

**Lukina L.V.**

**18<sup>th</sup> International Annual NATE-RUSSIA (National Association of Teachers of English) conference on the theme: «Rivers of Language, Rivers of Learning», organized by Yaroslavl State University named after P.G. Demidov together with the National Organization of English Language Teachers (NATE) (Yaroslavl: May 21-26, 2012)**

18<sup>th</sup> International NATE-RUSSIA Annual Conference (National Association of Teachers of English) was held in Yaroslavl on May 24-26, 2012. The organizer was the P.G. Demidov Yaroslavl State University together with the National Association of Teachers of English (NATE). The organization of the annual conferences is supported by the Embassy of the United States of America in Moscow. The President of the National Association is Svetlana G. Ter-Minasova Doctor of Philology, a distinguished Professor of Moscow State University. NATE unites teachers of the English language of the Russian Federation. Today NATE-RUSSIA has 20 branches in different regions of Russia and is the representative of the international ENGLISH TESOL association. NATE conferences are annually held in one of the Russian cities. Among the cities that have already held the conferences were Moscow, Voronezh, Vladivostok, Kazan, Chelyabinsk, Tambov, Kursk, Kaliningrad, and Novosibirsk.

In 2012, the ancient city Yaroslavl warmly received the participants of the forum. The conference «Rivers of Language, Rivers of Learning» was devoted to the latest methods of English teaching. The conference was attended by more than 700 teachers of higher and secondary institutions from all over Russia.

At the official opening of the conference the Rector of Yaroslavl State University Alexander I. Rusakov and NATE President Svetlana G. Ter-Minasova addressed the audience with the warmest greetings. In his speech in English rector Rusakov said that English had become the language of inter-cultural communication. At present the number of people who have a good command of the English language both as a second or a third one is already 50% greater than that of those for whom English is the native language. In this connection the rector emphasized a special role of English language teachers and their professional associations whose purpose is to help representatives of different ethnic groups find a common language not only in the direct but also in the figurative sense. As Professor Svetlana G. Ter-Minasova rightly noticed that linguistic mistakes can be forgiven, but mistakes due to lack of cultural knowledge cannot be forgiven. Teachers of English promote not only the English language, but they also teach a foreign language culture, recognizing that a false word or an act in contact with different cultures can lead to conflicts and aggression.

The American Council for International Education and English Language Office of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow took an active part in organizing the forum.

In their speeches Thomas Santos (English Language Officer) and Elena Lubnina (English Language Office Specialist) shared their experience and knowledge in creating well-functioning association of English language teachers.

The conference included plenary sessions, workshops, section meetings, round-table discussions, poster and electronic materials presentations, ELT resources exhibition and social events. The work was split into eight sessions that united specialists interested in various fields, such as Autonomous Learning in ESP, IT, Assessment and Testing, Intercultural Awareness, etc. Russian and foreign linguists, methodologists, qualified experts took part in the NATE conference. Among them were Sean Conley ("Technology and Social Justice"), Toni Hull ("Doing and Using Research for Papers and Presentations"), Erik Lundell ("Using Songs and Gestures for Vocabulary and Listening Skills Development"), Natalia Kasatkina ("Challenges of ESP"), etc. A special guest was Raymond Murphy, a well-known British linguist. A lot of

interesting questions were asked during Murphy's session on "Love Language, Love Choice, Love Grammar".

The Association of English Teachers of Voronezh - VATE - is a branch of NATE-RUSSIA. It was established in March 1992 and is the oldest provincial association of this kind in Russia. Voronezh Association first entered into TESOL-RUSSIA in 1995. Today Voronezh Association of Teachers of the English Language totals more than 250 members. Every year members of Voronezh association participate in international NATE conferences.

It has become a good tradition for major publishing houses producing teaching materials for learning foreign languages to participate in the annual conferences («Longman», «Cambridge University Press», «Macmillan» etc.). Within the three-day conference held by NATE in Yaroslavl State University named after P.G. Demidov, the presentation of the newest series of the textbooks of the publishing house "Express Publishing" was made for teaching students of non-language universities the English language - "English for Specific Purposes. Career Paths".

On the results of the conference work the proceedings of 18<sup>th</sup> International Conference of National Association of Teachers of the English language were published, where both plenary reports and panel presentations were presented.

All the problems discussed at the Conference were of paramount importance for ELT teachers, linguists, interpreters and translators.

L. Lukina PhD, Associate Professor  
of the Chair of Foreign Languages  
Voronezh State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering