



TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT UNIVERSITY AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SOCIETY

Yamshinska N.V./ Ямшинська Н.В.

Lecturer

ORCID: 0000-0002-0518-3657

Meleshko I.V./ Мелешко І.В.

Senior lecturer

ORCID: 0000-0002-7414-7828

Kutsenok N.M./ Куценок Н.М.

Lecturer

ORCID: 0000-0001-7111-0088

National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute"

Kyiv, Av. Peremogy, 37, 03056

Національний технічний університет України "Київський політехнічний інститут імені Ігоря Сікорського", Київ, пр. Перемоги, 37, 03056

Abstract. The authors of the article focus attention on the urgency of ecological problems the world faces today and consider sustainable development as a concept aimed to help save our planet for future generations. The paper addresses the great importance of quality education on sustainable development at higher educational institutions to meet the demands of modern social and educational needs of society moving towards sustainability. English language seems to be a bridge between sustainable education and sustainable behavior. The study was conducted to explore students' competence in sustainable education and their experience in interactive presentations on topics related to sustainable development. The results of it proved the hypothesis about a close link between teaching English and education for sustainability.

Key words: the sustainable development goals, environmental problems, sustainable education, interactive presentations, interactive tools.

Introduction.

The problems of negative changes that can be observed in the environment have become global and require urgent intervention at the level of governments, which should be reflected in the environmental policy pursued by each country.

Every society must work together to keep the planet clean for future generations, and with enough natural resources for people to be able to satisfy their basic needs.

Environmental problems are products of complex, often nonlinear, interactions between people and the environment, and our understanding of them is usually incomplete and clouded by profound uncertainties [1].

The functioning of modern economic and political institutions requires individuals with modern standards and attitudes to the surrounding environment. A great number of scientists have studied the role of sustainable education as the most significant factor for sustainable development of the society. They stated that higher education plays the key role in the dissemination of the sustainable development principles and values by providing upgraded interdisciplinary learning opportunities and educational resources [2, 3].

English language as the language of the 21st century is regarded by many scientists as the main component to support the development of knowledge and all necessary skills and values, which are necessary to build a sustainable world [4, 5].



Galkuté L. claims that “Education of sustainable development requires an understanding of the role that language and culture play in the construction of environmental, social, economic, institutional, cultural and religious systems, and the impact of these systems which support life” [6].

A special attention should be paid to searching techniques and methods on how to increase the level of students’ knowledge and awareness about sustainable development and sustainability at higher educational institutions [7].

The task of education on sustainable development in the language learning process is to mould students towards such attributes as openness to new experiences, readiness for social change, disposition to form opinions. ability to use factual information, a future-oriented concept of time, a sense of efficacy, tendency to plan things in advance, respect for the dignity of others, universalism in the application of rules and norms and optimism.

The basic fundamental principals of sustainable development approach allow students to develop cognitive activity [8]. Role-play based learning and the implementation of various interactive tools in the learning process can be a valuable way to engage students in the language learning process related to the sustainable development goals, as it fits well with poor environmental conditions. The implementation of elements of role-plays and presentations in the classroom will help build motivation and effective acquisition of necessary skills for forming further sustainable behavior [9]. The mentioned teaching approaches are increasingly being used as a more motivating and immersive way to teach learners to solve various tasks in their professional life in the context of sustainability when having developed communication skills. The students themselves become active participants of the educational process, while being involved in explaining one or another phenomenon, anticipating the development of the process, analyzing the causes and consequences of human beings’ actions.

The researchers are also convinced that students should be engaged in activities that bring together and cultivate mutual respect and understanding, a positive attitude, which will have a qualitatively new impact on becoming a responsible citizen of the sustainable society. In addition, the learning approaches include a range of techniques to solve the educational goals of students subjected to teach them to apply their analytical thinking skills and develop self-learning abilities for planning their sustainable behaviour.

A role-play is considered as one of the most acceptable techniques of the language learning approach. Due to the implementing of role-plays and presentations in the learning process, it becomes possible:

- to focus on redesigning learning to develop the 21st century communication skills (for deeper understanding of goals);
- to use new learning activities within language learning process;
- to analyze the impact on students learning;
- to discuss the results and support the 21st century communication skills.

