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Learning a foreign language in the higher educational institution's multicultural space

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Abstract

This research looks at the process of learning a foreign language in a multicultural space. A set of complementary research methods was used and a methodology was developed for teaching students a foreign language in a multicultural society. To achieve this goal, an experiment was carried out. In this experiment, 284 people participated on the basis of Tyumen Industrial University in Noyabrsk. As a result of the research, students appeared to be more tolerant and multicultural to their peers and to other cultures in general. Thus, the proposed teaching methodology can be effectively used in the educational program.

Keywords: education, multicultural, environment, languages, students.

Aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera en el espacio multicultural de la institución de educación superior

Resumen

Esta investigación analiza el proceso de aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera en un espacio multicultural. Se utilizó un conjunto de métodos de investigación complementarios y se desarrolló una metodología para enseñar a los estudiantes una lengua extranjera en una sociedad multicultural. Para lograr este objetivo, se realizó un experimento. En este experimento, 284 personas participaron sobre la base de la Universidad Industrial de Tyumen en Noyabrsk. Como resultado de la investigación, los estudiantes parecían ser más tolerantes y multiculturales con sus compañeros y con otras culturas en general. Por lo tanto, la metodología de enseñanza propuesta puede ser utilizada efectivamente en el programa educativo.

Palabras clave: educación, multicultural, medio ambiente, idiomas, estudiantes.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important directions for the improvement of modern language education in the system of higher education is the formation of the main features of a secondary or multicultural language personality (hereinafter - SMP) who is trained in the process of solving problems of interpersonal and intercultural interaction. The term language and culture learning means that students get acquainted with the culture of the country in the process of learning a foreign language, and on the contrary, when approaching the peculiarities of the culture of another country, they acquire new knowledge and skills in the process of intercultural communication (Zimnyaya, 2001; Galperin,

2008). The multicultural environment (multicultural society) is viewed in terms of intercultural communication. In our research, a multicultural environment is understood as an intercultural and an interlingual space within which representatives of different languages and cultures interact and communicate. As the practice shows, any process should be regulated. Therefore, in the multicultural environment, it is necessary to regulate cultural and language contacts. The Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District is an example of a multicultural space. In Yamal, there are traditions of co-residence of more than one hundred nationalities with different mentality, different religious and political views.

Stressing the value of the research on the problems of designing new approaches in the field of language education of specialists for science-intensive production of the fuel and energy complex, it should be noted that at the present stage of the development of vocational education, a detailed analysis of the theoretical foundations and accumulated experience in finding effective ways of learning a foreign language in the multicultural space of the university is required (Sigríður Jónsdóttir and Ragnarsdóttir, 2010; Atwater et al., 2014; Arphattananon, 2016). The contribution of our research to the world pedagogical science in the direction of theory and methodology of vocational education is in the fact that the successful solution of the research tasks makes it possible to improve the language education of students in science-intensive industries of the fuel and energy complex of Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District. It also makes it possible to have a real intercultural communication and to develop the system of

public-private partnership of professional educational organizations and transnational corporations of the fuel and energy complex of Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District on the basis of the projected changes in socio-economic relations aimed at strengthening vocational education institutions within production and educational clusters.

Thus, the problem of learning a foreign language in the professional training of oil and gas specialists in a multicultural environment, considered in our study, is relevant, as it is an indispensable component of preparing students for intercultural communication. It is important to search for ways of interrelated communicative, multicultural and cognitive development of students within the multicultural space of the university (Tomakhin, 2016). This stage is connected with the actualization of the student's personality, based on the knowledge of an unfamiliar reality, and also on the perception of a different culture. It follows that students need to develop communicative and cognitive skills at the intercultural level. Otherwise, communicants can face a conflict of misunderstanding.

However, similar research that considered the formation of the main features of SMP in the process of learning a foreign language and focused on a multicultural environment in which the student communicates and studies, practically does not exist. In this regard, in research related to multicultural space, it is necessary to pay attention to language learning and the specifics of the organization of this process. The aim of the research is the theoretical substantiation, development and implementation of the methodology for teaching a

foreign language in the multicultural space of the university. The scientific novelty of the study is presented by the following provisions:

1. The possibility and expediency of development of SMP in the process of learning a foreign language in the multicultural space of the university are justified.

