FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FEATURES IN TERMS OF CREDIT SYSTEM AT A HIGHER MILITARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION: PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT

In the article the author studies empirically the features of ECTS training at a higher military educational institution and a psychological analysis of the perceptions of this system by cadets-borderguards when learning a foreign language.

The experience and practice of teaching at the National Academy of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (NASBGSU) confirm at the present stage that professional training of future military specialists is of ultimate need for developing their cognitive activity, which is realized by the interaction of all cognitive processes of the individual when forming their professional foreign language communicative competence within the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS system), where specialized training as well as a spiritual development of personality are provided. The problem of selecting and using the best forms and methods of educational work in the conditions of the credit system of organization of the educational process, which would ensure effective acquisition of foreign language by cadets-borderguards as active subjects of cognition has been studied. In other words, by creating optimal conditions for the development of foreign language environment, the appropriate conditions for the cognitive development of cadets in general will be ensured. Adequate level
of cadets-borderguards’ cognitive activity development will enable appropriate performing of their educational tasks, as well as contribute to the optimal professional competencies formation, as a certain amount of educational and research material in credit system terms should be mastered during independent and individual work. The analysis of the survey results of cadets-borderguards have made it possible to identify the need of increase their cognitive resources to international educational standards and to introduce new approaches to personnel’s foreign language training in the conditions of a credit system in the educational process organization at a higher military educational institution.

**Key words:** foreign language acguistion; cognitive activity; perception; credit system; cadets-borderguards; higher military educational institution.

1. INTRODUCTION

By joining the Bologna Process, Ukraine has made the necessary commitments that have largely determined the direction and contours of educational reform. It is important to realize that the isolation of any university from the processes that are developing in the European educational area leads to negative consequences in the higher education system. In such a question, the higher military educational institution needs to be embedded in the educational space of the rapid development of modernity in a timely manner, while maintaining its own specificity, its own military traditions and the culture of higher education. The need for highly qualified specialists is especially growing due to the international cooperation between law enforcement agencies of the world, the attention of the European Union to the problems of border protection. This confirms the unquestionable need to improve the professional training quality of future foreign language specialists. The experience and practice of teaching at the National Academy of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (NASBGSU) confirm at the present stage that professional training of future military specialists is of ultimate need for developing their cognitive activity, which is realized by the interaction of all cognitive processes of the individual when forming their professional foreign language communicative competence within the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS system), where specialized training as well as a spiritual development of personality, patriotic education and respect for the Constitution of Ukraine are provided.
Problem formulation. The content of higher military education is the requirements for the competencies, outlook, public and professional qualities of future military professionals, which are formed during the educational process of higher education institutions in accordance with the requirements of higher education standards in general, and are determined by the purpose and needs of the state, society and law enforcement agencies of Ukraine. The content of higher military education is formed by taking into account: priorities of national interests and national security; changes occurring in economy, politics, social relations and public consciousness; the latest developments in science, technology, technology and culture, providing a broad scientific outlook for a military specialist who is fluent in a professional-oriented foreign language to effectively perform the service tasks; opportunities for the military science development etc. And this, in turn, leads to scientific developments regarding the psychological and pedagogical support of educational transformation processes at higher military educational institutions (HMEI).

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is a system created to provide a single interstate procedure for evaluating and comparing students’ education outcomes with academic recognition. It is worked out to provide students’ mobility, facilitating the understanding and comparison of curricula and student learning outcomes both between national and foreign educational institutions. The ECTS system is based on the assessment of all types of students’ work required to achieve the goals stated in the curriculum: attending lectures, preparation and participation in seminars and practical classes, independent work, individual assignments, taking exams, doing internships, etc. [1].

The effective implementation of the European Credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS) in the organization of the educational process of the HMEI contributes to the higher education quality assurance, the national higher educational system integration into the European and world educational community.

ECTS credits are based on the academic load required for the cadets to achieve the expected learning outcomes. The academic load implies the time required for the cadet to complete all types of study activities (lectures,
seminars, projects, practical classes, independent work, individual tasks, exams, etc.) and to achieve the expected learning outcomes. Learning outcomes (competences) reflect what a cadet must know, understand, demonstrate, and be able to do after successful completion of the training process (competence is the result of training at a certain level of higher education of a military specialist, an integral indicator of the quality of their training, characterized by a level of ability (readiness) to the applying of the acquired knowledge, abilities, skills, ways of thinking, professional, world-view and civic qualities, moral and ethical values, constant self-perfection while performing their service functions in routine and extreme conditions) [2; 3].

