

BOOK REVIEWS

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Review

The 30th anniversary of the Applied Linguistics Department of Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University (Lutsk, Ukraine)

Actually, the Applied Linguistics Department of Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University was founded in the fall of 1992, as a department of the Romance-Germanic Faculty of Lesya Ukrainka Lutsk State Pedagogical Institute. Mykola Ihorovych Kikets, after spending time at Harvard University in the USA had seen the Applied Linguistics Department there and was impressed, thinking it would be good to have a department like that in Ukraine as well. That plan was already in his mind when he heard that two volunteers from the USA could be available to come and help get that department started in the right direction. In September of that year (1992),

just as the academic year was beginning, Dr. Daniel Sherick (a co-author of this article) and Martin Hnizdil arrived in Lutsk. Martin stayed in Lutsk for three years, but Daniel continued teaching for a total of 24 years as a professor in the department. He had a doctor's degree in mathematics and computer science, writing his doctor's thesis on computer simulation, mostly involving stochastic processes that use random variables. During the course of his life, he had also studied German, Romanian and Serbian at national universities in those countries, giving him a good foundation in linguistics during the process. He was joined by other teachers from the USA and Canada in the following years. Often there were three or four such teachers working in the department at the same time.

In those first years, special emphasis was given to mathematics, with studies of matrices, derivatives, integrals, and even differential equations. To enter the department students had to pass an entrance exam in math, a requirement that was eliminated in later years. A computer laboratory was formed for the department and, later, a second computer classroom was provided.

In that first year, there were just 23 students, but soon there were around 40 new students each year. This academic year (2023-2024) there are 79 new students in the first year of studies. So, this has become a popular choice for incoming students. As time has gone on, information technology has undergone enormous changes and improvements, with new innovations appearing almost constantly. Web design was developing more and more. In our department first HTML was taught, then JavaScript and Cascading Style Sheets, as well the use of software that enables Web design without having complete knowledge of the former basic tools. Programming languages that were taught included C++ and Python, as well as an introduction to Artificial Intelligence programming languages like LISP and Prolog. Of course, English was also taught in depth along with the above-mentioned courses that were taught by native speakers of English. German was introduced as a second foreign language, as well. General and Applied Linguistics were stressed, too, of course. Actually, the students were being prepared not just to be applied linguistics. Ones who were interested in computer science, for example, could develop further in that direction. For example, one student, Dmitro Irzhytskiy, wrote a course paper on HTML in the early 1990's. After graduation he went on to become an expert web designer. He founded his own business in Lutsk and had several others working for him, most of their contracts being from Great Britain. Because the workload was getting enormous, he decided to work for a French firm and now lives in Sofia, Bulgaria, with his family. Other students have similar success stories. Most

students of our department, having a good command of English, and even German, have found good jobs in Ukraine or abroad where their knowledge of computer science was also one of the criteria required by their perspective employers. A number of our former students have taught or are now teaching in the Applied Linguistics Department in Lutsk, passing their knowledge on to others. There are good reasons why Applied Linguistics has become a very popular choice for young people hoping for a bright future.

It is important to point out that now the Applied Linguistics Department of the Faculty of Foreign Philology of Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University trains specialists on the basis of a unique educational model, which is based on the fact that along with the study of two foreign languages and translation, as well as professional linguistic disciplines, applicants receive thorough training in the field of information technology and intelligent systems, which significantly expands employment opportunities for our students, as compared to graduates of other specialties, both philological and technical. This model is reflected in the educational and professional program “Applied Linguistics. Translation and Computational Linguistics” (the program was approved in 2017), its history being closely connected with the creation of the department in 1993.

Among the founders of the department there were M. Kikets, D. Sherick, L. Kyrychuk, O. Rohach, Y. Zelenyi, N. Voloshynovych, Z. Korablina, M. Zhuikova, I. Karpus, S. Demchynska, I. Biskub, N. Maksymchuk, and others.

During its existence, the department was headed by: Mykola Ihorovych Kikets, Ph.D., Associate Professor (1993–2003), Oksana Oleksiivna Rohach, Ph.D., Professor (2003–2006), Maria Oleksandrivna Olikova, Ph.D., Professor (2006–2012), Iryna Pavlivna Biskub, Doctor of Philology, Professor (2012–2023), and Olha Bohdanivna Berlady, Ph.D. (from 2023 until this present time).

From the beginning of its activity until 2019, foreign teachers taught at the Department: Professor Daniel Sherick (USA), teachers Don Puffalt (Canada) and Duane Hettich (USA).

The Department of Applied Linguistics is a graduation program for the educational program “Applied Linguistics. Translation and Computational Linguistics” (for Bachelors and Masters). Its other educational program – “Polyparadigmality of Foreign Language Discourses” – is for the Faculty of Foreign Philology, preparing Doctors of Philosophy in the specialty “035 Philology”.

The research topic on which the Department is working on now is “The Function of Language Units in the Cognitive-discursive Paradigm”.

