



The 21<sup>st</sup> 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, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

One of the students of The Poznań University of Technology, taking part in the final stage, is **Mr. Wiktor Szymaniak**. He is one of the laureates, who **placed 4<sup>th</sup>**. Today we are talking to Mr. Szymaniak about his experiences, feelings and expectations towards the Olympiad.

PP: Hello Wiktor. First of all, congratulations on taking the fourth place in the 21<sup>st</sup> National Olympiad of the English Language for Students of Technical Universities. It was a really good job! 🎉

WS: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

PP: Tell us something of the final stage of the Olympiad – was it difficult or easy for you?

WS: I think it was difficult for me, especially due to my fear of public speaking. I had to overcome it, but in the end it was an extremely useful method of practicing, and it was something that perhaps didn't come exactly naturally to me but I think, in the end it was an extremely useful and interesting experience for me.

PP: Could you remind us what you were supposed to do at the final stage of the Olympiad?

WS: Our task was to prepare a ten minute presentation on one of two topics. Those were quotes – one was by Woodrow Wilson, who said: "I not only use all the brain that I have but also that I can borrow." And the other quote, the one I chose, was by an American psychologist, Henry Link, and it says: "We generate fears while we sit. We overcome them by action."

PP: You told me before, that you were quite nervous about giving a presentation, but tell us how you felt about taking part in the final and about presenting the topic.

WS: Well, it was definitely exciting, and although I was nervous about it, I was looking forward to trying my skills this way and to hearing the presentations of other participants as well.

PP: What made you choose the topic by Henry Link?

WS: I felt like it was something that was particularly relatable for me and, well, I think, it's safe to say that people usually find it more interesting to listen to someone who speaks about a topic that they understand themselves, and not some abstract that is not very relatable. And well, I just thought that it would be something that I could perhaps find a couple of interesting things to talk about.

PP: Let us now focus on preparation for the final stage. Tell us, please, how you prepared for the presentation.



WS: Yes, so I started, actually... a few months before the final itself, but it took me a while to get some traction, because at first I had a bit of dilemma on which topic to choose. Once I have chosen, I think it took me a few days to make a sort of a schedule of the things I would like to talk about, prepare some information... and I think what took me the longest, was choosing the exact information I should include in the presentation to make sure that it fit into the ten minutes, and to make sure that there isn't anything there that isn't very useful.

PP: What about the time, then? It must have been difficult for participants not to exceed the time limit.

WS: Yes, it was also another challenge and an obstacle to overcome, because when I was practicing for the presentation, I couldn't get the time any lower, it was always like ten minutes, thirty seconds, something like that. So I kept trying to cut down on that.

PP: Tell us, please why you decided to take part in this event.

WS: I definitely thought it was a useful way of practicing my language skills, perhaps in the areas that may be useful in a future career as well, and I also thought it would be an interesting challenge as well. Something to focus on.

PP: What were your expectations towards the result and feedback? What did you benefit from the Olympiad?

WS: Well, I think that since I got to hear the presentations of other participants as well, I think... I could learn from their experience as well, so I might have borrowed their brains... I think it's always useful to be able to see how others compete in such a competition.

PP: Are you going to take part in the Olympiad again?

WS: Well, I would have to check the rules. If I am able to, I will definitely want to try in the future.

PP: Ok, so we are keeping our fingers crossed. Can you tell us something about the organization of the event itself. It was an extraordinary situation for all of you this year. How was it structured?

WS: It was through ZOOM. I think, given the conditions we were in, it was a perfectly organized event. The University was very well-prepared and everything, almost everything went according to the schedule. I had some technical difficulties myself, but that was on my side. Everything else, I was really satisfied with.

PP: Do you think it is worth taking part in the Olympiad? You said you would definitely go for the second time, if you had a chance. But tell us why.

WS: I definitely think it's worth it, because skills like presenting and gaining new vocabulary, learning new experiences, it's a perpetual process. And it's vital that we try to challenge ourselves in the area.

PP: 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?



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WS: It's obviously worth taking part in. But at first, I had some doubts myself, I wasn't sure if I would be able to deliver a presentation that would be up to standards. I think if you take your time, prepare well, do some research... it's something you can overcome, and I think it's something that everyone should do because it's also useful not only in the language itself, but in life, in general; public speaking.

PP: What are your plans for the future? I am also asking about your vocational plans.

WS: I can't say that I have a precise job position in mind that I would like to hold, but I would definitely like my career to be related to the field of Logistics, International Shipping. So a good command of English, as well as other foreign languages, is vital in this field. But practicing English is a gateway to learning some other languages for sure.

PP: Wiktor, thank you very much for this conversation, thank you for your time. Once again, congratulations from us. And of course, we wish you all the best for the future! 🎉

Hanna Nowak M.A.