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INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY TO ACCELERATE LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract. The migration issue strongly displays educational structures' failure to supply a large group of adults with new production skills and a new homeland's language in a short period of time. Although there are high-quality systems for teaching foreign languages (for example, the Callan method), educational authorities do not understand or promote them for a variety of reasons, particularly in nations where regular migration waves occur. Efforts to employ current information and communication technologies (ICT) to accelerate adult education, particularly the adaptation of refugees and migrants, have failed due to a lack of adequately organized work by specialists in the field. The article demonstrates how, leveraging technology advancements in recent years, it is feasible to combine the most advanced methods to the formation of production abilities in adults while also speeding up the process of learning a foreign language.

I. Introduction. Most countries have their own or adapted teaching methods and foreign language competence evaluation procedures approved by education ministries, as well as a plethora of courses based on cutting-edge technology. Only huge worldwide corporations, one of the most authoritative being Education First, can objectively examine the problem (EF). Its regular current Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) is published annually based on its own English proficiency assessment tests conducted on their website for users around the world, and in collaboration with companies to evaluate their employees [1].

Adaptive testing is used to assess basic skills such as reading and understanding by ear. Because they are held on the Internet and by people who are more engaged in acquiring the language, the results are slightly exaggerated, and nations with poor Internet distribution are dropped from the ranking. Despite all this, the rating data allow us to determine the trends of further development of the situation in the world, as well as to prolong and extrapolate them. In addition, the EF EPI has a severe (> 70) correlation with the TOEFL iBT and the IELTS Academic.

Only Scandinavia and the Netherlands, according to EF, can claim to have overcome the difficulty of mastering English as a second language. This achievement is the result of decades of efforts by national education ministries to encourage multilingualism. School systems in these countries use several key strategies, including early focus on communication skills, daily learning of English, both in and out of the classroom, as well as specialized language training in the last years of training, whether it is a vocational school or University.

In the Slavic countries of the former Soviet Union, this level barely reaches ten percent. The level of English proficiency in Russia is not improving in any way. A survey conducted back in 2014 showed that 70 % of Russian adults admitted that they did not know any foreign language, and only 11 % said that they could speak a little English. Unfortunately, the situation is similar in those countries that account for the peak of emigration waves. Of the four largest economies in the Eurozone, only Germany speaks good English. France, Spain and Italy lag behind almost all other member States. The gap in English proficiency is particularly worrisome, as both Italy and Spain suffer from high levels of unemployment, especially among young people, and are subject to a constant influx of new migrants. Corporate and publicly funded adult education programs are common throughout Europe, but these foreign language courses are often too short and too low-intensity to be effective. European countries could further improve English proficiency by introducing adult education that is externally certified and normalized in accordance with certification systems to ensure its quality, but this is too slow.

II. Approach to creating a new type of learning management system. The Callan method [2] can teach English in a quarter of the time taken by any other method on the market (figure 1). Instead of the usual 350 hours necessary to get the average student to the level of the Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET), the Callan method can take as little as 80 hours, and only 160 hours for the Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE).

To date, this is almost the only method that can be used to "disable" the internal translator in the mind of the student and achieve not only high-quality language proficiency, but also to start the mechanisms of "thinking" in a foreign language. In fact, this is the optimal way to obtain language skills, which triggers the speech mechanism of students from the very first lesson, and which Krashen [3] defines as "grammar monitor". However, because of this, the main disadvantage of this excellent method is its exclusivity, as classes in the classroom can only be conducted with small groups of students and by teachers who have received extensive

linguistic and, more importantly, methodological training using specially selected materials. For example, in Belarus, there is just one teacher who holds a qualification allowing them to teach utilizing the Callan technique.
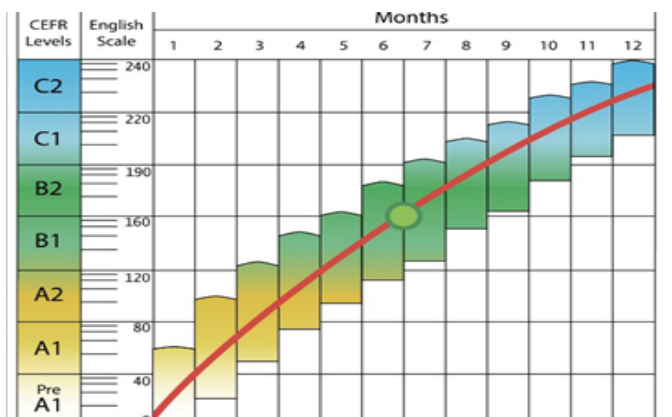

