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CONTRIBUTION OF NEW METHODOLOGY TO INTEGRATED ESP CLASSES

Summary: *The paper considers the results of implementing a new methodology of teaching ESP to linguistic students. It investigates the contemporary approaches and suggests new methods based on the most important aspects for achieving the goals of teaching ESP. The main focus is on developing professional communication based on linguistic discourse, integrating Academic writing skills and applying computer technologies.*

Key words: *language acquisition, linguistic terminology, subject-field language, blended learning, interactive assignment.*

Introduction. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has continuously been in the focus of researchers, linguists and language methodologies trying to search innovative ideas in order to make language teaching process most effective for learners. These ideas have been derived from language acquisition research and refer to language classroom applications and concerns. With the development of teaching approaches to ESP, integration of new aspect constituents and development of new courses have been considered the crucial components in the ESP context.

Our paper considers the results of implementing a new methodology of teaching ESP classes to linguistic students in Ivan Franko National University of

Lviv. In the wide sense of the word, it reflects the experience of developing curriculum reform for teaching domain-related problems through language environment, on the one hand, and developing skills for professional communication in English, on the other. In the narrow sense, it consists in developing linguistic competence through English medium.

The implementation of this methodology is significant due to the requirements caused by the orientation of Ukrainian education to integration in the European community. This, in turn, gave grounds to international collaboration with the US and European Universities, which was of great significance for developing curriculum reform. The necessity to innovate the teaching methodology was also caused by the requirements of contemporary world to implement Information technologies in the teaching process and develop students' writing skills for professional communication via the Internet. Nowadays, ESP classes integrate content and language and consist in teaching professional communication based on acquiring linguistic terminology through linguistic discourse, on the one hand, and developing Academic writing skills as well as applying computer technology resources, on the other.

The research is based on the approaches supported by such authors as A. Keedwell [6], P. Ur [9], K. Vesela [10], R. Spack [8], I. Lecki [7] who focus on the ways in which language is used in real professional communication more than on the description of its formal features. Our paper considers the results of both theoretical investigations and their practical implementation as well as suggests new methodology based on the integration of the most important aspects for achieving the goals of teaching subject-field language (SFL) through professional oral communication and writing assignments in the blended learning environment implying the use of computer technologies.

In order to demonstrate the strategy for teaching ESP based on the results of modernization in education, we consider being important to analyze its constituents consisting of three main stages. In terms of this, the first task

involves a detailed analysis of the ways of acquiring students' knowledge of SFL based on linguistic discourse. The second task is to show the results of integrating Academic writing into ESP classes as an important aspect nowadays. The third task implies the suggestion to use Information technologies as an inevitable part of the educational system in contemporary society.

Basic Methods and Strategies for Teaching SFL

Teaching SFL through Linguistic Discourse

The most typical feature of SFL methodology used in ESP classes to linguistic students is teaching professional communication through linguistic discourse. Reading and understanding the main ideas of linguistic texts, learning terminological units, practicing their use in oral communication and discussions in dialogue and team activities, working with writing assignments following the instructions of the teacher, fulfilling lexical and grammatical exercises in an interactive way based on the Internet resources, and making PowerPoint and Pecha Kucha presentations – these are the constituents of this methodology.

Textbooks and teaching materials applied for conducting classes to linguistic students are based on linguistic discourse. Acquiring basic knowledge of discourse as a linguistic phenomenon facilitates both teaching and learning. The students should understand that linguistic discourse concerns itself primarily with terms, i.e., the words that are assigned to concepts used in the special language of the subject-field or domain-related texts and combined logically with other words on the basis of certain extra-linguistic factors form linguistic discourse. A linguistic text cannot be given fuller meaning if it is not viewed also as discourse. Accuracy, references to certain sets of rules, brevity, reasonability are the main characteristic features of linguistic discourse. It is distinguished by the number of terminological units, definitions, argumentations and detailed explanation of facts.

Based on our observations, one of the reasons the students have difficulty learning SFL in ESP classes from textbooks is that sometimes a fundamental

difference exists between the nature of the textbooks and the educational goals the texts are meant to serve. Two major goals of professional education are that students learn to explain a certain knowledge and use it in practice. Linguistic discourse is likely to be successful when student's knowledge of a topic is consistent with the information presented in the text, is fairly extensive, and is correct but not necessarily complete (it will be completed it in the course of study). Students' prior knowledge influences their ability to recognize words and establish their meaning, to use syntax and text structure to relate previously unrelated ideas, and to construct an interpretation of the text content. These facts are not always observed in the textbooks.

