

## ACADEMIC MOBILITY AS A MOTIVATOR FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE OF TECHNICAL STUDENTS

*The article raises the issue of international academic mobility as one of the areas of implementation of the Bologna process and emphasizes the impact of this process on increasing of motivation of technical students to improve their communicative competence level. Academic mobility is considered by authors as intrinsic motivation for students to become full participants of the European Education area, to receive high-quality education and thus meet their educational needs, be ready to the rapid adaptation to the constantly changing conditions of the economic development in the period of globalization of society. The aim of the survey conducted by authors in this study is to identify the links between the level of respondent's foreign language proficiency level as a tool of communication and their aptitude to join the program of international academic mobility followed by commenting of the results obtained in this paper.*

**Key words:** Bologna process, academic mobility, foreign language communicative competence, motivation, communicative stimulus, communicative situation, intercultural communication, language proficiency levels, European educational space, educational needs, motive and communicative stimulus.

Challenges, determined by continuous and dynamic scientific and technological progress, introduction of innovative production technologies as well as the growing demands for future specialists on the modern labor market impose new, more sophisticated requirements to the technical graduates. The decisive factor in molding of a modern well trained specialist is highly developed foreign language communication skills, which are considered from the perspective not only of getting the necessary information from the original sources, but as vitally important for professional communication aimed at socializing with foreign partners, getting acquainted with their methods and tools, sharing opinions and participating in international projects. Moreover, the reinforced foreign language proficiency level facilitates greatly in the context of academic mobility process which is considered to be the most crucial integration procedure in the sphere of higher education as it gives the possibilities for students, post-graduate students and academic staff either to get education in various higher educational institutions or do practical training, or conduct scientific researches providing the ability transfer and accumulating of credits in proper legal manner of mastered disciplines [9].

As the issues of academic mobility and its implementation is one of the most urgent, many native scientists studied this process. Among them there are M. Zgurovsky, K. Korsak, V. Lugovy, whose works deal with challenges for modern higher education, O. Bolotska and S. Verbytska studied the implementation and development of international academic mobility, O. Shnirkov and S. Shmelyova eliminate the actuality of cooperation of universities with foreign organizations and funds, I. Zavgorodniy, V. Lisovy, O. Dyadchenko covered the issue of forming the academic mobility of students as a mean of integration in European Higher Education Area (EHEA). However, the search for means and tools that could provide the efficiency of the academic mobility process is still being studied as well as the issue how language proficiency level of technical students corresponds with European educational standards.

**The aim of the article** is to study academic mobility as a means of motivation to increase the communicative competence of technical students.

For the proper research it is important to determine the main concept of this article by citing the abstract from the law of Ukraine "About the higher education", which states that academic mobility is an opportunity for the participants of the educational process to study, to teach, undergo the internship or conduct the research activities in other educational establishment (scientific institution) both domestically or internationally [3].

M. Zgurovsky defines the academic mobility as a crucial and qualitative feature of European area that considers the interchange of people among higher educational establishments and among states [4]. According to M. Gulyaeva, academic mobility is a perspective for choosing the better options for getting education for training the modern specialist [2].

We consider academic mobility as one of the major factors facilitating the intercultural interaction. Development of communicative competence as the ability to conduct professional activities with representatives of different professions and cultures in various social and economic conditions is a key factor, which must be taking into consideration when training future specialists. It is obviously that in order to implement successfully any type of communication acts you need to have sufficient level of foreign language proficiency, particularly, of English language, and for a young specialist who is trying to meet the progressively stringent requirements of society and have a chance to pursue a career and opportunities for further professional growth, the adequate level of foreign language skills will be of crucial importance in the route of success. Academic mobility, as the integration process in the field of education, provides participants with the chance to gain new professional knowledge and improve the foreign language skills. Good command of foreign language and accomplished communicative competence could guarantee the higher competitiveness to the graduates of native higher educational institutions in either Ukrainian or international labor markets in various spheres and industries.

Following E. Kitova, we highlight that the specialist should possess either professional, or social and personal and interpersonal competence, which suggests the ability to work effectively in the foreign team and interpersonal skills, giving the opportunities to adopt the intercultural differences and work in the international context [5, p. 234–237].

