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**SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL
AND METHODOLOGICAL
ISSUES OF ADULT LSP
LEARNERS' FOREIGN
LANGUAGE TRAINING:
FROM THEORY
TO PRACTICE**

Ключевые слова: английский язык, иноязычная коммуникация, методы обучения взрослых, языковые навыки и способности, интерактивная доска, современные технологии обучения.

Theoretical background

Modern political and economical situation in Russia, the development of cross-cultural relationships and business cooperation provoke the demand for the new modified type of managers, who can use English as a means of communication in a global society. In order to be able to interact in an international business community one needs the sufficient knowledge of English to successfully cope with the situations which might occur in the professional communication worldwide.

Language serves as part and parcel of everyday life communication and the following components can be distinguished in its structure:

- language system;
- language ability;
- language performance.

Language ability, acting as a link between the language system and the language performance, comprises two basic parts – language knowledge and language subskills (the term used by some authors, for example, Harold S. Madsen [1]). Language knowledge, which is an inventory of grammatical, lexical and phonological elements stored in a particular language user's mind, is closely related to language subskills, which enable a language user to perceive and produce linguistically acceptable combinations of the corresponding inventory elements. Language subskills do not exist separately, but are all blended in each of the four communicating skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing.

However, language subskills do not collectively make up communication skills, they are only some of the constituent parts of the latter, which, apart from them also include other "ingredients" (e.g. intelligence, cross-cultural and strategic competences). Although the language subskills do not exist as separate entities, they can be theoretically and

experimentally disentangled from communication skills and from one another and viewed as if they were entities of this type. With this approach adopted each of the subskills can be tested separately as it is important to test isolated language subskills, since they underlie and form an essential part of communication skills, which insure actual communication in the real world.

Lately in multiple linguistic and pedagogical investigations much attention has been paid to the sociocultural assumptions such as international, traditional, evaluating and tongue due discrepancies. Along with the sociocultural issues playing a great part in the process of international communication, we can't help mentioning the sociocognitive peculiarities of learners existing due to gender, age, individual, professional and educational differences [2]. The given parameters should be taken into account while teaching adolescents as well as adults.

Speaking about teaching methods and techniques themselves, they extremely need to be different from the sociocultural and sociocognitive perspective in case of age divergence. The researches on adult education generally support the idea that teaching adults should be approached in a dissimilar way than teaching children [3] and adolescents being sometimes referred to as preadults. The assumption that teachers of adults ought to use a style of teaching different from that used with preadults turns out to be also based on "informed professional opinion; philosophical assumptions associated with humanistic psychology and progressive education; and a growing body of research and theory on adult learning, development, and socialization" [4].

The most cogent model underlying the assumption that teaching adults should differ from teaching children

and adolescents belongs to Malcolm Knowles. By contrasting "andragogical" or learner-centered methods with "pedagogical" or teacher-centered methods, Knowles argues that adults differ from preadults in a number of important ways that affect learning. Therefore, according to Knowles, the more traditional pedagogical model is inappropriate for use with adults.

The following assumptions underlie M.S. Knowles' andragogical model [5]:

- adults tend to be self-directing;
- adults have a rich reservoir of experience that can serve as a resource for learning;
- since adults' readiness to learn is frequently affected by their need to know or do something, they tend to have a life-, task-, or problem-centered orientation to learning as contrasted to a subject-matter orientation;
- adults are generally motivated to learn due to internal or intrinsic factors as opposed to external or extrinsic forces as in case with children and adolescents.

Since the first introduction of the model, Knowles kept on evolving it and paid special attention to the contrast between how preadults learn (pedagogy) and how adults learn (andragogy). According to Feuer and Geber, "what he once envisioned as unique characteristics of adult learners, he now sees as innate tendencies of all human beings, tendencies that emerge as people mature" [6].

In both above mentioned studies, as a result of these perceived differences in how adults and preadults learn, observers report significant dissimilarities in teaching styles. As compared to teaching children and adolescents, when teaching adults, they spend less time on discipline and giving directions, provide less emotional support to students, while planning classroom activities less tightly, and

vary their teaching techniques more. In addition to that Beder and Darkenwald found some significant differences in adult classes as following: greater use of group discussion, more adjustment in instructional content in response to student feedback, and a greater relationship of class material to student life experiences.

On the contrary, with preadults, teachers tend to provide more emotional support and overtly to be more directive. The responsiveness of adult students and the quality of discussion in adult classes make teachers adopt a less directive style of teaching and more student-centered approaches.

The andragogical model which has strongly influenced the adult educational field has found a reflection in our further research.

Research

Ivanovo State Power Engineering University is one of 102 higher educational establishments in Russia where in 1998 the Programme on Training Managers and Executives for the Enterprises of National Economy of the Russian Federation (the Presidential Programme for short) was launched. The candidates of the programme are the graduates of the institutions of higher education who work in business and commerce and hold management positions. The candidates' age ranges from 23 to 40 (45 in the case of ex-military personnel). This programme provides an opportunity for the candidates to be enrolled on a special (exclusive) training course and as a result to improve their professional skills as well as to increase their linguistic competence in ESP and cross-cultural communication.