As our experience shows, to improve teaching SFL through linguistic discourse in order to overcome difficulties and achieve successful results from applying linguistic discourse to educational goals, the English teachers of SFL should observe the following rules:

- a) students' prior knowledge and the degree of its influence upon the acquisition of teachers' explanations and descriptions of phenomena should be taken into consideration by teachers creating new textbooks and designing teaching courses;
- b) professional concepts should be described in teaching materials with a high degree of clarity;
- c) texts should be structured in ways that account for potential misconceptions;
- d) text content, clarity, grammar, punctuation and mechanics should be taken into account in the process of creating assignments for students.

Method of "Derivational Tree" for Teaching Terminology

No matter how carefully textbooks are designed, teachers need to develop and employ instructional strategies that will assist students in learning SFL. For this purpose, we suggest applying the method of "Derivational Tree" which greatly helps in teaching linguistic terminology as one of the most important elements of SFL. Generally accepted methodology for teaching terminology

consists in teaching through linguistic texts where terminological units are underlined or written in bold. The students are often asked to think over their meanings in pre-reading activities. After reading the text, the students discuss and explain their meanings in the context. Matching and filling gap exercises help practice the usage of terminological units. The next step is to use terms in dialogues and team discussions for the purpose of practicing them in professional communication. Although this methodology is a productive one, it is also time-consuming and, evidently, needs involving effective visual activities. The implementation of the method of “Derivational Tree” is of great help in this situation. It also essentially assists in achieving the goal of teaching subject-field terminology more effectively.

In order to describe the method of “Derivational Tree”, it is significant to point out that terminologists distinguish between single and compound terms consisting of core and attributive elements. In fact, every compound term derives from the single term which is defined as a core element of the compound term. The formation of compound terms resembles the picture of the tree where branches with boughs grow from one trunk. The image of the tree served as the basis for giving the name “Derivational Tree” to the method implying a comparative study of terminological units with a common core element. The picture of a tree is easily used to present a graphical image of terminological systems the term belongs to. The usage of the method of “Derivational Tree” provides students with a good deal of terminological combinations of one core term in comparison with each other. The process of memorizing them becomes much easier and the students are usually very enthusiastic about learning the terms with the help of this method.

Acquiring English terminology knowledge greatly contributes to enhancing students’ subject-field competence that, as a rule, depends on students’ understanding the meanings of terminological units and developing skills of using them in practice. Moreover, students become proficient at learning their

major problems not only from Ukrainian but also from English sources. It is a good motivation for students' work in ESP classes challenging simultaneously their international professional communication which is of particular interest for them nowadays.

Finally, it is worth drawing attention to the fact that students are learning ESP in professional groups (only linguistic students are in one group). This fact encourages teaching English including developing SFL skills for professional communication with a good command of terminology and Academic writing rules. In fact, since all students of the group major in the same field, they can practice their knowledge of English, acquired at the earlier stages, in English environment devoted to professional problems important for all students of the group. This, in turn, leads to a high level of students' motivation and activity in classes. Students are eager to acquire appropriate knowledge in order to be able to express the ideas concerning their major in English professional environment to the best possible way and this, obviously, causes the atmosphere of friendly competition between those who hold the same professional views. The task of the teacher is to skillfully create and support this atmosphere.

Integrating Academic Writing into ESP Classes. As a result of curriculum reform orientated to integrating content and language, the development of Academic writing skills on the basis of Academic writing knowledge as one of the stages in teaching ESP has started to play an important role. In the past, developing students' writing abilities was not considered to be a compulsory aspect of language classes in Ukraine, and the way it was sometimes done could be characterized as a chaotic one: no strict rules, detailed recommendations and specific requirements. Writing was primarily considered to be a gift and it was taken for granted that not all students could write well.

During the last years Academic writing has been penetrating more and more into the process of language teaching and has become a constituent part of integrated ESP classes. Students are taught how to write essays, reviews,

abstracts, summaries, course and diploma papers according to the textbooks by I. Lecki [7], D. Hacker [3], R. Spack [8], T. Yakhontova [11] who emphasize that each subject discipline has certain writing conventions, vocabulary and types of discourse. However, there are some general characteristics of Academic writing that are relevant across all disciplines: writing must be clear, concise, focused, structured and backed up by evidence.

Nowadays, in Academic writing aspect of ESP classes, linguistic students acquire knowledge on writing theses in the introduction, organizing paragraphs with topic sentences and supporting examples in the body, summarizing clear and reasonable ideas in conclusion. Teaching Academic writing is becoming a larger part of ESP integrating teaching professional communication and terminology of SFL. It also promises big changes in the direction to a more pragmatic way of teaching students who follow the instructions to handle the process of writing in such stages as planning, drafting and revising. The students are aware of the necessity to be ready to circle back to earlier stages whenever the need arises. Besides, much attention is now paid to the structure and rules of writing. Students learn how to organize Academic writing style, create sentences, choose words, use punctuation, quotation, citation, etc.