Among the priority areas for research conducted by professors and associate professors of the department are cognitive linguistics, discourse studies, theoretical linguistics, human-computer communication, foreign language acquisition and teaching methods, lexicography, intercultural communication, translation, verbal and non-verbal means of communication, distance education, new information technologies, programming, web-design etc.

The Department's teachers, professors and students are organizers, co-organizers and participants of numerous conferences, round table discussions, seminars, and academic conferences on various topics and of different levels.

Over the past five years, the teachers of the Department have taken part in more than 100 all-Ukrainian and international academic conferences. During the period from 2017 to 2023 the teaching staff has published more than 300 academic works, including research articles, educational manuals and books.

In 2014, the following academic journals were launched at the Department of Applied Linguistics: "Topical Issues of Foreign Philology" [since May 2016, the journal is included in the list of professional journals (order of the Ministry of Education and Science No. 515 of May 16, 2016)], "SCIENTIA EST POTENTIA: Youth Scientific Bulletin of the Institute of Foreign Philology", and "East European Journal of Psycholinguistics". Professor S. Zasekin is the chief editor of this last one and is a member of the editorial board of the international peer-reviewed journal "International Journal of Language and Linguistics". Professor I. Biskub is a member of the editorial board of the academic journal "Language. Culture. Politics" of the Institute of Neo-philology, PWSZ (Helm, Republic of Poland).

The academic and pedagogical staff of the department annually updates the list of academic works in the repository of Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, to which all interested persons have free access.

In 2018, the Department of Applied Linguistics established an educational and scientific laboratory of media linguistics. The head of the laboratory is D. Kalishchuk. The laboratory is a scientific and material-technical base for conducting the research and educational work of the Department of Applied Linguistics.

Since 2017, the Department of Applied Linguistics has been actively involved in innovation and grant activities, and it successfully implements projects funded by the EU:

– project "MILETUS (Erasmus + CA 2) – Development of Student Mobility Potential in Higher Education Institutions of Serbia and Ukraine" 2017-2019 (participants: I. Biskub, A. Danylchuk);

– Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module “European Union Language Policy” 2017-2020 (coordinator: I. Biskub);

– ATHENA project within the framework of the TEMPUS IV program under the leadership of the Association of European Universities (EUA) (participant: S. Zasekin);

– Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module “Sustainable Language Education and Media: Bridging the Gap Between EU-Ukraine (SLEMBG)” 2021-2024 (coordinator: I. Biskub).

– Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Module “Promoting the Development of Academic Integrity and Responsibility: EU Experience – Fair” (2022-2025) (participants: S. Zasekin and O. Kotys).

From 2015 through 2017, the Department served as the basis for the second stage of the All-Ukrainian Student Olympiad in Applied Linguistics. Students regularly participate and receive awards at all-Ukrainian Olympiads and competitions held in other Ukrainian higher educational institutions.

Since the establishment of the Department, its teachers and professors have been constantly improving their skills by participating in international internships, exchange programs, workshops and academic events.

Within the framework of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed by Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University and the Volyn Regional Philharmonic, since 2015 the Department has been a co-organizer of the annual International Music Festival “Stravinsky and Ukraine”. The teachers of the Department have carried out academic and consulting activities at the request of the Philharmonic and have translated five films by the famous British director Tony Palmer into Ukrainian. In March of 2022, as a part of the contract, the translation of a sixth film was done.

Since 2020, the Department of Applied Linguistics has organized the selection and training of applicants for dual education. Since then, 23 students have been selected to study at the IT company “InternetDevels”. In February 2022, a contract was signed for the dual education training of two more of our applied linguistics students at the company “Mint Innovations” of the Modern Expo group of companies.

At the Department of Applied Linguistics, student research is actively conducted. There are six student research centers, whose activities are aimed at developing the abilities of gifted students and stimulating their self-improvement. The results are presented in multi-genre publications, articles and theses in professional journals. The platforms for approbation of the results are the International Student Conference “Linguistic Horizons of the XXI Century” (conducted since 2017) and the student academic seminar “Interdisciplinary Vector of Foreign Language Education” (since 2021).

Among the international partners of the Department are the Faculty of Artes Liberales of the University of Warsaw, the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, the Chelm Higher Vocational School (Poland), the University of Vechta (Germany), the Pomeranian University in Słupsk (Poland). The Department cooperates with specialized departments at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukrainian Catholic University, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Zaporizhzhia National University, Lviv National University “Lviv Politechnics”, Odesa National University named after Illia Mechnikov, Kharkiv National University named after Hryhorii Skovoroda, and others.

In cooperation with the representative office of the British educational company Pearson Educational in the western region of Ukraine and the international educational and methodological Center Pearson-Dinternal, in 2017 the Center for Languages and Computer Technologies “CLEVER” at the department received a license to conduct international exams PTE General (Pearson Test of English General) and PTE YoungLearners. V. Novak, senior lecturer of the Department, was the head of the Center and a certified examiner of PTE tests.

There is a lot more that could be shared and written about the history of the first department of applied linguistics in Ukraine and its multidirectional and effective activities, but the most important thing about those working in this department is that they are difference makers and do their best in order to make this world a better place to live.