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TO THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST SPECIALIZED COURSE. GRADUATION OF TECHNICAL TRANSLATORS

Early 1970's saw slender signs of new resources replenishment into the relatively stable and rigid system of our engineering education. And, first and foremost, it dealt with training of would be experts possessing deep knowledge of a foreign language in separate branches of economy. This field of qualification is now called ESP or EOP (English for Occupational purposes). Prior to that time, such humanitarian aspect training was maintained at only a few higher educational establishments training students for traditional spheres of foreign language functioning, those of diplomatic and foreign trade relations, merchant marine and international civil aviation.

Rapid growth of foreign relation contacts, dramatic expansion of export-import ties, international exchange of experts, standardization of production in many branches of national economy and initiation of the first large-scale international projects on one hand, and on the other, – critical shortage of would be experts of such level facilitated strong joint efforts of country's ministries of the leading branches of industry and commerce, together with the ministry of higher education of the former Soviet Union, to fill in these lacunae. These were the principal reasons why such specialized courses of technical interpreters were arranged in the aforementioned period.

Naturally, both, our institute and our opposite number from St. Petersburg, were involved in this ambitious project among the other leading institutes across the country, such as Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys, Moscow Auto and Road Construction Institute, Leningrad Polytechnics, Leningrad Electric Engineering Institute, etc. The financing was carried on by the Foreign Trade Amalgamation 'Soudozarganpostavka' of the USSR Ministry of Shipbuilding.

In February, 1972 twenty-five best and highly ambitious candidates were selected after thorough testing from three basic departments of our institute: Shipbuilding department (10 graduates), Machine Construction department (10 graduates) and the department of Electrical Equipment of Ships (five graduates).

A month earlier, in January 1972, the then principal of our institute, V. A. Stepanov, assigned the author of these notes to visit a number of leading institutes in Leningrad and Moscow for a discussion and elaboration of the syllabus for intensive EOP training of required experts. Then the representative working group

of English language instructors, who were entitled to arrange and conduct classes at the assigned institutes, was gathered at the Ministry of Higher Education in Moscow for the final approval of the provisional courses for the duration period of 10 months (800 academic hours).

The classes started on the 1st of March 1972. The curriculum comprised three aspects: 1) general English (vocabulary, grammar learning, listening), 2) oral English (topics on a restricted conversation area) plus English newspaper reading, 3) English for specific purposes in the fields of shipbuilding and shiprepair, marine power plant design and electrical equipment of ships. Classes were held in the new building of NKI opposite the central stadium of Mykolaiv: five days a week from Monday till Friday plus two-four hours every day for the linguaphone courses.

Three lecture-rooms were allocated for everyday classes on the fourth floor of the new building where the department of foreign languages was located at that time (Cand. Sc., Ass. Prof. Kovalevskiy M. T. was head of Foreign Languages Department and contributed greatly into the arrangement and supervision of the first course as well as all the other seven courses until 1980). Three teachers of English, – Bavykina R. I., Movchan L. S. and Chernytskyi V. B. were appointed to run the first group. Later on, three more colleagues, N. A. Khlopinskiy, N. M. Filippova and L. Yu. Bonyushko became active participants in this project. I guess, the principal criteria for choosing the above teachers were their possession of at least a minimum experience of communication with mother tongue speakers, loyalty to the ambitious aim and, mainly, determination to meet the challenges implied in the new activity, readiness to devote as much time to the teaching process as is required in excess of the academic load allocated for the course.

The basic manual for general English acquisition was a well-known English language textbook (in two parts) compiled by N. V. Bonk from the Academy of Foreign Trade of the USSR. Naturally, it was not supplied by any audio or video materials as are all the modern British or American textbooks nowadays, but, at any rate, it was perfectly-structured, comprised grammar manual and vocabulary distributed by the lessons, with excessive training materials in the form of lexical, grammar, reading, writing and speaking exercises.

All the texts were marked up with stress and intonation signs.

The second aspect of teaching was based on the materials of relatively fresh newspapers: one was "Moscow News" published in the capital, another was "The Morning Star", published in London by the British Communist party.

The principal teaching materials for the EOP comprised internationally published and distributed journals, such as "Shipping Record", "Naval Architech" and "Marine Power Plants". It could sound quite ridiculous but even at those times of 'iron curtain' between our country and the whole world, total jamming of foreign radiostations, those journals were regularly subscribed by our library via the Ministry of Higher education and easily accessible in our Institute library.

Provision of teaching materials for the last aspect mentioned, i.e. materials for audition skill acquisition were extremely scarce. The only textbook available was "Speak English" by R. R. Dickson which had run through 40 editions and was supplied with vinyl plates. It was the only text collection recorded by a mother tongue speaker that won an enormous domestic popularity in our country. Somewhat later another manuals, accompanied by vynil plates comprising a wide range of topical situations, appeared in free access in the country: "Spoken English" by Andrews (licenced Polish edition). All these materials were copied on the tape recorder by our lab helpers Anatoliy Shiyan and Valeriy Martynov and intensively used daily by the students in groups and individual studies in a poor imitation of the domestically produced linguaphone study, specially installed in lecture-room 425 of the New Building.

A number of elements of foreign language teaching initiatives have been implemented and approbated during the first course and later extended to other similar courses. Among them were professional communication approach in teaching EOP, formulated later as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology, Total Physical Response (TPR) approach in the description of space relations of ship's structures and others. One of the most efficient was the so called "deep plunging into the language" when all the course



On the photo from left to right sitting are: Yu. Nechiporenko, V. B. Chernytskyi, L. S. Movchan, M. T. Kovalevskiy, R. I. Bavykina, N. A. Khlopinskiy, N. Rozhkov the first row standing are: S. Suslov, V. Yefimenko, A. Chechel, A. Saushkin, A. Kovalenko, Yu. Khromenkov, A. Roshchoupkin, S. Parak the second row standing are: V. Kushnaryov, V. Sizonenko, A. Ponomarenko, A. Shestopalov, A. Sergeyev, V. Slavov, V. Myasoyedov, A. Horbach, A. Dzhurmii

students together with the teachers held a non-stop classes in a secluded place in camping tents, put up far away from social infrastructure on the Southern Bug near Myhiya rapids, river banks next to Olbio archeological excavations close to the village of Parutino, on the seaside of Ochakiv and Koblevo. Such 'plunging' usually lasted for a fortnight when English was the only language of communication.

The course ended in January, 1973 and was followed by seven more similar courses until 1980. Nearly 150 technical interpreters were prepared within these period who worked as leading experts and professional interpreters in almost all branches of the national economy: All-Union and Republican ship design Institutes and Bureaus, such as Chernomorsudoproyect (Mykolaiv), Redan (St. Petersburg), SPB "Mashproyect", Computing Centers, Research Institutes and shipyards, Universities, country's representatives of foreign trade amalgamations "Soyuz-kniga", Lloyd's Register, Inspectorate and Dat Norske Veritas representations in Ukraine, and even at the USSR Committee of State security. Their hard work, talent and ambition resulted in their rapid promotion at work and service anyway but, as the course graduates admitted themselves, English language proficiency was the main decisive factor in their career booster factors.