2. The following principles are based on the methodology of teaching students:

1) The principle of multiculturalism

2) The principle of dialogue of cultures;

3) The principle of cultural conformity;

4) The principle of reliance on the native language and linguistic and cultural knowledge of students;

5) The principle of intercultural communication;

6) The principle of combining communicative and cognitive approaches to learning a foreign language.

3. The stages of SMP formation and motivation for mastering knowledge in the field of languages to be learned, as well as in the context of the culture of a foreign country are developed. At

the same time, emphasis is put on the formation of ideas about the specifics of national cultural speech behavior, as well as of the correct and adequate attitude to language as a value belonging to another culture.

4. Diagnostics, which allow us to determine the students' learning efficiency in the multicultural space of the university, have been developed. The theoretical significance of the study is in the fact that:

- The methodology of teaching a foreign language to students in the multicultural space of the university is grounded;
- The development of SMP in the implementation of a multicultural model for the study of languages and cultures was studied;
- The concept of secondary (multicultural) language personality is presented in detail, suggesting that students are ready to perceive other cultures. The ability to realize the specifics of speech behavior in their own intercultural communication is also formed.

The practical significance of the research is the fact that the developed methods of teaching a foreign language in the multicultural space of the university allow improving the process of teaching a foreign language to students in the oil and gas sector and are determined by:

- Development of the methodology for teaching a foreign language in the multicultural space of the university;
- Definition of teaching methods in the multicultural space of the university;
- Development and testing of diagnostic material for studying the formation of SMP in the multicultural space of the university.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

An analysis of Russian and foreign literature shows that in understanding the concept of language education there is no common opinion, which makes it difficult to develop this concept and its use in the educational process of the higher technical educational institution. According to Gershunsky, the language education means: 1) value; 2) process; 3) result; 4) system. In our research, we considered the process of studying a foreign language as a task of language education in a technical oil and gas university. We also considered the process of studying a foreign language as an instrument for bilingual and multicultural development of students at a technical university. The peculiarity of the process of learning a foreign language is that the formation of linguistic knowledge is simultaneously accompanied by the formation of communicative and cognitive skills and abilities that affect the development of the language personality, for which the foreign language becomes not only a means of communication, but also a part of life. All this will allow the language personality to

communicate effectively with representatives of other cultures. At the same time, the result of teaching a foreign language should be the formed SMP as an indicator of "the ability of a person to communicate at the intercultural level, which is understood as adequate interaction with representatives of other cultures." (LADO, 1957: 23)

On the basis of the above mentioned information, it is necessary to conclude that special attention in the development of this methodology should be paid to the content aspects of speech perception and speech generation, as well as to the ability of learners to get the necessary result in the process of mutual understanding of all participants in foreign-language communication. Many scientific works contain studies considering the effectiveness of students' oral activity, mainly based on the phenomenon of oral activity. This phenomenon is characterized by effective, dynamic and content aspects, as well as represented by general psychic and intellectual activity. In the studies of Russian scholars (Leontiev, 2016; Rubinstein, 2013), the oral activity is considered in two aspects: as a measure of activity and as a state that allows planning speech behavior and oral activity to control language interaction participants. The scientific works of well-known researchers are devoted to the content of the national cultural component, which is a phenomenon that determines the system of value orientations, both of society and of individuals. In this case, language is a reflector of this phenomenon.

The works of Russian and foreign scholars (Lado, 2012) show that mastering the language, without taking into account the national

cultural component, determines the behavior of the student, reflecting their own cultural norm and leading to a conflict with the behavior of foreign-speaking cultural bearers. SMP has the ability of intercultural communication if the linguistic and psychological characteristics of the communicant are taken into account. One of the most important problems of pedagogical pedagogy is considered in the article (Nechaev, 2016): the professional training of specialists in intercultural communication. The proposed approach allows us to disclose the meaning of the concept of linguistic consciousness and the methods that regulate its application in the process of formation of the secondary language personality, who acts as an intermediary in the intercultural dialogue. Intercultural communication, which is considered as a process of interaction between participants of intercultural communication, who are aware of their (native) culture and culture of a foreign country in a multicultural environment, is one of the most important issues of the research.

