

WAYS TO IMPROVE WRITING COMPETENCE OF NON-PHILOLOGICAL STUDENTS IN THE ESP COURSE

The article studies peculiarities of teaching writing skills to students in the ESP course, taking into account specificity of the skill itself and the discipline which is studied, the necessity and demotivating factors that influence the students' attitude to its acquisition. The main approaches to teaching writing, their explicit advantages and limitations are analyzed. Some effective methods of how to make this process more successful and student-oriented are also described.

Key words: *ESP; writing competence; a process approach; a product approach; a genre-based approach; creative writing; collaborative learning.*

Introduction. Teaching and learning English for specific purposes involves the development of learners language communicative competence in listening, reading, speaking and writing. On graduating from the university, students are supposed to obtain sufficient foreign language proficiency and literacy which can enable them to conduct their professional activity more efficiently, facilitating their professional communication and accelerating information exchange with foreign colleagues. As a rule, graduates language competence can be realized in their professional activity either in the oral or written forms. Demonstrating poor skills creates a poor impression about their professionalism and diminishes their chances of obtaining a proper job with better on-the-job opportunities.

Recent research analysis. Compared to the earlier years when at non-philological faculties writing as a foreign language skill wasn't paid much attention to, nowadays it is gaining popularity as the developing information technology era is boosting electronic communication via mobiles and the Internet, making this process more interactive and diverse. Graduates are expected to perform the assigned written tasks as successfully and efficiently as the oral ones. Even the majority of present language tests, for example, university entrance or graduate ones, are conducted in the written form. So for students, developing not only their speaking, but also writing skills is essential if not compulsory.

Moreover, the field of study chosen by the students also influences the prevalence of certain skills over the others. Thus, political sciences students require better-developed speaking skills to be able to participate in different debates or conduct negotiations, while for the students of computer sciences, training reading and writing skills is more important as their professional activity is connected with skimming tons of information and writing e-letters, technical specifications or projects. Dealing with contracts, invoices, orders, advertisements and reports is an essential aspect for future economists as all these documents must be processed in the written form.

Writing in a foreign language has been studied by many scientists, including O. Tarnapolsky, G. Alred, N. Fenton, A. Brooks and P. Grundy, J. Harmer etc. It is

specific because the interaction between the participants of the communication is realized by means of the text message without a direct feedback. The written product – an essay or a letter, a resume or a project – should be structurally coherent, clearly and correctly written, in a non-ambiguous way, so that the author's intention could be easily interpreted and understood.

Writing is not an easy skill to learn. It's a big challenge, especially for second language learners, so many of them often get demotivated. To solve this problem, teachers apply various methods and strategies to make these practices more successful and student-oriented. The emphasis is made on constant practicing until learners achieve a better performance. However, as J. Harmer states, while teaching a foreign language, we cannot train one skill without mastering the others. Receptive skills as a rule must be alternated with the productive ones [4].

The **aim of our research** is to analyze peculiarities of teaching writing to non-philological students, of the Ecology department in particular, in interdependence with training other language skills.

Research Results. According to the requirements stated in standards of ESP and Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, students striving for a Bachelor's degree should be able to write professional texts and documents in English on a variety of topics concerning their specialization, highlighting personal significance of events and experiences [3]. Going into details, they should:

- be aware of peculiarities of different genres, their goals and structures;
- provide a coherent discourse, ordering ideas logically and organizing paragraphs clearly;
- compare and interpret tables, diagrams, charts, making logical conclusions;
- use relevant grammatical and lexical structures;
- use a variety of appropriate clichés (in business letters), intensifiers, linking words and other cohesive elements;
- implement field-specific terminology and abbreviations fluently, etc.

In teaching writing in and outside the classroom, J. Harmer offers teachers several approaches to choose: whether to focus more attention on the process of writing (*a process approach*) or on its product (*a product approach*), whether to acquaint the learners with various genres (*a genre-based approach*) or develop their creative writing (*a creative approach*), whether to encourage their *individual or cooperative work* [4].

The decision which approach to use depends on a variety of factors, including:

- students' level of progress and skills development, of information perception, pReferences;
- time limit allotted for learning a skill;
- teacher's experience and proficiency;
- genres which need to be acquainted with, etc.

In the process approach, all stages like idea generation and drafting, structuring, reviewing, editing, redrafting, etc. are important. It supports the idea that learners progress while correcting and improving a great number of messy drafts, striving to organize their thoughts and judgments in a proper way. The product approach, on the contrary, focuses more attention on setting the aim at the beginning of the process and anticipates seeing a ready written product.