To crown it all, the essential part of the above mentioned programme is a professional training workshop taking

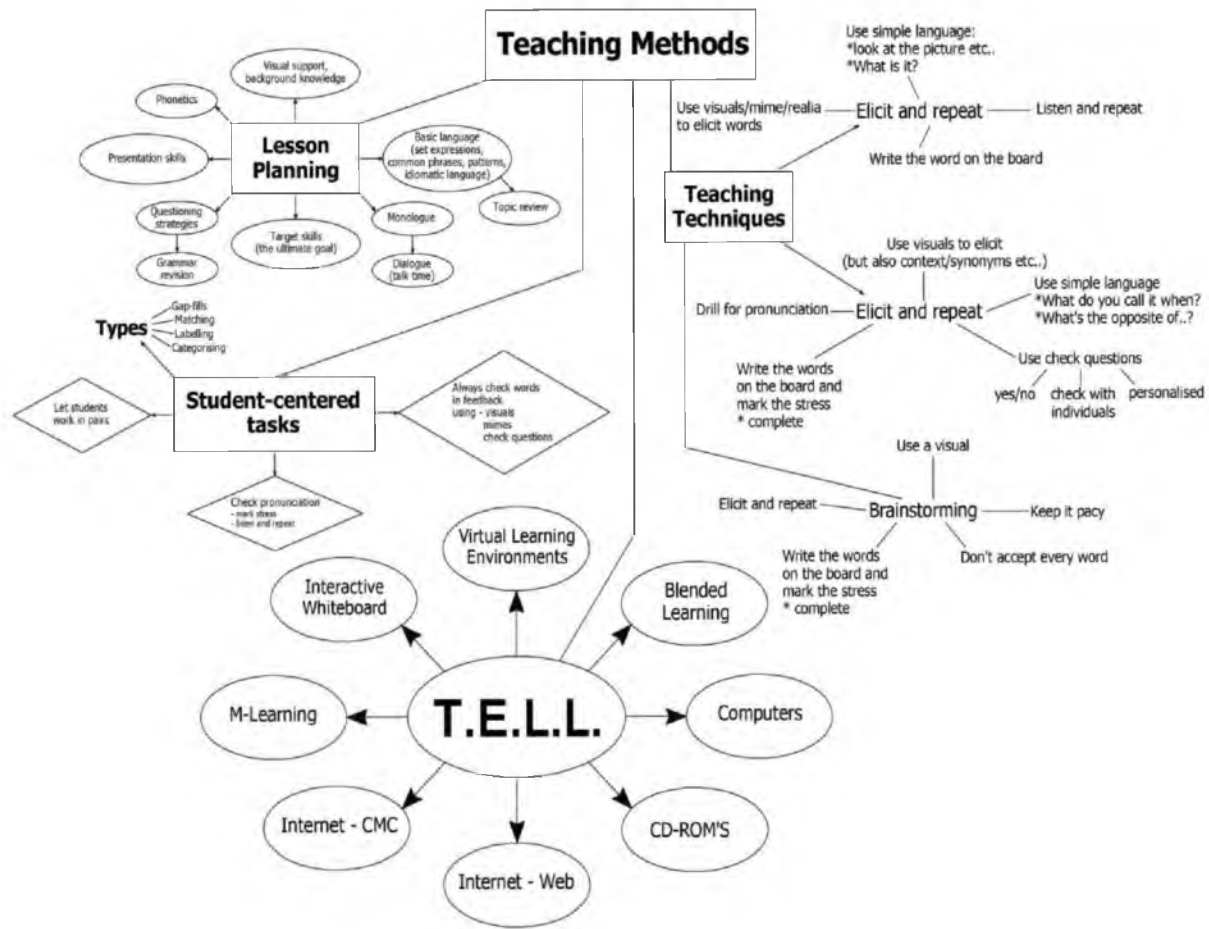
place at one of the foreign enterprises functioning in the same business sphere as the candidate's main specialization. Consequently, the level of English as the main tool of international communication is supposed to be quite profound. As far as the teaching methods and techniques are concerned, they should be both effective and up-to-date. However, this can be mainly achieved with the implementation of sociocultural and sociocognitive constituents along with the new technologies forming the basis for the carefully designed and tailor-made exercises and target-oriented tasks.

As the English language coaches for the Presidential Programme, we found it necessary to work out a methodological complex for teaching Business English to adults which combines the most important aspects to be implemented in the educational process featuring the students' socio-cultural and socio-cognitive peculiarities. One of the principles of the above mentioned complex is Technology-Enhanced Language Learning or TELL for short [7], which includes all modern tendencies in second language teaching process and meets both students' and teachers' demands.