We find the same requirements, principles and criteria in the field of higher education in Ukraine: proper specialists training, coordinated joint activity of the subjects of the educational process, positive competitiveness, mobility, as ECTS academic credits should facilitate and enable the transition to another curriculum. After all, the educational process is an intellectual, creative activity in the field of higher military education and science, which is carried out in the higher military educational institution through a system of scientific and methodological, pedagogical, educational measures and is aimed at the transfer, assimilation, multiplication and implementation of knowledge, skills and other competences of persons who study, as well as the formation of a harmoniously developed personality and is carried out on the basis of continuous development of cognitive activity of the subjects of studying [2].

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** In the context of our study, we are talking about the organization of the educational process in the modern higher education institution on a credit system and assessment of cadets’ knowledge within the ECTS system. In this way, we investigate the problem of selecting and using the best forms and methods of educational work in the conditions of the credit system of organization of the educational process, which would ensure effective acquisition of foreign language by cadets-borderguards as active subjects of cognition. In other words, by creating optimal conditions for the development of foreign language environment, we create the appropriate conditions for the cognitive development of cadets in general. Adequate level of cadets-borderguards’ cognitive activity
development will enable appropriate performing of their educational tasks, as well as contribute to the optimal professional competencies formation, as a certain amount of educational and research material should be mastered, as mentioned above, during independent and individual work.

Acquaintance with scientists’ theoretical achievements, practical experience of border-guards’ training at higher military educational institutions, with the experience of military servicemen made it possible to identify in the context of the study the main contradiction that exists in the educational process of higher military school: between the necessity in a competent military professional who is able to independently analyze, evaluate and regulate his own activities, to realize the prospects of his self-development, and insufficient level of reflexive mechanisms formation of borderguards-graduates of HMEI, poor understanding of the essential dimensions of their future service activity and subjective conditions, i.e. lack of psychological and theoretical readiness for independent learning and development professional foreign communicative competence in particular.

The essence of cognitive activity, its scientific, theoretical and methodological foundations are reflected in the works of L. Zankov, A. Makarenko, O. Leontiev, R. Nizamov, S. Maksymenko, V. Sukhomlynskyi, K. Ushynsky, T. Shyriaieva, G. Shchukina and other scientists-educators.

In the studies of V. Kozakov, I. Lerner, V. Onyshchuk, I. Pasychnyk, P. Podkasystyi, M. Skatkin, M. Yarmachenko, and others, the basic approaches to the organization of the student’s independent cognitive activity are defined. V. Grubinko, M. Zgurovskyi, V. Kremen, N. Nychkalo, G. Owens, T. Shyriaieva, G. Dryden and others argue for the effectiveness of credit and transfer technology of students’ education and the necessity of its introduction into the educational process. However, the problem of the cognitive activity development in the process of professional foreign language communicative competence formation of future border guards in terms of credit and transfer system implementation at a higher military school remains poorly researched.

The purpose of the article is an empirical study of the features of ECTS training at a higher military educational institution and a psychological
analysis of the perceptions of this system by cadets-borderguards when learning a foreign language.

2. **THE RESULTS OF RESEARCH**

We absolutely agree with the opinion of S. Maksymenko, I. Pasichnyk, T. Shyriaieva that the fundamental idea of effective adjustment of the educational process is the proper organization of independent work of the subjects of study, in which there will be an opportunity to take into account all the cadets’ achievements in the assessment, and not only their educational load, but participation in various scientific researches, conferences, competitions, writing abstracts, independent study of additional educational material as well. [5; 6, p. 105]. An important role is also played by the availability of a sufficient amount of individual work in the distribution of academic load, which allows the cadet not only to obtain professional knowledge, but also to establish personal cooperation with the teacher, while using his own distribution of energy and focusing on the approach, which is convenient for the cadet, which will promote his positive motivation for mastering a foreign language through comfortable psychological support of this educational activity type.

It is worth noting that it is extremely valuable for such a subject of study as a cadet who not only studies but also serves, performs various military tasks, guard-duties, training, etc., that is, he is limited in his free time parting and its duration in particular. And the foreign language teacher, taking into account the psychological specificity of the subject of the foreign language, cannot ignore the individual cadets’ characteristics and their interests, especially their studying stay at the academy, previous social experience that influence the course of mental cognitive processes while learning a foreign language and disregard age, gender and social aspects.