It's evident that the first approach is more time-consuming and usually involves a teacher's or other students' intervention or help. Peer editing or evaluation foresees exchanging thoughts on the topic, which can stimulate discussion and provide a necessary feedback. When the classroom time is limited, for example, one class a week, the process approach may not be appropriate. The product-based approach is more preferable when we want the students to write a short advertisement for a holiday rest or a brief 7-sentence story on the spot.

Acquisition of certain genres can also dictate choosing one approach over the other. For example, formal correspondence which focuses more attention on structure, layout, organization, grammar patterns is more suited to a product-based approach, while writing essays and narratives in which expressing ideas is essential may be taught by means of a process-based one. It should be mentioned that these two approaches aren't incompatible. They can be both integrated in teaching writing skills on certain stages.

In the ESP course, teachers who appeal to a genre-based approach want to acquaint students with peculiarities of different genres, but mainly with those which are important to them for achieving specific communication purposes. The discipline «English for Ecology» at the Ecology department foresees teaching writing essays on ecological topics and annotations to the articles, as well as technical descriptions, instructions, claims, CVs, formal and informal e-mails and other business and technical correspondence which in most cases is necessary for students' professional adaptation and development. They learn to request information in the written form, to complain and apologize, to arrange some important meetings, etc.

We have noticed that most often, students, especially those who have no previous work experience, have problems with writing CVs and formal e-mails. So at the classes, during the pre-writing phase, students are asked to study real examples of typical business documentation before starting to compose their own products. Taking on different roles and positions, working with based on real life situations they are given an opportunity to interact in

a simulated work environment to ease real-life communication in the future.

Many scientists (Bawarshi, Badger and White) criticize a genre-based learning since it interferes with learners' creativity by limiting their creative potential so that they become passive looking for fixed or ready patterns and clichés, and create reproductions rather than compose something new. Still, its proponents believe it gives grounds for individual variations as well [1].

Creative writing is approved by many scientists as a more motivating one. It is considered to be a tool for effective learning. It foresees doing not usual imaginative tasks like writing poems, scripts, or stories, which is believed to be highly motivating. Satisfaction and pride come when a person sees how successful, meaningful and evaluated the product of his activity is.

Thus, at the ESP lessons while discussing the worldwide problem of plastic pollution, the Ecology students were offered to form teams and write scripts to the film «Plastic Soup». The topic «Recycling VS Reuse» implied making posters for an Eco-Exhibition. Senior students became thoroughly engaged as this task required demonstrating their creativity and originality.

However, for some students, especially low-achieving ones, writing activity poses certain difficulties, both language and psychological ones. Our research has shown that among the students of Ecology department problems that occur are mainly connected with technical aspects of grammar and language usage. Spelling mistakes are also frequent but they don't interfere with understanding the message. 10 % of students have difficulty choosing contextually proper words. For example, on hearing the phrase «birds fly to warm edges» native speakers could be embarrassed and would hardly guess that warm countries/places are meant. For 25 % of the learners, word order and sentence organization are the most difficult options. Luckily, only a few students in the group confess that they write in the Ukrainian language first and then translate it into English.

Many ESP teachers who support advantages of collaborative and project-based learning apply these principles and ideas to training writing. Working together in collaborative groups and assisting each other, students manage to solve the problems which can't be solved when working independently. Their motivation increases when they understand their personal importance and contribution into the mutual process. They are encouraged to read and process a large scope of information taken from various resources. And afterwards the final product of their work – whether it is a presentation, or a poster, or a video film – is perceived by them in a different way. The work seems to be less stressful, less tedious and more motivating.

Nowadays, a rapid development of information technologies offers vast opportunities to enhance students' motivation to learning languages, making this process more interesting, interactive and student-oriented. ESP teachers who don't want to lag behind use various software applications and instant messaging services like WhatsApp, Telegram, Viber, etc. in their work and prove their effectiveness for educational purposes. The main benefits they emphasize include the following:

- availability (can be installed on any smartphone, laptop or tablet computer);
- flexibility (learners can fulfill the assigned tasks any time which suits them until deadline);

– students master their language competence (not only in writing, but also in reading and listening), enrich their vocabulary;

– they overcome some psychological problems like anxiety or shyness which are common in the classroom;

– students improve their communicative skills (they are expected to exchange information, thoughts, opinions on certain topics, to make decisions, to solve problems, to manage conflicts, to collaborate with each other, etc.).

Conclusions. In regards with the new requirements for graduates, the problem of teaching writing skills to non-philological students as a part of the ESP course has

acquired a new direction. To fully understand peculiarities of the course which is taught and the skills that are to be developed, writing skills in particular, ESP teachers must be engaged in interdisciplinary cooperation.

