

LEASECON 2021**Conference on Land Economy and Rural Studies Essentials****THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSE ECOLOGIZATION IN
TRAINING OF SPECIALISTS FOR AGRARIAN ECONOMY**

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Abstract

The problem of training of specialists with a certain set of competencies comes as a result of the process of globalization, technology development and world economic competition. The formation of a social and ecological competence plays an important role in specialists' training, since sustainable development includes environmental, economic and social components. We believe that the university subject "Foreign language" has sufficient potential for the formation and development of social and ecological competence. The major objective of our research is to present a model of the English course ecologization in training of specialists for agrarian economy on the example of Omsk State Agrarian University. The study was carried out within the framework of a competence-based approach. The following conceptual principles became essential for this work: the concept of sustainable development; the principle of ecologization of humanitarian, socio-economic and natural science cycles subjects; the principle of continuity and integrity of the ecological component within the disciplines of environmental cycle; the principle of reflexive activity. We present a three-component model of the foreign language course ecologization which includes cognitive, motivation and activity elements. A case study method was chosen as an effective educational technology. It can be used in studying interpersonal communication (everyone's contribution to solving environmental problems), intercultural communication (comparative analysis of environmental problems in different countries), academic communication (environmental activity at the university), and professional communication (agriculture and ecology, sustainable development). The case method is aimed at acquiring knowledge, developing practical skills, and the system of students' ecological values.

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Keywords: Case method, ecologization, higher education, social and ecological competence, specialists' training



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1. Introduction

These days, a graduate of an agrarian university should be ready to face the challenges in the field of sustainable development of the society and the state, which can arise in the future. The process of globalization, technology development, and world economic competition have led to the importance of training of specialists with a certain set of competencies. Key competences acquirement has become a new paradigm of education. The formation of a social and ecological competence plays an important role in specialists' training, since sustainable development includes environmental, economic and social components. In addition, the expansion of international contacts in the field of agriculture, technology transfer and academic mobility lead to an increasing interest in the knowledge of a foreign language by every specialist of agrarian economy. In this study, we suggest that developing of a social and ecological competence should be a mandatory educational component in training at the level of general education (Bolt, 2017), and at the professional level it should be a component of any type of activity (Perfilova & Alizade, 2012). This competence ensures the development of the ecological culture of any individual and the improvement of the life quality (Demyankov et al., 2017; Khabarova et al., 2017).

The concept of sustainable development is seen as one of the conceptual principles of social and ecological competence formation. Education for sustainable development aims to create skilled and active citizens who are motivated to live in sustainable development (Biasutti et al., 2016; Sinakou et al., 2019). The next principle is the need for ecologization of humanities (philosophy, history, and sociology), socio-economic (economics) and natural science (chemistry, physics) cycles disciplines within higher education (Dzyatkovskaya & Zakhlebny, 2021; Mihelkevich & Chekanushkina, 2015; Nemkova & Ershova, 2013). The continuity and integrity of the environmental component of ecologized disciplines as a key principle allows us forming, developing, and improving social and ecological competence of university students throughout the entire training period. Reflexive activity is mandatory for testing the level of skills formation (Chekanushkina, 2011).

Previous studies by V.V. Nikolin, A.Yu.Liberova, L.M. Zaitseva, N.A. Biryukova have reported that ecologization is understood in different ways: as the inclusion of environmental aspects in all educational subjects; incorporation of integrated environmental courses into curricula; transferring the ecological style of thinking into the educational subject content, and not only the facts related to ecology; the content filling with environmental knowledge; the development of ecological culture, skills and practical activities to implement the principles of environmental policy (as cited in Boranbayev, 2015). Thus, we believe that the university discipline "Foreign language" has sufficient potential for the formation and development of social and ecological competence.

The development of the foreign language course content, teaching methods and technologies becomes relevant for university teachers. The practice of ecologization of the natural science cycle disciplines has shown that the volume of the environmental component should not exceed 5-7% of the total volume of hours per discipline. In addition, ecological components are necessarily combined by structural and logical links, and they are seamlessly connected with the studied material (Chekanushkina, 2011). To incorporate these components successfully, adequate methods and technologies should be used. A case study method was chosen as an effective educational technology. Theoretical foundations and experience of using the method in teaching foreign languages are presented in the works by E.N.

Krasikova, T.P. Frolova, Yu.P. Surmina, T.N. Gorbatova and others. In addition to the development of social and ecological competence, the use of the case method allows developing of visual and critical thinking skills (as cited in Kulamikhina et al., 2020a).

2. Problem Statement

Ecologization of the foreign language course at an agrarian university allows developing of social and ecological competence of future specialists for the Russian agrarian economy. The proposed model will contribute to the development of the students' intercultural communication skills. These skills will help them to participate in academic mobility programmes, agricultural practices abroad in order to increase their knowledge about sustainable agriculture, develop entrepreneurial thinking, transfer knowledge about organic agriculture and renewable energy sources.