Here it is necessary to draw a parallel with the principles of problematic learning, which can change the motivation of cognitive activity: the leading are cognitive and motivational (intellectual) motives. Interest in learning arises from the problem and unfolds in the process of mental work associated with searching and finding a solution to a problem task or set of tasks. On this basis, there is an intrinsic interest that becomes a factor in the revitalization of the educational process and the effectiveness
of learning. Cognitive motivation drives a person to develop his or her inclinations and abilities. Such training contributes to the development of psychic functions that interact through the prism of awareness, analysis, reflection, identification, comprehension, systematization of educational material etc. Such activity contributes to the creative activity and orientation of the cadet-borderguard, develops his imagination, stimulates associative thinking, the ability to understand patterns, the desire to constantly improve, to solve ever more complex creative tasks, to self-perfect, to consciously complete his or her information gap.

The organization of the educational process at a modern higher military educational institution by the credit system and the students’ knowledge assessment by the ECTS system necessitates the study of the students’ foreign language acquisition effectiveness in accordance with the organization of classes forms and assessment criteria. The credit contains all forms of cadets’ educational work: lectures, practical classes, seminars, consultations, as well as individual and independent work (preparation for practical classes, final test, writing a report, abstract, participation in research, independent study of particular topics and curriculum issues, etc.).

The educational process at the higher military educational institutions provides the opportunity for students to acquire general and professional competences in the humanitarian, social, scientific, technical, and military spheres necessary for professional activity and their intellectual, moral, spiritual, aesthetic and physical development [2]. Specificity of the educational process at the NASBGSU is determined mainly by the authoritarian (clearly regulated) system of management of the educational process, which is based on statutory relations, which influences the implementation of any kind of activity of the future officer-borderguard.

Specificity of the educational process at the NASBGSU contains such characteristics as: homogeneity of members’ age structure in educational groups, their merger into a single educational process; relative stability, duration and continuity of interaction and intensity of communication of all its members; relatively high self-government level; the presence of sufficiently clear regulation of relationships and functional dependence of group members, which is determined by the system of subordination; observance
of military discipline and law and order; unity in complex coordinated activities, etc.

Changing attitudes towards learning a foreign language is enshrined in state curricula: today it is no longer just a subject, but a life skill. One of the key competences of the modern man is mastering a foreign language. According to the program, knowledge of a foreign language is not a knowledge and a set of rules and grammatical constructions, but the ability to use the language in everyday life and service situation. This shift of emphasis is in line with the current trend - a competency-based approach to the educational process whereby foreign language communication is one of the key competences. In order to effectively solve these problems, vital skills are required. Simply using a number of lexical units and certain grammatical structures is not enough, as these situations go beyond linguistic boundaries.

An interesting classification of life skills that is in line with the basic requirements of our study in the cognitive sphere development of future military professionals, is found on the site of the British Council. For example, the so-called "Seven Cs", where all skills begin with the letter "C". They need to be developed with the help of foreign languages: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, cross-cultural understanding, communication, computing, carrier and learning self-reliance [7]. In the context of life skills, based on our long-term experience and research, we can argue that the use of purposeful techniques and methods (psycholinguistic training in particular as a means of developing the cadets' cognitive sphere), which, on the one hand, are based on typical educational programs or include separate subject blocks of the discipline being mastered. There are opportunities for the cadets' cognitive sphere development of both linguistic and non-linguistic specialties in practical classes in English. The psycholinguistic trainings offered in our study contain the problematic tasks of general and professional orientation. Correct content educational material and selection of interactive methods of work not only provide constructive communicative interaction of all subjects of studying, but also contribute to the emergence of positive motives for a foreign language learning, search for new knowledge, abilities development to master...
a language, which is the basis of professionalism formation. It helps to ensure the purposeful development of practical skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating; development of creative foreign language linguistic thinking as a formative basis for creative approach to solving the problems of professional foreign language activity, as well as being the basic condition for conscious and systematic foreign language learning by future officers, which will ensure the qualitative fulfillment of professional tasks during special service conditions. On the other hand, the introduction of psycholinguistic techniques and methods directs the cadets’ foreign language learning to activity, cognitive emotional reflection and cognitive development in general, and should be widely implemented in the educational process of HMEI [8].