Learning to write in a foreign language, covering different genres and pursuing certain goals is really challenging. Diversifying the educational process with various methods and techniques, taking into account all possible benefits and drawbacks of different approaches, ESP teachers can ensure favorable conditions for effective teaching writing skills to students.

References

1. Badger, R., & White, G. Product, Process and Genre : Approaches to Writing in EAP : [Electronic version]. – ELT Journal. – 54 (2). – P. 153–160.
2. Brooks, A. and Grundy, P. Writing for Study Purposes: A Teacher's Guide to Developing Individual Writing Skills. – 1st ed. – Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2003. – 162 p.
3. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment : [Electronic version]. – Retrieved from: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/Framework_EN.pdf.
4. Harmer, J. The Practice of English Language Teaching. – 4th ed. – Harlow : Pearson Education Limited, 2012. – 448 p.
5. Hyland, K. Genre and Second Language Writing. – MI : University of Michigan Press, 2004.
6. Тарнапольський О. Б. Методика навчання студентів вищих навчальних закладів письма англійською мовою / О. Б. Тарнапольський, С. П. Кожушко – Вінниця : Нова книга, 2008. – 288 с.

В. Л. Чуенко,

ЧНУ ім. Петра Могили, м. Миколаїв, Україна

ШЛЯХИ ВДОСКОНАЛЕННЯ МОВЛЕННЕВОЇ КОМПЕТЕНЦІЇ У ПИСЬМІ СТУДЕНТІВ НЕФІЛОЛОГІЧНИХ СПЕЦІАЛЬНОСТЕЙ У ПРОЦЕСІ НАВЧАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЗА ПРОФЕСІЙНИМ СПРЯМУВАННЯМ

Стаття розкриває шляхи покращення мовленнєвої компетенції у письмі у студентів нефілологічних спеціальностей у процесі навчання англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням, враховуючи власне специфіку навички та тієї дисципліни, що вивчається, а також передумов та демотивуючих факторів, що впливають на бажання студентів оволодіти нею.

Автор дає аналіз основних підходів до навчання письма, вказуючи на їхні переваги і недоліки. Вибір того чи іншого підходу залежить від низки факторів, включаючи рівень сформованості комунікативних навичок студентів та їхньої готовності сприймати інформацію, обсягу часу, відведеного на оволодіння та закріплення навичок під час курсу, жанрів письма, що плануються для ознайомлення, та досвіду й майстерності викладача.

Основним є процесний підхід, який передбачає багатостанову роботу, редагування, структурування, колаборацію з викладачем чи іншими студентами, і підхід, що зосереджується на створенні кінцевого продукту письма. Креативний підхід вважається багатьма вченими інструментом для ефективного навчання, оскільки націлений на реалізацію творчого потенціалу студентів і мотивує їх на успіх. Багато викладачів також підтримують і застосовують на заняттях ідеї колаборативного і проектного навчання. Розвиток інформаційних технологій дозволив використовувати комп'ютерні додатки і месенджери з метою вдосконалення мовленнєвої компетенції студентів у письмі. Усі ці підходи можуть бути поєднані та успішно інтегровані в навчальний процес.

Ключові слова: англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням; мовленнєва компетенція у письмі; процесний підхід; підхід, що базується на створенні кінцевого продукту письма; жанровий підхід; креативне письмо; колаборативне навчання.

В. Л. Чуенко,

ЧНУ ім. Петра Могили, г. Николаев, Украина

СПОСОБИ УЛУЧШЕННЯ РЕЧЕВОЇ КОМПЕТЕНЦІЇ В ПИСЬМЕ У СТУДЕНТІВ НЕЯЗЫКОВЫХ СПЕЦИАЛЬНОСТЕЙ В ПРОЦЕССЕ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНО-ОРИЕНТИРОВАННОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

Статья изучает особенности обучения письму студентов неязыковых специальностей в рамках курса английского языка для специальных целей, принимая во внимание специфику самого навыка и дисциплины, которая изучается, а также предпосылки и демотивирующие факторы, которые влияют на стремление студентов овладеть им. Анализируются основные подходы к обучению письму, их преимущества и недостатки. В статье представлены некоторые эффективные методы, позволяющие сделать процесс обучения более успешным и нацеленным на студента и его потребности.

Ключевые слова: английский язык для специальных целей; компетенция в письме; процессный подход, подход; базирующийся на создании продукта письма; жанровый подход; креативное письмо; колаборативное обучение.

Рецензенти: Мещанинов О. П., д-р пед. наук, професор;
Гришкова Р. О., д-р пед. наук, професор.