3. Research Questions

This research seeks to address the following questions: 1) What is the scope of the foreign language university course in developing of social and ecological competence? 2) How can ecologization influence upon the course content and the technology of its realization?

4. Purpose of the Study

The major objective of this study was to develop the model of the foreign language course ecologization within an agrarian university (using the example of Omsk State Agrarian University). In this regard, our research tasks are as follows:

1. To define the concepts of 'social and ecological competence', 'course ecologization'.
2. To describe the potential of the foreign language course in the developing of social and ecological competence.
3. To develop a model of the foreign language course ecologization for agrarian university students.
4. To develop opportunities for inclusion of a case study method in the educational process.

5. Research Methods

The following methods were used in the work: literature analysis, analysis of domestic and foreign experience in educational courses ecologization, modelling of the university foreign language course ecologization.

6. Findings

Since a competence-based approach in education has developed in Russia, the presence of key competencies is seen as a new paradigm of the result of education. Some researchers believe that acquiring different competences, including the ecological one, in various fields of activity today

influences the ability of civilization to survive in the future. According to Khabarova et al. (2017), nowadays it is not sufficient to give the students information about the existence of environmental problems only and the ways to eliminate them. The main idea is to develop an internal need for a specialist to make adequate environmentally sound decisions in order to form their ecological thinking. Therefore, the formation of social and ecological competence of an agrarian university graduate becomes of particular importance. Acquiring the competence ensures the development of the ecological culture of the individual and the improvement of the quality of life (Demyankov et al., 2017; Khabarova et al., 2017). In this study, following Chekanushkina (2011), we define *socio-ecological competence* as the ability and willingness of a person to perceive the surrounding reality in the unity of natural and socio-cultural ties. On the basis of the developed knowledge, abilities, skills, experience and personal qualities, the individual has to be able to solve ecological problems and the problems of interaction of society and the nature in an adequate way during their professional activity.

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on ecologization, which describes the process in different ways: as the inclusion of environmental aspects in all educational subjects; introduction of integrated environmental courses into curricula; transferring the ecological style of thinking into the educational subject content (not only the facts related to ecology); the content filling with environmental knowledge; the development of environmental culture, skills and practical activities to implement the principles of environmental policy (Boranbayev, 2015). We consider the foreign language course ecologization at agrarian university from the point of view of incorporating environmental aspects into the discipline content and the development of skills in order to their further practical application, for example, in academic mobility programs or agricultural practices abroad.

Traditionally, a university foreign language course is compulsory at all levels of higher education. Depending on the level of training and in accordance with educational standards of the Russian Federation, the discipline is aimed at the formation, development and improvement of universal competence. The graduate must be able to carry out business communication in oral and written form in the state language of the Russian Federation and foreign language (s) (UC-4). At the same time, the components of the competence include knowledge (cognitive component), skills (activity component) as expected results of mastering the discipline. With this approach, the motivating component is excluded. We suppose this element mandatory for “powerful stimulating learning which is constructive, cumulative, self-regulated, goal-oriented, situated, collaborative and taking into account individual different process of meaning construction and knowledge building” (Sinakou et al., 2019, p. 5994). In this regard, in order to develop social and ecological competence in a foreign language course, it is necessary to include a motivation component. Stimulating the need for the study of the foreign language vocabulary, knowledge of relevant information on environmental problems, as well as the need for environmentally-oriented behavior in the process of intercultural communication, will help to prepare a specialist ready to solve the problems of the modern agrarian economy and sustainable development. The proposed model for implementation at Omsk State Agrarian University is presented in Table 01.

Table 1. Model of the English course ecologization

Universal Competence	Cognitive Component	Activity Component	Motivation Component
Able to carry out business communication in oral and written form in the state language of the Russian Federation and foreign language (s)	The knowledge about environmental problems in Russia and the country of the language studied	The ability to participate in intercultural communication using knowledge about the environmental situation in Russia and in the country of the language studied	The need for environmentally-oriented behaviour in intercultural communication
	The knowledge of environmental vocabulary	The ability to use environmental vocabulary	The need to study environmental vocabulary
	The knowledge of reliable foreign sources on environmental issues	The ability to use relevant foreign sources on environmental issues in educational and scientific activities	The need for relevant foreign sources on environmental issues in educational and scientific activities

A case method is chosen as the main pedagogical technology for the formation of social and ecological competence. This technology allows applying theoretical knowledge to solving practical tasks, while the teacher becomes a facilitator – a conductor and an adviser. The case method can be used in studying interpersonal communication (everyone’s contribution to solving environmental problems), intercultural communication (comparative analysis of environmental problems in different countries), academic communication (environmental activity at the university), and professional communication (agriculture and ecology, sustainable development).