Such categories as knowledge and ideas involved in familiarizing learners with a foreign language, with the culture of a people – its bearer – are associated with the cognitive orientation of the language education. Forming students' readiness and ability to communicate verbally and in writing, directly and indirectly, developing intelligence, language consciousness on the basis of knowledge of the laws of language, including their mother tongue, allows us to ensure the balance of the use of communicative and cognitive approaches to learning a foreign language. An analysis of the sociocultural competence composition, which is suggested by Ibbotson

(2009) allows us to determine the linguistic-cultural components in teaching a foreign language. The development of these components contributes to the formation of the basic traits of student's SMP. Thus, as priorities the multicultural approach defines not the language system and the process of transferring the education content to students, but the content aspects of communication based on the interests and needs of students who are subjects of learning activity. At the same time, the approach is based on pragmatic and cognitive learning objectives, multicultural factors, as well as on the motivation for the study of both languages (native and foreign). The multicultural model of simultaneous study of languages and cultures within the framework of the approach under consideration is aimed at the following processes:

1. Creating conditions for students to master the norms of intercultural communication in the languages to be learned (native and foreign).
2. Stimulation of students' awareness of their own personalities, as well as personalities other people, who are cultural and historical subjects – bearers of several cultures at the same time. Students should be aware of the cultural multidimensionality, understand the increase in the level of multiculturalism of national identity and promote the development of intercultural dialogue skills in the languages to be learned in the difficult conditions of a multicultural environment. In this regard, students should have integrative cognitive and communicative skills, which are a means of intercultural communication.

3. Formation of SMP traits, taking into account the degree of affinity and differences of language systems that interact for the learner.

In our research, in the problem of teaching students in the multicultural space of the university, an analysis of normative and methodological documents was carried out. Based on the analysis of educational programs for teaching a foreign language in a technical university, textbooks and teaching aids, conclusions were drawn on the term secondary (multicultural) language personality. This concept does not exist in the content of the curricula examined. However, practice shows that the ground for the formation of language and speech competencies has been created, and a detailed analysis of the remaining programs makes it possible to conclude that the content needs to be revised with the aim of incorporating the linguistic-cultural components. Foreign literature suggests many different approaches to addressing issues related to a multicultural society and, accordingly, education, and also examines various aspects in solving problems aimed at forming a second language personality among students studying a second non-native (foreign) language.

The book Cha et al. (2017) presents studies related to multicultural education at the global level. Great emphasis is put on understanding the combination of multiple socio-political influences on multicultural education, both in politics and in practice. In the article (Sigríður Jónsdóttir and Ragnarsdóttir, 2010) the authors consider the development of a multicultural society in Iceland. In spite of the fact that

neither politics nor national curricula say anything about a multicultural society, the school management does everything to ensure that students receive education in the aspect of a multicultural society.

The author of the article Arphattananon (2016) studies the characteristics of multicultural education in Thailand. The emphasis is on the diversity of cultures, which goes through all levels of public education offered to students, including migrants. The article of the Azerbaijani authors Luscombe & Kazdal (2014) analyzes the relationship between the learning environment and the perception of language by students. It also examines the conclusions about the significant correlation between the language of instruction and language identity, which is important for building a secondary language personality. The book Atwater et al. (2014) is devoted to multicultural scientific education. The authors try to consider issues related to the historical formation of scientific education of teachers, the features of further development of this direction with the development of certain solutions.

Practice shows that students receive linguistic and cultural knowledge in foreign language classes, and develop these skills only in the process of intercultural communication, when the learner's personal development promotes the formation of abilities for an adequate dialogue. We can sum up that existing educational programs offer some methods for solving the task, but they are not systemic in solving the global problem. All this dictates the need to develop a specially organized teaching process in the multicultural space of the university.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the presented research, we have developed a methodology for teaching a foreign language in a multicultural society aimed at studying both native and foreign languages, acquaintance and understanding of the national and cultural specifics of speech behavior and intercultural communication, as well as the formation of students' attitudes towards the language as a value, and not just a means of communication. When implementing the methodology for teaching students a foreign language in the multicultural space of the university, the work was carried out taking into account linguistic and cultural, communicative-pragmatic and value-oriented components of teaching a foreign language. The review of the proposed methodology was carried out through the development of diagnostic toolkit, which is aimed at determining the level of development of SMP taking into account the developed criteria (Table 1).

