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## STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS IN ESP TEACHING

*Acquiring writing skills for the students who study English for specific purposes is of great importance. In the article the vision of other ESP tutors and researchers in respect of writing skills development in connection with engineering students' needs has been represented and the variety of effective techniques applied in Engineering Course has been defined.*

*Key words: accuracy, assessment, correlations, drafting, frame of reference, paragraphing, piece of writing, report, specification, techniques, textual organisation, writing skills.*

English for Specific Purposes is generally considered to be one important branch of the English as a Foreign Language system that functions as the main branch of English language teaching ELT. Therefore, ESP is not a particular kind of language or methodology, but rather an approach to language learning where by the content and method are based on the learner's particular needs to learn the language. To distinguish ESP from English for General Purposes we could say that ESP is more focused on special subjects when the student should acquire skills not only of reading specialized texts and understanding the context, but also achieve their writing ability of different kinds of writing. There exists a variety of opinions of different writers and researchers who have defined English for specific purposes as the course that refer to the teaching of English based upon students' need to express the facts and ideas of some special subjects after which the student should acquire skills of reading and writing specialized texts, understand the content clearly and speak about that topic confidently and fluently. Among these writers and researchers are Peter Master, Beer and McMurrey, J. Carson, R. Buckmaster, Dudley-Evans and St. John, T. Hutchinson and A. Waters, G. Kavaliuskiene, A. R. Krapels and J. Seely.

The purpose of this article is to study and suggest the most effective writing techniques and activities useful for writing skills acquisition for engineering students. According to the purpose we have defined the following tasks to analyze:

- defining the main objectives of ESP writing course and identifying different writing skills engineering students should acquire in connection with their professional needs;
- defining the main structures engineering students should learn to use to produce accurate writing for professional purposes and suggesting some techniques to be used in the ESP classroom;
- analyzing and defining different strategies and tasks for engineering students to be able to produce various pieces of writing.

It is well known that writing is a complex activity, and teaching writing skills presents some difficulties.

Length of words and sentences in written texts is one of the key difficulties. Difficulties in writing for learners are caused by either limited vocabulary or its inappropriate usage. This point is emphasized by R. Buckmaster [1;15] who argues that the most important skill is a very large vocabulary. There are numerous techniques for teaching vocabulary, reading and writing skills. It is also thought that learners' ability to write in L2 depends on efficiency in reading. Researchers have only recently begun to explore the relationship between reading and writing. Reading-writing and writing-reading connections in the first language have shown a number of correlations: between reading achievement and writing ability, between writing quality and reading experience, between reading ability and complexity in writing [3; 89]. English language teachers are well aware of the fact that well-read learners are better writers, and better literacy in the mother tongue helps developing literacy skills in the second language. However, a necessity to gather data on literacy acquisition in a foreign language remains a burning issue.

The studies showed that 'poor reading in a foreign language is due in part to poor reading in the L1, together with an inadequate knowledge of the foreign language. Learners need to reach a threshold level of language knowledge before they are able to transfer any L1 skills to their L2 reading tasks' [4; 74]. Another research findings on writing showed the following: a lack of competence in writing in English results more from the lack of composing competence than from the lack of linguistic competence, differences between L1 and L2 writers relate to composing proficiency rather than to L1, and using L1 when writing in L2 frequently concerns vocabulary and enables the L2 writer to sustain the composing process [7; 49].

There are six aspects of written work that learners must pay attention to: textual organization, structure of sentences, different word networks, paragraphing, spelling, punctuation, and non-standard English. The main purpose of writing should be identified. As the most common type of writing is considered to be a report writing, the task of ESP writing course is to try to adapt it for a particular situation [4; 106].

There are many different types of reports for instance: inspection or trip reports, laboratory report, progress report, specification report, instruction report and progress report [2;47]. According to Beer and McMurrey, all reports are similar in that all start with a prologue and end with a conclusion. The study of students' writing reports showed that the documents suffered from language problems, specifically with organization, sentence structure and grammar. Taking into consideration the above study the aims of ESP writing course will be to promote engineers ability to write different types of reports. The objectives of the course will be as follows: recognise the organisation of different report genre; use appropriate grammatical structures and functions; write a full report with 80% accuracy; assess each other's writing; use the appropriate technical and semi-technical vocabulary; use appropriate layout and punctuation; employ the process of editing and drafting; using linking devices, where appropriate, to produce cohesive text; express a variety of functions in writing; promoting writing fluency. By looking at the findings of the authentic documents analysis, it is possible to decide the content of the course. Hence, the course content should include the most frequent functions, structures, and lexis. Each report writing should go through the following stages: learn the general structure of a report, analyse a model report, write a report.

