



The 21st National Olympiad of the English Language for Students of Technical Universities has already finished and the final stage of the Olympiad took place on Saturday, 10th October 2020.

One of the students of The Poznań University of Technology, taking part in the final stage, was **Mr. Szymon Gąska**. He is one of the laureates, who placed **2nd**. Today we are talking to Mr. Gąska about his experiences, feelings and expectations towards the Olympiad.

In our next edition we are going to present an interview with Wiktor Szymaniak, a student of Poznan University of Technology, who placed 4th in the Olympiad.

HN: Hello Szymon. First of all, congratulations on taking the second place in the 21st National Olympiad of the English Language for Students of Technical Universities. It was a really good job! This was awesome 😊

SG: Yes, thank you very much. I am very glad I have managed to do that, to come to such place.

HN: Firstly, I would like to ask you something about the final stage of the Olympiad. Was it difficult? Could also you remind us what you were supposed to present?

SG: Er, the final stage was, first of all, confusing, as we got a topic, which was just a sentence. And no more hints on what we actually did. I didn't have access to any last year's presentations, something like this, so I just had to, er...to stick to one thing and hope that this is the format of the presentation. It was a bit confusing, but I would say it gives you freedom, you can basically make a presentation about anything. That's something I like it.

HN: Ok, and how were you feeling? Especially considering the whole organization of the Olympiad this year was quite unusual due to the pandemic. That is, you were supposed to deliver your presentation online, as far as I know? Did you like that way? 😊

SG: I was a bit stressed, but, you know, it's a kind of something I expected, but I would say that it was conducted very well, there were some technical problems, but it was due to individual participants, yes, it was like, the camera is broken, the microphone doesn't work, something like this. But apart from that, there was, er....there weren't any problems, really. Er....I'd say that it was, a kind of..., er...like weird, and there were only a few people there. Basically, the only competition I had been before that stage, the university stage, really...Er, and there weren't any more stages before. It was pretty interesting, I would say.

HN: All right, so what about the topic itself? As far as I know, you were supposed to choose one of the topics. Which topic was yours?



SG: Yes, as it was very well-known, there were two topics. One was a quote by Woodrow Wilson and it said “I not only use all the brain that I have but also that I can borrow.” And there was another question by some psychologist, I forgot his name.

HN: It was Henry Link.

SG: Ah, yes, Henry Link and it says: “We generate fears while we sit. We overcome them by action.” So I chose Woodrow Wilson’s quote. Well... the reason why I have chosen that one, was, first of all, that I knew that one by Woodrow Wilson and I could, kind of, relate to his quote closer, because I couldn’t find any information whatsoever by Henry Link, only that he was a psychologist, so...

HN: Ok, so while we’re discussing the presentation, tell me about the length of the presentation and duration of the speech. Because what is important to indicate is that you had to stick to the topic, obviously, but in ten minutes. What about the time of the presentation?

SG: I would actually debate that claim that it’s enough, because I just couldn’t make it possibly show all my slides in ten minutes. I also wanted to try to add more to my presentation, but I couldn’t go fast in seven and a half minutes. So I guess the ten minutes were stressing me. To be honest, I didn’t really know how long it is going to be, just not to be longer than ten minutes, but also how much shorter it could be. And now I know that seven and a half minutes is ok.

HN: All right, then. Thank you, Szymon. And now a question concerning taking part in the 21st National Olympiad of the English Language for Students of Technical Universities. Was it your first time?

SG: Yes, this was my first time.

HN: Ok then. Why have you decided to participate in the event? What was the reason?

SG: Basically, I can’t say there was a reason. There was no reason not to take part in it. I know I am pretty good at English and not attempting it’s going to be an opportunity. Yes, so I just went there.

HN: And what were your expectations towards the result, the feedback, the outcome?

SG: I certainly didn’t expect to be second.

HN: That’s a great achievement, Szymon 😊

SG: Thank you 😊 I actually expected to be the seventh, maybe. Some presentations of other participants were well-prepared, and I couldn’t understand how well they were done and how good these people were at presenting them, but there were also, I think, two presentations I found quite underwhelming, they were of upper level than us.

HN: Ok, Szymon, one more thing. Why is it worth participating in the Olympiad? What would you say?



SG: Well, obviously, these are the material rewards, that you get for participating in the finals, really, because everyone from the finals got the reward. But also, I mean, you have to prove to yourself that you can do it, yes? But it was, the main motivation, that you can do it at such a high level.

HN: Very well said. Very well done. What would be your advice to students of our Poznan University of Technology, if they were a bit doubtful about signing up for the contest? What would you tell them?

SG: You miss one hundred per cent of shots you don't take. You have nothing to lose, by taking part in it, so it's an essential issue, you can only win.

HN: Ok, I guess I know what you mean. And this is the last question for you. What about your vocational plans? But I'm also asking about English. Are you going to develop your English language skills after your graduation? Are you going to combine them with your future job?

SG: Yes, so, regarding your first question, after graduation, because I am a student of IT, so after graduating from IT field of study, actually I think I will (laughter).

HN: For sure, you will 😊

SG: Thanks. So, I would like to find a job in the field of IT, but I have nothing in particular in mind, but ... some opportunities will come up.

HN: So, it was the last question. Thank you very much for taking your time, for meeting us, thank you for that interview. And once again, congratulations from us, because you have done an incredible job! It was a huge achievement 😊

SG: Thanks 😊

Hanna Nowak, M.A.