But today there is a number of issues that hinder the effective performance of the international academic mobility programme as a strategy, declared to be the fundamental principle of building the EHEA.

First of all, we can mention the unreadiness of many higher educational establishments in Ukraine for participation in international activities in the declared format. Many studies indicate that the implementation of academic mobility is proceeding slowly and tentatively and is hindered by financial factor of our country, when such types of programs must be fund by educational institutions themselves [1].

There is no actual data on the subject of academic mobility in Ukraine. According to the rough calculations, the academic mobility of students from universities, institutes and academies of Ukraine in the countries of EHEA ranges within 5000–10000 people per year (0,5–1,0% of the contingent of students of higher education institutions of III–IV levels of accreditation, full-time education) [6, p. 130–143]. The next and more crucial problem, which intercepts students from participating in international mobility programs, is the reducing of students' motivation caused by their unconfidence in foreign language communicative competence. Although school teachers and university lecturers notice the significant increase in students' language proficiency in recent years, otherwise, in practice, this is not a reason to believe that a young person possesses developed communication skills and is ready to use these language skills for achieving personal and professional goals.

According to N. Sayenko, the enhancement of the quality of foreign language learning in a higher educational institution is to be supported and reinforced by a strong motivation which, in its turn, contributes the concernment in acquiring the language knowledge needed. It could be achieved by implementing advocacy work with students on such themes, as, for example, the importance of foreign language proficiency for enhancing the competitiveness and mobility of students and graduates or to discuss the main principles of Bologna convention, to reveal incentive measures on the part of departments' and institutes' chairs as well [7].

Currently the higher educational establishments are heavily focused on the providing the development of students' competences as well as the elaborating of incentive measures aimed to stimulate and encourage students to extend their potential and the vital factor for the successful integration of our youth in European educational area. A great deal of native scientists, among which we can mention O. Bolotska, O. Dyadchenko, H. Mihnenko, I. Fedorova, I. Zavgorodniy devoted their works to the analysis of accomplishment of Bologna process with focus on mobility of students and academic staff as an urgent element of the general strategy of higher education internationalization and forming of EHEA. Analytic investigation of data obtained proves the actuality of our research.

A study was organized and conducted with the aim to analyze how the foreign language proficiency and formed communicative competence motivate students to participation in academic mobility program and merge into the educational process of universities of European countries; to reveal whether students consider the participating in academic mobility programs as an opportunity of professional development and advancement of foreign language communication skills; to suggest the measures for increasing the students' motivation for participating in international projects and programs; to report their readiness to master the foreign language communication skills.

The survey was carried out among the students of the National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute". An overall number of students participated in the survey was 97, 47 of which were the students of the 1st–3rd years of study and 50 respondents – the senior students.

The survey covered all bachelor degree courses and the first year of master course. Students were divided into two groups: the first group consisted of the students of the I–III years of study as the first and middle level in the studying process of higher education, and the second group consisted of the senior students i.e. the 4th and the 5th years of study, as those, who have already mastered certain educational programs.

The method of study was the survey that allows to find out respondents' opinion on the issue of research quickly and efficiently. During the survey, respondents were asked to give answers on 5 questions of the questionnaire. The answers in the questionnaire provided answers "yes" or "no".

The first question of the questionnaire was aimed to identify respondents' opinions concerning whether they feel confidently when conducting conversation in foreign language. The results of the survey revealed that among the respondents in the first group, the majority, accounting for 59% (28 people), answered "yes", but the percentage of positive answers from the respondents of the 2nd group appeared to be a minority – only 35% (18 people). This fact suggests that every year the awareness of the significance of language learning and the level of communicative competence grows.

In other words, students during the first years of their academic learning less feel the psychological barrier and are not afraid of real-life communication in a foreign language. And this can be assumed as a good precondition for fulfilling the requirements for participation in the mobility program and increases the chances of our young people to quickly and easily adapt to new social conditions. These data are encouraging on the one hand, but a rather low percentage among respondents who already have an educational background and may start or have already started their professional career seems to be dispiriting.