With the aim to understand deeply and be capable of measuring students’ knowledge about major sustainability trends in modern society and their attitude to sustainable changes the survey was conducted.



Methods.

The participants were 60 Bachelor's students, who are studying engineering at National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute". The survey included 10 questions, which could give more detailed information to what extent young people are interested in issues related to sustainable development and offer more effective ways to provoke their desire of getting qualitative sustainable education.

Results.

The data obtained in the survey showed that at the beginning of the experiment, more than a half of the students (64%) did not have any knowledge about the sustainable development goals declared by UNESCO and accordingly it was proved by high percent of those students (33%), who answered that they are not aware of the concept of sustainability. The lack or absence of knowledge about sustainable development in students highlights the problem that students obviously pretend not to think about social and economic factors and the protection of the environment as urgent issues our world face today.

In addition, the responses of nearly half of students expressed their uncertainty in the questions about their readiness to change towards sustainability and the necessity to have access to equitable quality education on sustainable development (41% and 46% correspondingly). The responses collected pointed at the importance of providing students with enough information about sustainable goals, trends and achievements of different countries in their way to sustainability to increase the confidence of students as representatives of the young generation to act towards environmentally friendly society. The foreign language will just assist them and broaden their minds in these issues and will allow them to get to know more about ways to save our planet for our descendants.

To raise students' awareness of sustainability issues during the experiment interactive presentations and role-plays were used by teachers with the groups of the responders. That is why it was necessary to assess students' attitude to these approaches. It was found that approximately half of students (43%) are not experienced in making interactive presentations and the same percent of students (42%) considers that such presentations partially can extend their knowledge about sustainable goals.

According to the results achieved in the survey, the majority of students (47%) considered that they have a basic level of language knowledge and the minority (14%) assesses their level as advanced.

The question about the role of environmental issues as the mean to use language and stimulate discussions with other students got approximately the similar percent of agreement (28%) and disagreement (27%) among the responders.

To increase the number of students with advanced level of language knowledge the teachers should apply innovative methods and techniques focused on the development of communicative skills and critical thinking. The ability to interact with people from different countries and become more aware of styles of life people lead in various societies will make students more involved in global challenges across the world.



Conclusion.

Firstly, authors drew attention to the direct and integral link between English language teaching and sustainable development education. Secondly, an attempt was made to draw parallels between the sustainable development and learning of the English language for better understanding structural elements of sustainable development such as social, economy and environment. Thirdly, the authors proved that the competence in the field of sustainable development is of great importance for university students. To present more detailed and current information about the topic of the research the review of the literature and analysis of the related studies conducted by various researchers working in the field of sustainable development were made. To confirm the theoretical conclusions, a study of students' attitudes to sustainable development and environmental issues was conducted. Based on the results of the survey it became obvious that sustainable education must be interdisciplinary and included into the curriculum of the university. New roles, which both teachers and students play in education on sustainable development certainly leads to the appearance of novel teaching techniques. They are subjected to solve different tasks and get other learning outcomes compared to those, which we have with traditional learning and meet the demands of modern society to prepare a new generation of specialists, who don't have any fear of facing problems of a sustainable world.

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Анотація. Автори статті акцентують увагу на актуальності екологічних проблем, з якими стикається сьогодні світ, та розглядають сталий розвиток як концепцію, спрямовану на порятунок нашої планети та збереження її для майбутніх поколінь. У статті розглядається значна роль якісної освіти щодо сталого розвитку у вищих навчальних закладах для задоволення сучасних соціальних та освітніх потреб суспільства. Дослідження проводилось для з'ясування рівня компетентності студентів у галузі сталого розвитку та навчання і вдосконалення навичок та вмінь у підготовці і проведенні інтерактивних презентацій на теми, пов'язані зі сталим розвитком.

Результати даного дослідження підтвердили гіпотезу про тісний взаємозв'язок між викладанням англійської мови та освітою сталого розвитку.

Ключові слова: цілі сталого розвитку, екологічні проблеми, освіта сталого розвитку, інтерактивні презентації, інтерактивні інструменти.