No.	Teaching component	Criterion
1.	Linguistic and cultural	The awareness of the peculiarities of native and foreign languages, the specifics of native and foreign cultures
2.	Communicative-pragmatic	The awareness of national and cultural specifics of speech behavior and implementation of these ideas in their own intercultural communication
3.	value-oriented	The attitude of students towards the language, which is the value of a particular culture

Table 1. Components in teaching a foreign language

Also, in order to verify the proposed methodology, the diagnostics content and methods are determined. The levels of SMP development are determined resulting from learning a foreign language in a multicultural environment. There are several levels of learning a

foreign language, which take into account the specifics of training: high, medium and low levels.

High level: Students are characterized by a high degree of knowledge about the specifics of native and foreign languages, as well as about the native culture and culture of the country of the studied language. They are able to use independently their communicative and cognitive skills of foreign speech in intercultural dialogue. Students not only form an idea of the national-cultural features of speech behavior in native and foreign languages; they develop an understanding of the communicative task posed to them; a variety of selected language means of communication; self-realization in the context of intercultural communication. They relate the knowledge of a foreign language to the culture of SMP, there is a motivation for self-knowledge and self-awareness as an object and subject of a multicultural environment.

Medium level: Students have episodic knowledge about the specifics of native and foreign languages and, accordingly, the culture of countries. If we talk about the students' attitude towards their native language and a foreign language, then it is mainly developed with the help of a foreign language teacher who also puts their own attitude to reality in the transmission of information. Students are able to take into account the characteristics of the partner and the nature of the learning situation in the dialogue of intercultural communication with the help of a foreign language teacher. They understand the importance of knowing a foreign language. This level is also characterized by the fact that students show respect for representatives of one culture, but also a

negative attitude towards the other. That is, there is a selective positive and negative attitude to the multicultural environment.

Low level: Students have no formed knowledge about the specifics of native and foreign languages, and there is a lack of conscious interest in both native and foreign cultures. In the process of the educational dialogue, students do not take into account both the features of intercultural communication and the characteristics of the partner. Knowledge of native and foreign languages and the ability to speak a foreign language do not correlate with the culture of SMP, there is a negative attitude towards representatives of other cultures, which impedes intercultural interaction in a multicultural environment. Experimental testing of the research results was carried out on the basis of the branch of the Tyumen Industrial University in Noyabrsk. In the experiment 284 people participated.

Diagnostics of the levels of SMP development in the multicultural space of the university were accompanied by such methods as: observation, questioning, conversation with students, diagnostic tests. Table 2 presents the results of the preliminary distribution of the students of the control and experimental groups according to, taking into account the linguistic and cultural component of education.

Level	Experimental group		Control group	
	Number	%	Number	%
H (high)	18	13,3	19	13,0

M (medium)	39	28,7	47	31,6
L (low)	79	58,0	82	55,4

Table 2. Distribution of the students according to the levels of SMP development

The experimental testing data allowed us to draw the following conclusions from the results of the control and experimental groups of students:

- 1) There is an insufficient level of knowledge in the field of the specifics of native and foreign language, native culture in a multicultural environment and the culture of the studied language country;
- 2) There are no formed ideas about national and cultural features of speech communication and behavior;
- 3) The respect for representatives of other cultures is shown;
- 4) There is no systematic and consistent work on the formation of the main features of SMP, which contributes to adequate interaction in intercultural communication within a multicultural environment. The purpose of the developed methodology is the formation of the traits of SMP that allow students to communicate in a multicultural environment. On the basis of such basic methodological principles as multiculturalism, cultural conformity, the dialogue of cultures, intercultural communication, reliance on

the native language and linguistic and cultural knowledge of students, the connection of communicative and cognitive approaches to the teaching of a foreign language, a methodology for teaching a foreign language in the multicultural space of the university is developed. The main idea is that the formation of the main features of SMP is achieved through the creation of cognitive motivation to master a foreign language as a means of interaction and understanding of other culture representatives in intercultural communication in a multicultural environment. The following conditions contributed to the realization of this idea:

- 1) The existence of students' motives to master a foreign language as a means of intercultural communication;
- 2) Creation of a friendly atmosphere in the classroom;
- 3) Involvement of students in a joint cognitive activity, which encourages their linguistic and speech, cognitive and creative abilities;
- 4) Creation of a developing multicultural language environment with the maximal reliance on the leading and significant for a given age type of activities.