While developing any ESP writing course English teachers should always take into account that by the end of the course the engineers should be able to acquire the following skills: describe the condition of something (e.g. piece of equipment), give instructions or orders, suggest actions to be taken, clarify actions that have been taken. The engineers should be able to use the following structures with a fair degree of accuracy: Present continuous, Present simple, Modals (shall, should), Modals + passive infinitive, Simple present passive, Past simple, Simple past passive. Writing in the class usually involves demonstrating to students rhetorical frames of reference acceptable to the area of specialization with which the class is concerned [9; 103]. In ESP writing is largely descriptive, concerned as it is with conveying what things are for, what they are composed of, what they look like, how they work, etc. In so doing great emphasis is placed on the noun phrase and its modification, comparatively little on the verb structure. This writing must furthermore be terse, controlled and highly organized. One technique for sequencing the written aspect of the ESP class is to teach and practice simple descriptive formats which can later be modified for use in longer, multi-faceted reports. These simple rhetorical frameworks include the amplified definition, description of a mechanism (or body part), description of a process, classification and abstract.

Here are some ideas for the types of writing you can ask your students to do: copying text word for word; writing what you dictate; imitating a model; filling in blanks in sentences or paragraphs; taking a paragraph and transforming certain language (for example

changing all verbs and time references to past tense); summarizing a story text, video, or listening clip (you can guide with questions or keywords); making lists of items, ideas, reasons, etc. (words or sentences depending on level); writing what your students want to learn in English and why; writing letters (complaint, friend, advice); organizing information (for example making a grid of survey results or writing directions to a location using a map); reacting to a text, object, picture, etc. (can be a word or whole written piece).

Writing is an integral part of the daily life and it should be seen as a specific purpose. Learning to write in English is very important for all who study a foreign language and it is particularly necessary for all who study at university.

As writing is essentially a creative process, it is our task as teachers that our students learn how to communicate their ideas clearly. We attempted to describe here a group of activities that are focused on communication and self-expression through writing. For this reason, these activities should be motivating and of the student's interest in ESP lessons. As the goal of writing is to attain concrete information, the students should be challenged in decision making which are related with a specific content to be included in the text, form should be considered as well before writing. The student must recognize the linguistic content given, not only through a definition, a classification or a description but also by any other communicative function in context; furthermore, they should be able of using connectives correctly in a paragraph and organizing the formal speech. Establishing an adequate logical order of ideas by means of diagrams, charts etc., is also of great importance to fulfill a good writing.

All the techniques mentioned in the article provide the means to succeed in a content course and can definitely motivate the student. Recent research has shown that learning language through content is an excellent way to increase language proficiency. Peter Master pointed out that if an ESP instructor had the opportunity to work with subject experts, the ESP teacher would remain firmly on the side of language in the language content [9; 154]. Despite all the disputes about whether the activities are used to teach reading or writing skill development, Hutchinson and Waters argue strongly that the role of the ESP teacher should be not to teach content but to provide the means to be able to cope with content [5; 86].

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that it is important to understand that in ESP classroom each activity should be targeted at the acquisition of definite skills. In case with writing activities the main purpose to be achieved is coping with different types of writing the students may need in their professional environment. In this study there have been analyzed and suggested the writing techniques and activities that proved to be the most effective for writing skills acquisition among engineering students. According to the students' needs the most frequently required types of writing are: report writing, describing the condition

of something, giving instructions or orders, suggesting actions to be taken, clarifying actions, etc. With that, classroom activities should include the language structures that are mainly used in such types of writing. At the same time it should be accentuated that for different types of activities every tutor can vary and use his or her creativity with the set of structures to be taught depending on the students' level of English and the purpose of writing. Accepting the fact that writing skill is of great importance for all students, it is attached high importance for ESP learners, because their proficiency in this skill would have a great effect on their future academic and professional progress.

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### ОСНОВНІ МЕТОДИ РОЗВИТКУ НАВИЧОК ПИСЬМА У ВИКЛАДАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ДЛЯ СПЕЦІАЛЬНИХ ЦІЛЕЙ

*Надбання навичок письма для студентів, які вивчають англійську мову за професійним спрямуванням є надзвичайно важливим. Надано аналіз точки зору інших викладачів англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням у зв'язку з розвитком навичок письма у студентів інженерних спеціальностей. Розглянуто різноманітні ефективні спеціальні прийоми, які використовуються в курсах англійської мови для спеціальних цілей.*

*Ключові слова: Точність, оцінювання, співвідношення, складання чернетки, система відліку, розподіл на параграфи, система письма, звіт, специфікація, володіння спеціальними прийомами, організація тексту, навички письма.*