Figure shows the constituent parts of modern teaching methodology.

This methodology shows the constituent parts of modern teaching methods and techniques and provides useful ideas for teachers to incorporate the methods in the classroom in order to make learning more communicative and meaningful. The best part is that students will be given the chance to participate, whether they are active or passive in the classroom, thus provide positive possibilities for teachers and students to have a more interactive and effective language learning.

Among the constituents of TELL you may notice Interactive Whiteboard (IWB) which has opened new academic pros-



Technology-Enhanced Language Learning

pects for teachers [8; 9]. It has complemented project-based learning, designed around real world contexts. The surveys have shown that representation on IWB has boosted the student's attention span by up to 70% and thus audiovisual applications are in demand for educators who want to deliver dynamic lessons and involve their students in learning with technology [10].

With the help of the Interactive Whiteboard, data and information can be presented in electronic and multimedia formats and applied in ways that further explore, unpack or explain the content. This unique board also enables you to quickly change and reconfigure information, providing opportunities to engage with students and audience at a higher and deeper level that is especially important working with candidates of the Programme on Training Managers and Executives for the Enterprises of National Economy of the Russian Federation. This technology not only brings teaching and presenting at your fingertips, but also lets you present the information in more interactive and engaging ways. Therefore, we apply it while training our students for one of the most difficult parts of the final exam, which is "Letter Writing" or, as we call it, "Business Correspondence".

Before starting the immersion into "Business Correspondence" we suggest our candidates to participate in the interactive class "Letter Writing Guide", which consists of theoretical information about the rules of writing, a layout of a typical letter, the ways of writing addresses on the envelope, different types of letter recognition, the diversities existing between formal and informal styles of writing, and most popular linking words used in both language registers. Thus, the trainees can have a chance to get acquainted with the Golden Rules of Letter Writing and watch a useful video

guide which demonstrates the basics of business writing and, to crown it all, have a lot of fun while competing in teams or with each other. We have worked out a number of didactic steps in introducing the material:

1. **Target:** study the letter layout.
2. Target-oriented task: make up the letter.
3. Self-checking.
4. **Target:** study the British variant of writing the address, then study the American variant of writing the address and remember the envelope layout.
5. Target-oriented task: match the information on the envelope with the parts of the address given below.
6. Self-checking.
7. **Target:** study the main types of business letters.
8. Target-oriented task: determine the types of the following letters.
9. Self-checking.
10. **Target:** study the information about different letter styles: Formal-Neutral-Informal.
11. Target-oriented task: match the informal expressions with neutral and formal ones.
12. Self-checking.
13. **Target:** study the information about linking words and phrases.
14. Target-oriented task: complete the table with the synonymic linking words from the box.
15. Self-checking.
16. **Target:** study the information about Punctuation and Spelling.
17. Target-oriented task: rewrite the e-mail using capital letters, full stops and commas.
18. Self-checking.
19. **Target:** watch a short video about the main principles of letter writing to consolidate the success.

Actually, we include 7 targets, 6 target-oriented tasks and 6 self-checking

parts into our didactic set which can form and develop the basic skills of Letter Writing by means of easy format of presentation, brief spirited summary of the articles and interesting exercises as well as visualization provided by the Interactive Whiteboard. The candidates can study the "Guide" either individually or together with the group-mates and English coaches.

Conclusions

The applied methodology and techniques help us effectively train the candidates for the finals, selection interviews for a foreign training and the professional training itself. As for the final examination it consists of four stages:

- oral interaction (dialogues based on the situation given) and a presentation of one of the suggested topics connected with their professional field;
- a written test (including business correspondence and graphs analysis);
- on-line reading of the authentic English texts which are followed by a set of tasks on skimming, scanning, distinguishing the main ideas from supporting detail;
- on-line listening comprehension.

The assessment procedure is as follows:

Oral interaction and topic presentation	16 points
A written test	22 points
On-line reading	11 points
On-line listening	11 points

The total score: 60 points.

The results of each part of the final test are summed up and the total amount of points defines if the candidate suits the criteria for a foreign training or not. For instance, if the total result is lower than 41 points, the candidate can't apply for the selection. If he or she has scored more than 41 (which is equal to

"good") or more than 51 (which equals "excellent"), they have a chance to be interviewed and go abroad.

It goes without saying that in the present day situation every professional is supposed to have not only occupational skills, but also the ability to communicate in another language with a foreign partner both orally and in the written form paying attention to the cultural assumptions and specifics of the overseas mentality. In order to avoid confusing situations when cooperating with foreign partners it is necessary to establish friendly, effective and long-term relationship which can be mutually profitable.

For the record: for the last three years 80 % of candidates successfully passed the exam and had a chance to take up the international training course. Therefore, the effectiveness of the programme is obvious, since the graduates not only develop their life skills on the basis of a foreign language, but also have an opportunity to improve their professional and linguistic skills by learning from their foreign partners.

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