In order to conduct a psychological analysis of the cadets-border guards’ perception of the credit system features during the process of mastering a foreign language, we made a selection of students of the third year cadets of the Engineering faculty and faculty of Humanities and Foreign Languages of NASBGSU. The cadets have already three years of experience of studying with the credit system and understand the basic requirements of the basic provisions organization, as well as they are aware of the assessment system during the current and final tests, credits accumulation system etc. We were curious to know thoughts of the cadets who study at the faculties of the linguistic and non-linguistic specialties. Our questionnaire contained twelve questions related to the credit system of educational process organization. So among the questions were: “Do you consider the credit system to be effective in a military high school and why?” , “In your opinion, does the credit system have advantages (disadvantages) comparing with the traditional system of education?”, “Which are the most effective for you?”, “What are the advantages (disadvantages) that you can point out about the system of score accumulation during the semester?”, “What difficulties do you have during your independent work?”, ”Do you consider it effective, when your total mark is put automatically (having sufficient score accumulation during semester, for example)?” etc. Our answers were elaborated in the form of quantitative and qualitative analysis (Fig. 1).
Let’s take a closer look at the results of the answers we received. As we can see from Figure 1, a significant percentage of 81.7 % of the cadets surveyed are satisfied with the credit system, while 18.3 % see some drawbacks and are not satisfied, comparing it with the “traditional school” system of education. We grouped the cadets’ answers from the positive to the negative in their opinion concerning the credit system while studying a foreign language: 1) 89.7 % of the respondents consider possibility to accumulate their score rate very positive. Students are impressed by the fact that systematic work not only accustoms to hard work and self-discipline and the independent cognitive activity development, but also serves as an additional “bonus and reward” during the session period. It is an instructive example for them and what is very important for the cadets, it reduces stress feelings, fear to fail, uncertainty and even depression (according to the respondents’ answers); but at the same time, there were cadets for whom permanent work causes tension, exhaustion and a feeling of “compulsion”; 2) 58.5 % of the respondents said that they consider it preferable to have a certain number of practical lessons in foreign language, which are to be assessed obligatory, that is a psychologically favorable phenomenon.
for them, because the cadet is able to monitor and plan his own success and understand what else the teacher will demand. Although this percentage is mainly completed by the cadets with relatively low academic achievement score, for whom foreign language is a complicated subject to learn; 3) 48.1% of cadets expressed a desire to improve the organization of independent and individual work, pointed to the lack of clear mechanisms for such activities, a large amount of material for self-study, although, in our opinion, this also indicates a low level of cadets’ ability to research independently and rather insufficient level of their cognitive activity development; 4) there were no differences in the respondents’ choice of practical classes, but almost everyone indicated the introduction and using of non-standard teaching methods, interactive games, trainings, multimedia technologies and group projects that would maximize their creative and cognitive growth.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Therefore, we can conclude that the features of borderguards’ foreign language training are due to a number of reasons, among which is the critical need to make decisions in non-standard situations, communicating with representatives of the border services of adjacent states and persons crossing the state border. This, in turn, places increased demands on the level of the foreign language acquisition. At the same time, the cadets-borderguards’ cognitive activity level in the educational process of NASBGSU, whose development is facilitated by the credit system of organizing the educational process with independent work and individual tasks, becomes important. The analysis of the survey results of cadets-borderguards have made it possible to identify the need of increase their cognitive resources to international educational standards and to introduce new approaches to personnel’s foreign language training in the conditions of a credit system in the educational process organization at a higher military educational institution. The prospects for further work include working out an experimental program for the future officers-borderguards’ cognitive sphere development in the context of a credit system in the foreign language learning process.
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Валентина Гришко-Дунаєвська. Особливості оволодіння іноземною мовою в умовах кредитно-модульної системи у вищому військовому навчальному закладі: психологічний аспект

У статті автор досліджує вивчення особливостей запровадженої ЄКТС навчання у вищому військовому навчальному закладі та психологічний аналіз сприйняття цієї системи курсантами-прикордонниками під час вивчення іноземної мови. Досвід і практика викладання у НАДПСУ засвідчують на сьогоднішньому етапі професійної підготовки майбутніх військових спеціалістів існує необхідність розвитку рівня пізнавальної активності, яка реалізується взаємодією усіх пізнавальних процесів особистості у процесі формування їх професійної іншомовної комунікативної компетентності в рамках системи ЄКТС, де певна кількість навчального і дослідницького матеріалу повинна опановуватись під час самостійної та індивідуальної роботи. Належний рівень розвитку пізнавальної активності курсантів-прикордонників сприятиме оптимальному формуванню професійних компетентностей загалом. Аналіз результатів анкетування курсантів-прикордонників дав змогу встановити необхідність у підвищенні їх пізнавальної сфери та впровадженні нових підходів щодо іншомовної професійної підготовки персоналу в умовах кредитно-модульної системи організації навчального процесу у вищому військовому закладі освіти. Ефективне застосування Європейської кредитної трансфертно-накопичувальної системи (ЄКТС) в організації освітнього процесу ВВЗО сприяє забезпеченню якості вищої освіти, інтеграції національної системи вищої освіти в європейське та світове співтовариство.

Ключові слова: оволодіння іноземною мовою; пізнавальна діяльність; сприйняття; кредитно-модульна система; курсанти-прикордонники; вищий військовий навчальний заклад.