

PhD Candidate in Philology, Isakova M.L.

SHEI "National Mining University", Ukraine

Foreign Languages in Modern Curriculum

For centuries has the higher education been the privilege of the chosen ones. This impermeability was conditioned by social, religious and financial factors. However democratization and liberalization of society facilitated acquisition of higher education for all strata of society. And the statistics are that there are more of those who are eager to get this education. According to recent estimates the number of applicants almost doubled, in spite of the present poor demographic state. This entrance boom can be explained by a number of factors, as can be seen from the recent research conducted among the students of all years of study and post-graduate students from Ukraine's leading higher education institutions (Kyiv University of Economics and Law, Lviv Institute of Banking, Customs Academy of Ukraine, National Mining University and oth.)

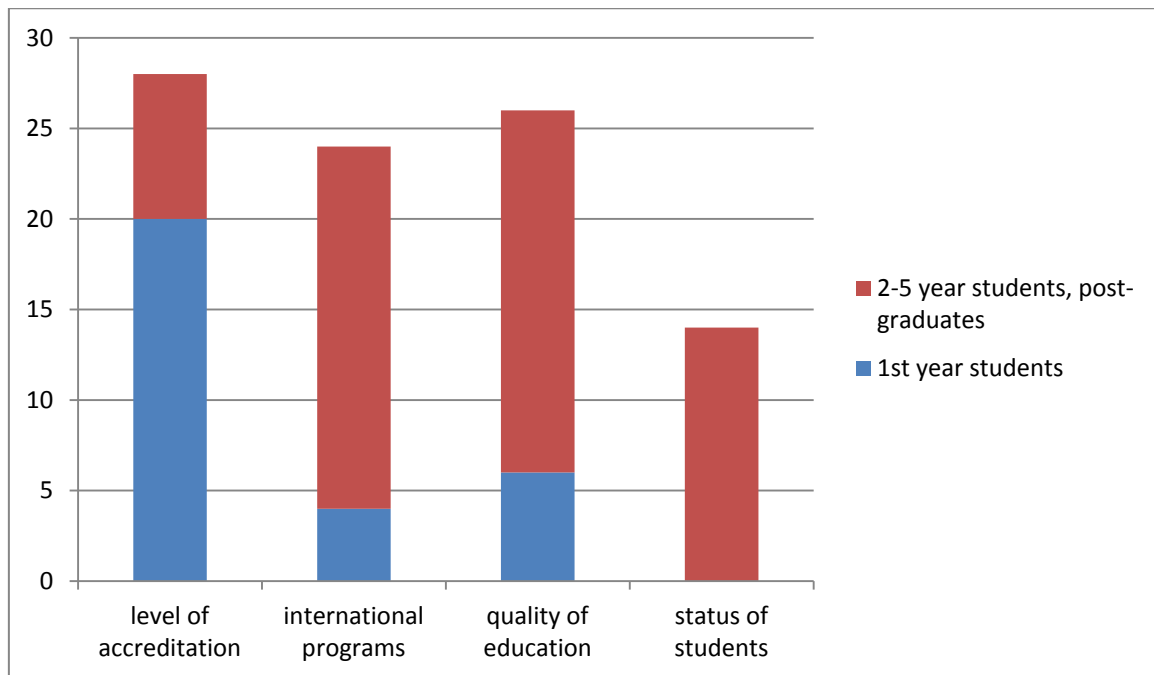
Respondents answered the following questions: Why did you enter your university? How do you see your future? and the main question: What do you think are the main advantages of higher education (university) over vocational education (colleges, technical schools)? The majority of students of 2-5 year of study gave lengthy answers to the open question, which gave the opportunity to determine key values sought by students in the higher education. As for the first year students (the survey was conducted in the first week of studies), their answers were short and insufficient. Overwhelming majority said that the level of accreditation was the main advantage of university education. It is not surprising, though, as first-year students are acquainted with universities only from outside, from entrance campaign leaflets. No doubt, if the same survey was conducted in one year, these second-year students would give quite different, definitely more extended answers.

This is obvious from the answers of the students of 2-5 year of study and post-graduate students. One of the main benefits mentioned by respondents was the presence of international connections and the possibility to participate in international students' exchange programs. Two respondents (students from the faculties of Management and Informational Technologies) shared positive experience of taking part in such programs.

As for the knowledge and skills acquired, respondents emphasized immediate usability of technical and vocational education while university education drew their attention because of its universal nature, width and scientific depth. Many respondents mentioned the possibility to participate in conferences of different levels including ones conducted exclusively in foreign languages: in particular, annual International Forum for Students and Young Researchers "Widening Our Horizons" held by the Department of Foreign Languages of the National Mining University conducted in English, French and German and others. Thus it is obvious that students are interested in learning foreign languages in the university to participate in conferences and students' exchange programs or to find a job abroad. Therefore students expect university education to give them knowledge and skills to take part in international events and to be competitive at the foreign labour market. This is one of the key factors of Ukraine's integration into Europe

Our survey also showed that along with the high level of accreditation (this factor continues to play a significant role, however, the older the students become the less important it is), the respondents mention competitiveness of university graduates at domestic labour market. Quite a large number of respondents noticed the higher status of university students which implies greater autonomy (individual work) and responsibility for the learning process.

Higher quality of education was another major reason to enter a university. In addition, more skilled and professional teaching staff encouraged students to enter universities. Therefore, to meet the above students' needs quality control should become the major principle of modern education.



Thus all the above mentioned values and needs of modern Ukrainian students totally reflect the objectives of European Higher Education Area and the priorities of the Bologna process among which are

1. ensuring a quality higher education system,
2. promoting the mobility of students,
3. lifelong learning
4. and promoting a European dimension in higher education.