulierung der akademischen Mobilität im Rahmen des Bollonisches

Prozesses. Es ist die positive Einwirkung des lehrmethodischen Komplexes ILAN auf Qualität der zweischichtlichen Vorbereitung der ausländischen Spezialisten, die auf das Dreikomponentensystem basiert ist, gezeigt.

Le rôle du complexe méthodique éducatif ILAN dans la formation des spécialistes internationaux dans l'Université technique d'état de Tambov

Résumé: Est présentée l'expérience de l'emploi du complexe méthodique éducatif ILAN dans la formation des spécialistes internationaux. Le but de ce cours consiste dans la stimulation de la mobilité académique dans le cadre du processus de Bologne. Est montrée une influence positive du complexe méthodique éducatif ILAN sur la qualité de la formation à deux niveaux d'un spécialiste international qui est fondée sur le système de l'enseignement d'anglais à trois composants.

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