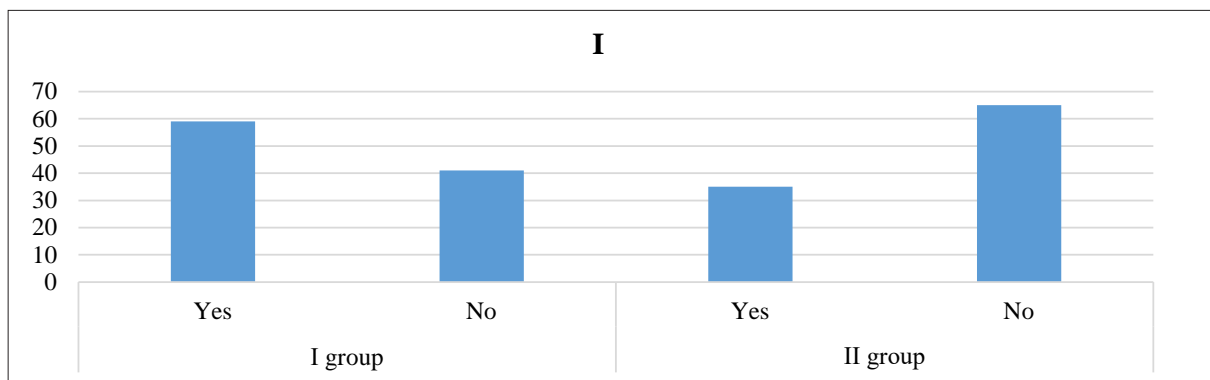


Fig. 1. Results of the first question

The second question of our survey was intended to find out respondents’ opinion on how adequate is their level of foreign language knowledge to participate in international programs.

Among junior students (1st–3rd years of study), 35% (17 people) consider that they have a sufficient language proficiency and are ready for living abroad and speak foreign language, while the other 65% gave the negative answer. The replies of students, belonging to the second group were divided equally by 50%. These data obtained indicates that the teacher should be the motivator for students who are willing to develop their language skills and communicative potential in order to succeed with obtaining a diploma in another country and gain new skills and experience, that the process of academic mobility actually suggests.

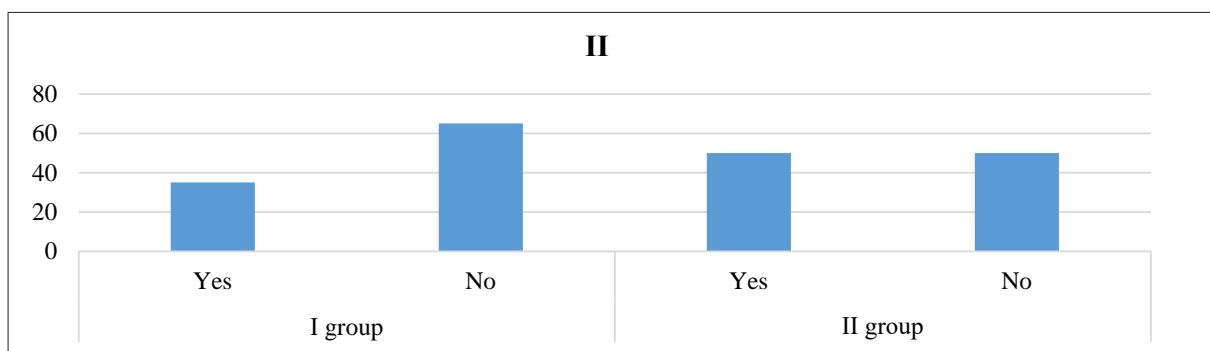


Fig. 2. Results of the second question

As for the students’ intention to enhance their language speaking skills, the majority of the two groups answered “yes”, namely, 71% of respondents of the first group and 65% of the second group, respectively. Presented statistics confirms the fact that the entire educational process in foreign language class ought to be aimed at heightening the students’ interest in mastering the foreign language, which they consider as a powerful tool for professional development and reinforcing the speaking skills for their successful implementation in further practice.

