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APPROACHES TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN UKRAINE AND PORTUGAL: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Students' academic mobility programmes provide us with a unique opportunity to gain new experience abroad. Students are able to get acquainted with various approaches to teaching different subjects at prominent European universities. During the first semester, I studied English language and literature at Faculty of Arts at the University of Porto (Portugal). Thus, the aim of this article is to compare foreign language (FL) teaching approaches in Ukraine and Portugal.

From my own experience in the University of Porto, I can state that approaches to FL teaching in Portugal slightly differ from those in Ukraine. Portuguese teaching system has some key differences when compared to the Ukrainian one. The most notable difference is the grading system. In the University of Porto, students don't get evaluated on their performance in class, instead, they are only expected to attend and take notes. Therefore, the grading system in Portugal (depending on the methods used by the teacher) can either be just one final exam or, be various (usually two) written evaluations throughout the semester. If a student doesn't get the minimum grade to pass the class, he or she can request a retake exam, which will give them another opportunity to improve their grades. There is also the possibility of some teachers asking the students to create small or medium-sized essays that will go towards the final evaluation score. Group projects are likewise available for a teacher to use, with the intent to test the student's knowledge throughout the semester while promoting teamwork and communication by making them work together.

In contrast to the Ukrainian system, the teachers in Portugal give free will to their students. If a student needs or wants to, he or she can choose to not go to a class and not have repercussions for their actions. However, this is limited by a maximum of 25% absences of all total classes, which means, if a student doesn't attend, at least, 30% of all classes, he or she will fail. Another interesting aspect is that, unlike in Ukraine, in Portugal when you miss a class and the respective course material that was taught, the student is not obligated to retake the class that was missed, instead, they are encouraged to catch up on the material by themselves, promoting a sense of responsibility and studying on their free time.

One aspect of the Portuguese education system that intrigued me is the methods used by English teachers. It's important to note that most English teachers in the Faculty of Arts are of English descent, which makes a prominent difference when learning certain aspects of the language, such as pronunciation. It's important to note that these teachers are very dynamic. They mainly give lectures to a medium-sized classroom of about 30 to 40 students. The teacher would start his or her lecture by warming up activity, e.g. by mentioning a recent topic from the news and try to incorporate it with the material taught in that class. Consequently, this always created a spark of interest in the students, as it was never a repetition of previous classes. Generally, this also created a debate among the students at the start of the class, leading to a more energetic audience.

The teachers also use methods similar to the ones used by Ukrainian teachers, such as a PowerPoint slideshow and written course material to support the lessons. Every student is expected to have their own course material, which they could print at home. This material would serve as a basis for the teacher to advance the lesson. However, the lessons were never strictly confined to following what was written. Generally, the teacher would opt to make the lessons more dynamic, such as creating small puzzles for the students to do, or short-duration games to teach certain grammatical aspects of the English language. This proved very effective, as it was possible to observe students' amusement and energy during the English classes.

Thus, we can make the conclusion that approaches to FL teaching in Portugal differ from those in Ukraine and contribute to developing learner autonomy.