Stages of the SMP formation with the indication of the dominant and the concretization of methods and techniques for solving the posed tasks related to the formation of motivation for mastering the peculiarities of native and foreign languages, the peculiarities of the native culture in

the multicultural environment and the culture of the studied language country, with the formation of the students' attitude to the language as a value, belonging to a certain culture. The motives are the introduction to the culture of other people and the deepening of the ideas about their culture and their language, that is, the objective values and interests of the students.

No. in sequence	Dominant	Goal	Techniques
1.	Linguistic and cultural component	Development of communicative and cognitive skills, formation of respectful attitude to the representatives of other cultures	Listening, learning, performing communicative-oriented cultural tasks, testing
2.	Communicative-pragmatic component	Implementation of the students' ideas about their own intercultural communication, the formation of knowledge about the rules and norms of communication, the development of abilities for empathy, the feeling of a partner in communication	Communicative exercises of various kinds of dramatization, improvisations, role plays, playing dialogues with the formation of a positive attitude to the language as a value that belongs to a particular culture
3.	Value-oriented component	Formation of the basic features of SMP, which independently applies communicative and cognitive skills in value-orientation activity (recognizes itself as an object and subject of a multicultural environment, integrates into any multicultural space, does not oppose its culture to others, but perceives them as a universal value).	Linguistic search tasks, development of linguistic and cultural projects

Table 3. Dominant; Goal; Techniques

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

The goal of this stage of the research was to test the effectiveness of the proposed innovative methodology for teaching a foreign language. The goal of the control stage of the experiment was to study the dynamics of the SMP development of the student. For the control stage, communicative tasks that contribute to the development of cognitive skills and the formation of a more complete language picture of the world were developed. The control stage was carried out on the basis of Noyabrsk Oil and Gas Institute (a branch of the Tyumen Industrial University, Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District). One thousand three hundred sixty-one students took part in it. All assignments were formulated taking into account the information learned in the classroom and the practice of learning the language and culture obtained while doing communicative exercises.

A comparative analysis of the findings of the ascertaining and follow-up survey made it possible to identify a stable tendency to the increase in understanding the features of native and foreign languages, native and foreign cultures, and the national and cultural specifics of speech behavior. The students began to experience fewer problems when interacting in a multicultural environment. They also began to show respect for representatives of different cultures. In the experimental group, the number of students with a low level of knowledge of the features of native and foreign languages, native and foreign cultures decreased by 27.89%, and in the control group – by 14.19%. There was an increase in the group with an average level of knowledge of the features of native and foreign languages, native and foreign cultures. In the experimental group, the increase was 7.39%,

and in the control group – 11.01%. In the experimental group, the number of students who received an excellent assessment of knowledge about the specifics of native and foreign languages, native and foreign cultures, increased by 20.5%, and in the control group – by 3.2%. The results of the control stage of the experiment are presented in Table 4.

Level	Experimental group				Control group			
	Ascertaining stage		Control stage		Ascertaining		Control stage	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
High	18	13,3	46	33,8	19	13,0	24	16,2
Medium	39	28,7	49	36,1	47	31,6	63	42,6
Low	79	58,0	41	30,1	82	55,4	61	41,2

Table 4. Dynamics of the knowledge formation level according to the specifics of native and foreign languages

The distribution of students, according to the levels of knowledge of the peculiarities of native and foreign languages, native and foreign cultures at the control stage of the experiment is shown in the figure.