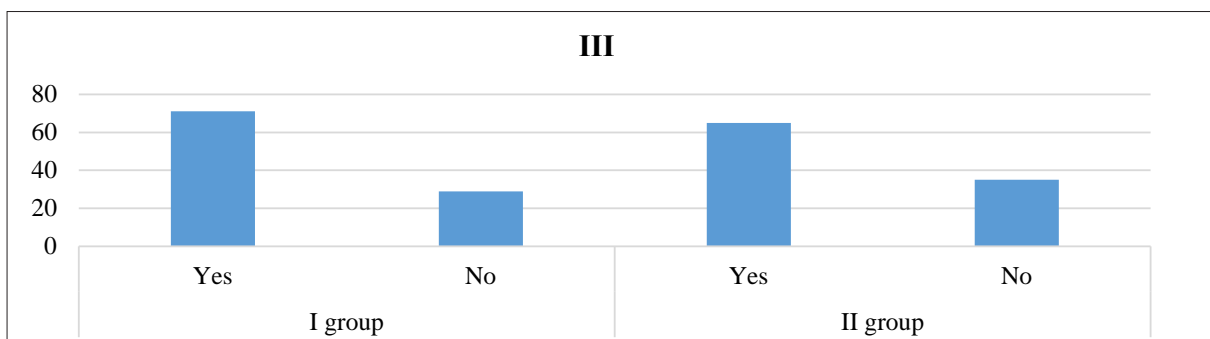


Fig. 3. Results of the third question

Academic mobility is a logical and effective feedback to the hardening demands of the modern global labor market, adapting not only professional skills of its applicants, but also, that is no less important for the XXI century society, develops multicultural competencies. It means that now, more than ever before in the history of mankind, there is a potential opportunity for a specialist to tailor himself as a further object of the planetary labor market [8, p. 78].

The results of the fourth question of the survey confirms the favourability of the students to the mobility program, since majority of students (53% of the first group and 55% of the second, respectively) consider it as a way of improving the level of spoken English and increasing the degree of formation of communicative competence developed in the process of studying at a non-native university. The mobility program provides students with the ability to communicate with native speakers, presuming their peers, teachers, etc. as well as gaining of knowledge on the speciality.

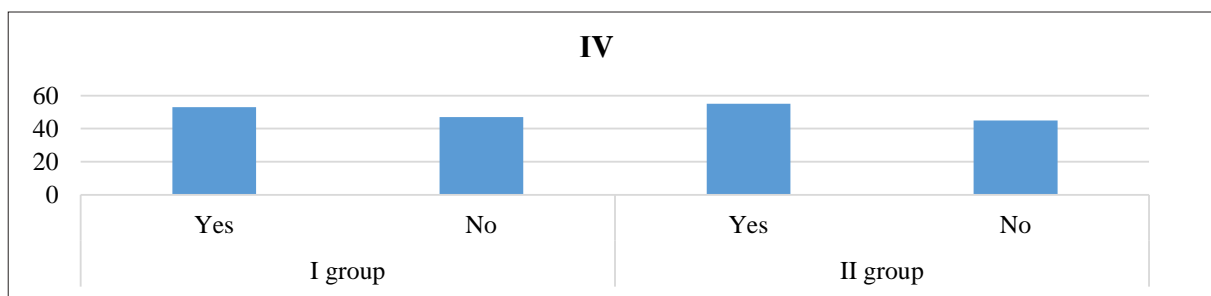


Fig. 4. Results of the fourth question

In this context we consider the academic mobility as one of the essential factors aimed to stimulate the learning of foreign language for professional purposes and stipulate the importance of formation of intercultural professional competence of technical students.

Respondents' answers on the last question – whether they consider the academic mobility program as a motive for more advanced English language learning, were quite predictable. In both groups the percentage of students giving the positive answer prevailed over those, answering negatively – 56% and 65% respectively.