Figure 1 — Callan method and CEFR

However, one of the most effective ways to learn a language is through simultaneous formation of professional skills. The most striking example of this approach was the multinational Armed Forces of the Soviet Union. Back in the 60–70s of the last century, the outstanding Soviet psychologist Galperin [4] developed the theory of interiorization. Its introduction into the combat training of the Soviet Armed Forces provided for many years a systematic steady formation of professional and linguistic skills in young people aged 18 and over. Several dozen generations of people of different nationalities were drafted into the Soviet Armed Forces, and most of them did not speak Russian at all or spoke extremely poorly. Each of them mastered their military vocation and was able to independently conduct tasks in the sphere of specific military activities after three months of training in Russian, which was quite difficult for foreigners to grasp. After two years of military service, each young man returned home to discover a new language with a very sophisticated grammar, which nearly no one forgot. They had attained a degree of fluency in Russian as a foreign language that allowed them to speak it spontaneously, despite the fact that none of them had been specifically taught the language. However, professional skills training was conducted on a regular basis using specifically prepared materials and methodologies created by Galperin and his associates.

Furthermore, in the Soviet Union at the time, the grammatical-translation method dominated the mass study of foreign languages; as a result of this training, Soviet people were able to read and write well, and even knew English grammar well, but the vast majority could not understand native speakers' oral speech and could not conduct a normal dialogue. However, the most advanced psychological approaches were used at the time for targeted linguistic training of specialists in a short period of time, as well as for mass training of Russian language representatives of various nationalities, which were usually based on an Orienting Basis of mental Activity (OBA). As a result, we can give an example of modern migrants, guest workers, who come to work in Russia from Central Asia. These are young people who work in heavy industries or in construction for several years, and few of them speak Russian normally. At the same time, previous generations of their parents and even grandparents have not forgotten Russian for a long period after returning to their native country and are used by their own children as translators.

Modern linguists are unfamiliar with these procedures and may not even be aware of them. A symposium on the challenges of teaching and learning languages in a multicultural environment, for example, was held in Berlin in May 2019. However, the conference program and final materials revealed orthodox linguists' clear lack of how to handle the challenges of refugees and migrants. Teachers don't know how to teach people fast and efficiently, and they don't know how to use current simulators and other ICT to accomplish these aims.

At the conference, almost the only notable report was on the topic: "From language for work to language through work" in the context of migration and inclusion – The Language for Work Network and its tools for supporting work-related Second Language development" [5]. As I previously stated, a comparable problem was handled many years ago thanks to Galperin's, his predecessors', and students' foresight. Although the report's author is on the correct road, the manner she suggests to fix the problem demonstrates a practical lack of the fundamentals of activity theory, psycholinguistics, and adult learner psychology. In brief, the author proposes that a second teacher be introduced, who, along with the linguist, would teach the student the fundamentals of his eventual vocation. There is reason to believe that as a result of such improvements, the length of training will only lengthen, because it will still be based on language study, although for work, rather than the simultaneous construction of professional and language skills based on the OBA.

III. Conclusion. For refugees and migrants, the implementation of such a project is critical. They will be able to obtain not only the necessary information about their new job, but also stable language skills in their new nation in a reasonably short period of time. Furthermore, the learning process will take place remotely, with no need for an instructor to be present in the classroom face to face with pupils, and lessons can be hosted anywhere with an Internet connection. The resulting solutions and technologies will actively support state administrations' efforts to manage migrant integration at the national and local levels. They will also make it easier for migrants to communicate with host communities and access services such as vocational and language training, jobs, education, and social security.

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