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**THE ROLE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
IN RURAL COMMUNITIES' DEVELOPMENT IN UKRAINE**

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**РОЛЬ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ У РОЗВИТКУ СІЛЬСЬКИХ ГРОМАД В  
УКРАЇНІ**

*У статті розглянуто, як володіння іноземними мовами мешканців сільських територій може здійснювати позитивний вплив на розвиток сільських громад в Україні. Переваги від опанування ними іноземних мов проаналізовано на рівні індивіда, громади та держави в цілому. У статті наведено практичний досвід Таврійського державного агротехнологічного університету в реалізації завдань навчання англійської, німецької та французької мов представників сільських територій.*

**Ключові слова:** розвиток сільських територій, громада, іноземні мови, запровадження, переваги

*The author considers how foreign language education of rural dwellers could productively contribute to the development of Ukraine's rural communities. Benefits of acquiring foreign languages by rural dwellers are analyzed on individual, community and state levels. Practical experience of Tavria State Agrotechnological University in teaching English, German and French to rural dwellers is provided in the article.*

**Key words:** rural areas' development, local community, foreign languages, implementation, benefits

**Relevance of the research.** Throughout Ukraine's history agriculture has played an important role in the national economy. However, for the period of recent 20 years the situation in this sector is worsening which results in weakening of

Ukraine's rural communities and various problems that arise. The most pressing among them are: depopulation of rural communities, low birthrate, alcoholism, unemployment, poverty, low quality of life, unattractiveness of business in rural areas, underdevelopment of industrial and social infrastructure, out-of-date agricultural machines etc. This influences both every individual villager and the rural community as a whole. Recent studies (Prytula, K.& Krupin, V., 2011) show that nowadays an average rural area dweller has a low level of education and cross-cultural competence, poor command of English or other foreign languages, scarce knowledge about the world trends in the development of agriculture, poor information awareness, no access to up-to-date information, lack of leadership and communication skills, no international experience, low self-esteem; he/she is mostly narrow-minded and inflexible, not ready to use practical experience of other countries etc. Everything mentioned above reveals relevance of the research and proves that the development of rural areas is to be seen as one of the primary tasks in Ukraine.

Ukrainian government realizes that rural areas require support in their development. This is emphasized in the Law of Ukraine "On the priority of social development of rural areas and agricultural sector in the national economy", the Law of Ukraine "On basic principles of national agrarian policy for the period until 2015", the Law of Ukraine "On the state support for the rural economy of Ukraine", "Conception of the development of rural areas" etc. However, implementation of these laws faces a lot of obstacles.

**The objective of this study** is to substantiate the role of English and other foreign languages in the development of Ukraine's rural communities.

**State-of-the-art of the problem.** Some aspects of the development of rural areas in Ukraine have been studied by O.M. Borodina, I.H. Kyrylenko, O.I. Pavlov, O.L. Popova, I.V. Prokopa, M.K. Orlatyi, V.V. Yurchyshyn and others. However, the role of foreign languages as a means of Ukrainian rural communities' development has not been grounded yet.

Higher educational establishments of agrarian specialization have a great potential in solving at least some of the problems of rural communities' development

(Erling, E. et al., 2012). We can demonstrate it on the example of our university. Working at the Department of Foreign Languages at Tavria State Agrotechnological University as foreign language teachers we promote English, German and French in various ways. Firstly, the pedagogical staff does its best to motivate the students (most of them are from rural areas) to acquire a good level of foreign languages and explain them various advantages it can give them. Practical significance and communicative approach to foreign languages are emphasized. Students are taught to use a language as a tool for carrying out various tasks and solving problems. Their self-study and individual work in the course of foreign languages is related to their master level research work. The students find sources of information in English, German or French and use them in their research. They also participate in scientific conferences and present results of their research in foreign languages.

Secondly, extracurricular activities are also suggested to the students. They include English discussion club “Ukrainian Youth for Sustainable Development”, where the students find themselves in the authentic verbal environment with native speakers and discuss the most pressing problems of Ukraine as well as study experience of the developed countries. Language courses are also available for the students wishing to improve their level. Moreover, every year we arrange the decades of foreign languages and hold various meetings, contests and other events.

And finally, when our students master English, German or French they are able to participate in international exchange programmes. It is very important that our university offers the students programmes in education exchange, practical training, internship etc. Such experience is crucial for every participant but in our opinion it is especially necessary for young rural dwellers.

Benefits of mastering foreign languages by rural dwellers can be considered on three levels: individual, community and state. On the level of individuals learning a foreign language and participation in international programmes gives rural dwellers an opportunity to develop a global perspective and a broader understanding of the world; enriches their professional, educational and cultural horizons; makes them able to cooperate with representatives of other countries; provides them with new

skills in agriculture; makes them more open-minded; raises their self-esteem; provides an opportunity for self-development due to analyzing experience of other countries in solving the most controversial and pressing issues; allows them understand Ukraine's potential and value their own country.

On the level of rural communities a high level of foreign languages of their members promotes Ukraine's rural areas development due to access to information in foreign languages about the latest achievements in agriculture, ability to learn how to work with up-to-date agricultural machines and find out about the world trends in the development of agriculture, improvement of leadership and communication skills, having more chances to get international experience, ability to use practical experience of other countries etc.

On the level of the country proficiency of rural dwellers in foreign languages promotes mutual understanding between different countries and building long-term international relationships that is beneficial for all the parties. Intensive development of agriculture, implementation of the latest achievements in technologies and up-to-date equipment, ensuring food security on the global scale are among the most important benefits.

**Conclusion.** So, foreign language education could productively contribute to the development of Ukraine's rural communities.

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