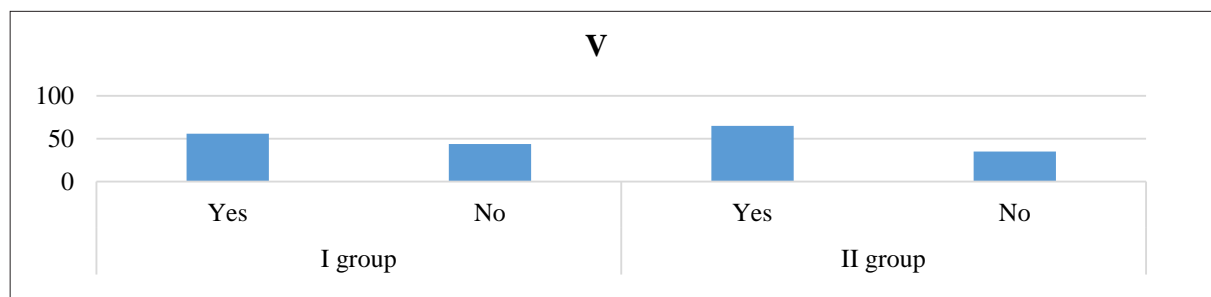


Fig. 5. Results of the fifth question

The research demonstrates that academic mobility for the majority of students actually acts like a launch pad for professional self-realization. The data obtained during the survey indicates that a sufficient level of formation of communicative competence facilitates students' affiliation the EHEA, allows them to reach understanding with foreign peers, aids to express their own opinion, exchange the professional and academic experience etc.

**Conclusions.** Today Ukraine is ongoing the process of integration of native universities into the unified network of higher educational establishments. Consequently, such participation involves the academic mobility, both for students and for the teaching staff.

Participation of students in international educational programs should become a permanent feature of modern Ukrainian education, which means that it is necessary to develop and improve the new terms and forms of academic mobility in order to meet the growing demand of students for participation in international educational programs and promote the successful integration of native higher education establishments into the world system of education and science. The results of the conducted research prove the necessity of further development of new, effective methods and means of foreign communication competence formation. The importance of forming the students' apprehension that mastering a high level of professionally oriented foreign language training is one of the constituent components of foreign language communicative competence becomes more effective through participation in international mobility programs. The level of language proficiency, the degree to which communicative skills are formed should motivate the students to focus on the enrichment of their foreign language vocabulary and to improve their communication skills. Students need to understand the great prospects of participating in academic mobility programs for their own personal and professional development.

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#### **Ямшинська Н. В., Свиридова Л. Г. Академічна мобільність як засіб мотивації для підвищення комунікативної компетенції студентів технічних спеціальностей**

У статті відображено питання міжнародної академічної мобільності як одного з напрямів реалізації Болонського процесу та вплив цього процесу на підвищення мотивації студентів немовних вузів для підвищення рівня комунікативної компетенції. Академічна мобільність розглядається авторами як стимул внутрішньої мотивації для студентів до залучення до світового освітнього простору, отримання якісної освіти та задоволення їхніх освітніх потреб, готовності до швидкої адаптації до постійно змінюваних умов розвитку економіки в період глобалізації суспільства. Автори статті дають оцінку результатів опитування серед студентів, яке дало змогу виявити зв'язки між рівнем володіння респондентами іноземною мовою як засобом комунікації та їх можливістю брати участь у програмах міжнародної академічної мобільності з метою поліпшення своїх знань мови для особистого й професійного спілкування.

**Ключові слова:** Болонський процес, академічна мобільність, ініомовна комунікативна компетентність, мотивація, комунікативний стимул, комунікативна ситуація, освітній простір, сфера освіти, рівні володіння мовою, європейський освітній простір, освітні потреби.

#### **Ямшинская Н. В., Свиридова Л. Г. Академическая мобильность как средство мотивации для повышения коммуникативной компетенции студентов технических специальностей**

В статье отобразен вопрос международной академической мобильности как одного из направлений реализации Болонского процесса и влияние этого процесса на повышение мотивации студентов неязыковых вузов для повышения уровня коммуникативной компетенции. Академическая мобильность рассматривается авторами как стимул внутренней мотивации для студентов для приобщения к мировому образовательному пространству, получения качественного образования и удовлетворения их образовательных потребностей, готовности к быстрой адаптации к постоянно изменяющимся условиям развития экономики в период глобализации общества. Авторы статьи дают оценку результатов опроса среди студентов, который позволил выявить связи между уровнем владения респондентами иностранным языком как средством коммуникации и их возможностью принимать участие в программах международной академической мобильности с целью улучшения своих знаний языка для личного и профессионального общения.

**Ключевые слова:** Болонский процесс, академическая мобильность, иноязычная коммуникативная компетентность, мотивация, коммуникативный стимул, коммуникативная ситуация, образовательное пространство, сфера образования, уровни владения языком, европейское образовательное пространство, образовательные потребности.