It was decided to use IKEA website on the case “Sustainable Life at Home”. We followed the plan which included:

- lead-in stage – acquaintance with an environmental problem, studying vocabulary;
- decision-making stage – small group discussion on the problem;
- facts collection stage – work with foreign language online resources;
- presentation of results stage – presentation of facts collected during the previous stage;
- discussion stage – exchange of opinions on the problem.

At the lead-in stage, the students scanned the text to answer the question: What type of the text is it: a newspaper report, an encyclopedia article, an advertisement?

Lighting makes our homes safer, cosier and more welcoming. And it allows us to do things we couldn’t otherwise do. But around a quarter of the world’s energy consumption is used for lighting. That’s a lot of energy. We want to help you reduce your energy consumption without making sacrifices. To make living a sustainable life at home easier, beautiful and more affordable.

Experts say that less than three percent of the water on Earth is fresh water. We can all contribute to conserving this precious, shared resource. That’s why we offer kitchen taps that reduce water consumption by up to 30%, bathroom taps that reduce consumption up to 50%. Many IKEA dishwashers and washing machines also help saving water.

In addition to water-saving initiatives, there are many IKEA products that help customers conserve water. For example, our MISTELN nozzle can reduce water consumption by more than 90% (depending on the water flow in your tap, local water pressure and how you use the nozzle).

Once the text type has been clarified, the teacher asked about the products in the advertisement and their purpose. This step identified the problem “Sustainable Life at Home”. Using the text material, the teacher introduced vocabulary on the topic (*energy consumption, reduce, a sustainable life, contribute to, conservation, save, safe*) and offered a series of tasks for vocabulary practice. This stage also provided the process of the conceptual terminological apparatus development in order to its practical application in solving educational tasks (Kulamikhina et al., 2020b).

During the following stage of decision-making, the students worked in small groups of 3-4 people. They told each other how they saved electricity and water at home. Also, they prepared a list of Dos and Dont’s while preserving water and electric resources. The teacher boarded the lists, and the students could compare their solutions within the whole group.

Facts collection stage included the work with online resources of foreign companies. The students in small groups observed the websites of Apple, Samsung, and Sony in order to study their policies in conservation of natural resources (water and electricity). The choice of companies was due to the fact that today it is difficult to imagine people without gadgets: smartphones, tablets and computers. Also, large corporations are used to broadcast the experience of using saving technologies for life.

At the presentation of the results stage, the students were asked to place their works on the Padlet.com resource. So other students could leave a comment or ask their questions. The ability to use information and communication technologies was another important skill developed during the work on the case. At the lesson, the students made a report using vocabulary on the topic and demonstrating oratory skills.

The exchange of opinions on the problem and discussion took place after the presentation of all students’ works. This stage was particularly important, since the teacher had the opportunity to test the knowledge of the studied vocabulary, as well as to evaluate the ability to use relevant foreign sources on environmental problems in the course of educational activities. In turn, the students shared their points of view and civil position on the issue of nature saving technologies.

These findings suggest that the foreign language university course is sufficient for developing of social and ecological competence. Discipline ecologization influences the course content and the technology of its realization. Using the case method requires substantial teacher’s preparation. He or she needs to choose a relevant environmental problem, select authentic information resources, and develop the tasks for organizing classroom activity and individual students’ work.

7. Conclusion

In this study, we made an attempt to present a model of the foreign language course ecologization at Omsk State Agrarian University. Today, an agrarian university graduate should be able to solve problems in the field of sustainable development of the society and the state in the future. We see a social and ecological competence as one of the key competences in the XXI century.

A social and ecological competence is considered as the ability and willingness of the individual to perceive the surrounding reality in the unity of natural and socio-cultural ties. On the basis of the developed knowledge, abilities, skills, experience and personal qualities, the individual has to be able to solve ecological problems and the problems of interaction of society and the nature in an adequate way during their professional activity.

The university foreign language course is sufficient in order to form, develop and improve the social and ecological competence. The ecologization of the discipline is possible in different ways: through including environmental issues in the course content and the development of skills for their further practical application in academic mobility programs or agricultural practices abroad.

The proposed model of the university foreign language course ecologization in addition to traditional components – cognitive (knowledge) and activity (skills) – should include motivation to stimulate the need for environmentally-oriented behavior in the process of intercultural communication.

A case method was chosen as the main pedagogical technology for the development of social and ecological competence, since it is aimed not only at obtaining knowledge and developing practical skills, but also at developing the system of environmental values of students and their lifestyles.

Further research should be done to investigate environmental online discourse in order to develop and improve the content of the university foreign language course.

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