An important part of developing students' writing skills in ESP classes is their work with three writing drafts, based on the Peer Review Checklist containing questions for discussion. It helps the students become critical in analyzing their writing works in team and dialogue activities.

Finally, learning how to develop ideas, connect sentences and paragraphs as well as practice how to be persuasive in writing, brings fruitful results making students become more practical in acquiring knowledge on their major in English. This, without any doubt, will be useful for students' future professional carriers in conditions of integration and globalization processes in the contemporary world.

The Use of Computer Technologies. The implementation of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in higher education curriculums is an important requirement of modern education. During the last years it has been widely penetrating into teaching ESP. English teachers have integrated CALL into their classes in order to practice professional communication, terminology, grammar, reading, writing and listening comprehension through interactive assignments.

This way of teaching students is known as blended methodology. The term symbolizes a change in education nowadays, as it signifies the inclusion of computer technology providing online activities and materials in the mix, rather than implying this is a wholly new approach to teaching and learning.

In relation to teaching English, G. Dudeney and N. Hockly [2, p. 43] differentiate between online courses, blended language learning courses, and face-to-face language learning courses with additional online materials. Despite these perceived differences, the terms are synonymous and ESP 'blended learning' is the term most commonly used to refer to any combination of face-to-face teaching with computer technology.

With reference to blended learning in higher education, it has been defined by E. Banados as a combination of technology and classroom instruction in a flexible approach to learning that recognizes the benefits of delivering some training and assessment online but also uses other modes to make up a complete training programme which can improve learning outcomes [1, p. 534]. On the one hand, blended learning is lowering attrition rates in comparison with equivalent fully online courses. On the other hand, in the context of language education, the blended learning mode is much more effective in student retention than the distance learning mode.

We share the idea emphasized by A. Keedwell that blended learning involves an effective combination of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning [6, p.147]. We also agree with his statement that

the blend has to reflect the teaching and learning environment and recognize its contextual limitations [6, p. 182]. Therefore, SFL and Academic writing as the constituents of ESP to our linguistic students are taught both through linguistic discourse and with the help of interactive assignments created for the purpose of achieving specific goals. Applying computer technologies gives an opportunity to integrate developing several skills, provides students with tools for interactive communication and gives a chance to solve domain-related problems in English.

Teaching ESP is conducted on the basis of the textbook [5], the Internet resources and the teacher's web-applications. One of them is TALAS [4] which is a multifunctional computer environment aimed at providing the tools for teaching academic subjects. This web-application helps students develop their language skills including terminology. It is aimed at both students' group and individual activities, has an automatic system of progress evaluation and supports monitoring student's progress results with the help of the evaluation system. Besides that, TALAS enables the students to view their mistakes at the end of work and creates a new learning space in which the users are autonomous. The studies have shown that the students in large measure find the blended CALL experience a positive and motivating one and tend towards preferring this approach to the traditional classroom-based learning.

Conclusions. To summarize, ESP classes to linguistic students in Ivan Franko National University of Lviv consisting in teaching professional communication and terminology in the past, has undergone effective changes caused by the requirements of a new position of Ukraine in the world and thanks to the collaboration with the US and European Universities that gave a strong impulse to developing curriculum reform and designing new ESP courses. The integration of Academic writing and CALL has greatly contributed to ESP methodology making it more challenging and efficient. Now, teaching SFL in ESP classes to linguistic students consists in: a) teaching professional communication through textbooks and teaching materials on the basis of

linguistic discourse applied to educational goals considering students' prior knowledge and the degree of its influence upon the acquisition of teachers' explanations and descriptions of linguistic phenomena; b) teaching linguistic terminology with the help of the method of "Derivational Tree" implying the comparative acquisition of compound terms with a common core word; c) integrating Academic writing the purpose of which is to teach structure and rules of writing in an appropriate style; this results in a pragmatic way of teaching students making them more practical in their studies, helping them to acquire knowledge in ESP classes on their major; d) implementing CALL resources in teaching ESP due to their rapid development, meeting the requirements of modern education, great students' and teachers' motivation and interest in the blended learning environment.

The experience described in this paper can be useful for designing new courses integrating content and language, as well as implementing innovations in teaching ESP in other universities. We hope that these strategies can be replicated or adapted by other practitioners to suit their particular teaching and learning contexts. Finally, we believe that the guiding principles and practical considerations that shaped the contribution of our methodology will hopefully help practitioners achieve a new approach to teaching ESP in their contexts.

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