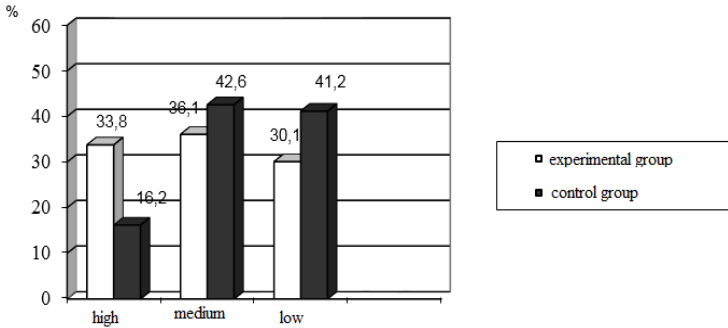


Figure 1. Distribution of students according to the levels of knowledge of the specifics of native and foreign languages

The analysis of the ascertaining and control stages of the experiment allows us to conclude the following: quantitative and qualitative changes in the level of knowledge formation of the specifics of native and foreign languages demonstrate the effectiveness of the application of the chosen methods in the implementation of the developed methodology for teaching a foreign language in a multicultural environment. The students of the experimental group are characterized by a more attentive attitude towards others, which is expressed in respect for representatives of other cultures. The research showed that the study of the Russian language is connected with human literacy. Thus, for example, 62.01% of students consider literacy as the main criterion of human culture; only 45.79% of respondents believe that a foreign language is necessary for study and work in the first place; and 32.01% of students put an emphasis on how the foreign language is structured. And only 21.49% want to learn a

foreign language in order to communicate with foreign peers. In addition, all students (100%) have ideas about the values of the culture of the studied language country. Thus, the results of the experiment give sufficient grounds to say that the methodology developed by us is oriented towards students as members of a certain multicultural environment, bearers of a certain national culture in the broadest sense of the word and contributes to the formation of the main features of SMP. The results of the research, reflecting the positive dynamics for all the selected criteria and indicators, confirm the proposed methodology and give grounds to conclude that the research goal has been achieved.

5. CONCLUSION

1. Thus, the study of questions on linguistic multicultural education is a priority in a multicultural society, and the language-culture-identity relationship is the methodological foundation of humanitarian education.

At the same time, the main direction of language education in a technical university is connected with the formation of the basic traits of SMP based on the study of language and cultures for solving problems of interpersonal and intercultural interaction. SMP is a qualitative new formation of a person characterized by a positive attitude towards language as a value that belongs to a certain culture, and manifested in the readiness to perceive other

cultures and the ability to realize representations, taking into account the specifics of national cultural speech behavior in its own intercultural communication.

2. Analyzing the program and methodological support of teaching a foreign language to specialists in the oil and gas industry, it should be noted that insufficient attention is paid to the formation of socio-cultural competence, in particular, to linguistic, cultural, communicative, pragmatic and value-oriented components.

3. On the basis of the multicultural approach, the process of teaching a foreign language is characterized by:

- The implementation of conditions for mastering the norms of intercultural communication of the planned level of mastering communicative and cognitive skills;

- Students' awareness of both themselves and others as cultural and historical subjects;

- Development of the ability to implement intercultural dialogue in the languages to be learned;

- Mastering integrative cognitive and communicative skills to use the languages (native and foreign) as a tool for becoming

equal members of the multicultural communities existing in the modern world.

4. Among the criteria for SMP development in the process of teaching a foreign language in the multicultural space of the university, we can identify: the availability of knowledge of native and foreign languages, the peculiarities of native culture in a multicultural environment and the culture of the studied language country; representations of the national and cultural specifics of speech behavior and the implementation of these ideas in their own intercultural communication; the formation of the students' attitude to the language as a value that belongs to a particular culture.

5. The implementation of the methodology for teaching a foreign language to students in a multicultural environment led to a positive result, as the goal was achieved gradually. At the first stage, the goal was to form a motivation for mastering the knowledge of the peculiarities of native and foreign languages, native culture in a multicultural environment and the culture of the country of the studied language. At the second stage, generalized ideas about the national and cultural specifics of speech behavior as a result of their own intercultural communication were formed. The goal of the third stage was the formation of the basic features of SMP of students, who are able to apply independently communicative and cognitive skills in

value-orientation activities and aware of themselves as the object and the subject of a multicultural environment.

Thus, the conducted research showed that the dynamics of the levels of a foreign language demonstrates that the proposed methodology provides effective teaching of students in the multicultural space of the university. A multicultural approach to the content of education is considered to be a necessary condition for the effectiveness of professional training of students in technical universities.

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