EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES IN ESP TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Education and Qualification Standard (EQS) and Educational Professional Programme (EPP) adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine reflect educational and qualification characteristics of University graduates. The English for Specific Purposes (ESP) National Curriculum for Universities [4] was designed taking into account the EQS and EPP requirements specifying the overall aim of ESP teaching and learning which is to prepare students to communicate effectively in their academic and professional environments [4. Pp. 119].

The target-level communicative competence of the Bachelor's degree ESP students is B2 language proficiency qualification level [4. P. 36] In order to achieve the learning outcomes at this level derived from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages [2], rather than developing a course around an analysis of the language, we start instead with an analysis of the learner's needs.

To reach the destination point we should never bypass this logically necessary first step. For the identification of our students' fairly specific needs, we "proceed by first identifying the target situation and then carrying out a detailed analysis of the linguistic features of that situation" [5. P. 12].

Based on professional and academic skills the course helps our students match national qualification levels of achievement, i.e. Education and Qualification Standards which describe the targets students should be able to reach. The content of the ESP course is determined by those communicative needs which are required for the learner's purposes.

As ESP students are studying to perform a role [7. P. 11], their needs are described in terms of performance: what the learner will be able to do with the language at the end of a course of study.

Academic mobility Bachelor's qualification level presupposes that by the end of the course students will be able to read with a large degree of independence, adapting strategy to a range of study and specialism-related texts, communicate within academic or professional environment with a degree of fluency and spontaneity, follow the essentials of talks, lectures, reports, presentations, discussions on study and specialism-related topics, convey detailed study and specialism-related information in writing, drawing on a range of sources etc.

Thus, the needs profile is translated into statements of the list of specific language skills which help us assess/measure proficiency of a language learner against agreed standards [4. Pp. 99-103].

ESP courses bring about changes in students' behaviour. As the language behaviour requires the acquisition of linguistic competences, learning outcomes are described in terms of competences. They are described as observable behaviour necessary for the successful completion of real-world activities – knowledge of, and ability to use the formal resources from which well-formed, meaningful messages may be assembled and formulated. [2. P. 109]. Competences related to the effective performance on a job will enable learners to participate effectively in society.

According to the National secondary school standard (2004), the proficiency level for school leavers is B1+. The entry level of students of the National Mining University specialising, for example, in economics, engineering (mining) and law ranges from A1 to B2: A1 - 41.2 %, A2 - 42.4 %, B1 - 15.7 % on average.

At the Department of Foreign Languages of the National Mining University we use OUP Quick Placement Test when placing students into an appropriate level/group before the course starts. It is a flexible test of English language proficiency, quick and easy to administer.

Field of specialization	Common reference levels		
	A1	A2	B1
Economics	35.5 %	43.3 %	21.2 %
Engineering (Mining)	42.5 %	41.8 %	13.4%
Law	45.5%	42.1%	12.4 %
Average	41.2 %	42.4 %	15.7 %

Table 1. The entry level in language proficiency of NMU students

The data from the table show that the majority of 1st-year students do not possess the required language proficiency level. That is why, university students need better and more effective ways of learning foreign languages as well as their teachers must employ more effective teaching methods.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Curriculum for Universities highlights the necessity of an integrated approach to the teaching of the primary language skills. The process of integrating language skills to reflect and match real-life use involves linking them together in such a way that what has been learned and practiced through one skill is reinforced and extended through further language activities which bring one or more of the other skills into use [1].

Though listed as separate core objectives for Bachelor's language proficiency level B2, they are seen as integration of skills incorporating professional communicative competence developed with the performance of academic and job-related tasks.

In an ESP course, project work alongside with oral presentations, role-plays, simulations, and case studies are of paramount importance as they have a truly authentic purpose related to students' target needs and high degree of interaction among students [3. Pp. 195-196].

Case study which is considered to be an ideal method of inducting students into their professional world improves students' motivation to learn a language, develops responsibility, problem-solving skills as well as all the language skills. Cases reflect typical real life situations which students will have to encounter with in their professional activity. What is more, the language skills are developed in an integrated way: students read the case study thoroughly, working in groups they discuss business problems and recommend solutions (speaking + listening) and do a writing task which reflect the real world of business correspondence. Before reaching their own solution students discuss all the options practicing the language and developing communicative skills. The results of discussions can be given in the form of a presentation.

Generic job-related skills such as giving presentations, understanding and writing reports, letters, memos etc., participating in discussions are trained with case-studies.

There are some more advantages of the case study method that make it effective and, consequently, commonly used in teaching English for specific purposes:
- active student involvement;
- high degree of interaction among students;
- use of authentic materials (manuals, specifications, instructions, business letters, technical journals, etc.) improves the reading comprehension and intensifies the relationship to the students' job;
- each student is an individual and they work in their own manner.

The use of project work in ESP places responsibility for learning on the students themselves. More often projects are based on library research, engaging individuals in extensive purposeful reading followed by a written report and oral presentation. Students can access the source material in their own time, work through the material at their own pace, choosing topics to match their own interests and do all this without necessarily having to interact with a teacher. Students are in control of their language learning [3. P. 204].

Project work centres on the completion of a task. It usually requires an extended amount of independent work. Much of this work takes place outside the classroom. Being involved in the project work students go through the following stages. Everything starts with a classroom planning, initial discussion of the idea, definition of the project objective, creating general outline. After the discussion of the content, scope of the project and the needs basic research around the topic is done. While carrying out the project to complete the tasks planned students collect information, design a questionnaire which will be used to investigate the opinions of a specific target group. Following this, the learners must go beyond the boundaries of the classroom and administer their questionnaire to the target group, conduct interviews, organize the material. Then comes reviewing and monitoring. The teams have discussions and feedback sessions. They assess and evaluate the work done.

The general objectives of the project are to:
- provide intrinsically motivating activities;
- allow learners to take responsibility for their own language education;
- enhance the learner's presentation skills;
- provide opportunities to work in small groups.

Project work is also increasingly used to promote meaningful student engagement with language and content learning. Projects can be successfully integrated into a skills-based thematic unit, or introduced into a special sequence of activities in a more traditional classroom.

Project work promotes collaborative learning. Classrooms are organized so that students work together in small co-operative teams. Taking into account the low level of language proficiency of some of the students, it is less threatening to them. Besides, such an approach enhances students' learning in the sense of increasing the amount of their participation. Students work together to produce a product, but the value of such work lies not just in the final product but in the process of working on it. The final product (an oral presentation, a poster presentation, a bulletin board display, a written paper, a report) is shared with others, giving the project a real purpose.

Project work is student-centred, though the teacher plays a major role in offering support and guidance throughout the process. When organized in the way described project work places responsibility for learning on the students themselves. They take control of what and how they learn.

In the ESP course students should be aware of the learning process and their roles as learners that can be raised by developing the integrated set of knowledge and skills. One of the most important procedures is raising awareness of their own learning styles. Cognitive variables affect learning: as different learners have different cognitive styles they approach learning tasks differently. They may prefer different solutions to learning problems, e.g. focus on the details or concentrate on the main idea; have different sensory preferences in learning (visual verses auditory versus hand on/tactile). Being aware of their learning styles students may enhance learning.

Ability to monitor the students' own learning progress can be effectively developed through the use of Language Portfolio for Professional Communication which is a learning as well as assessment tool. Students are involved in deciding what to include in the portfolio. They may revise material in the portfolio after feedback from the teacher or peers. They reflect on the work in the portfolio, thus becoming aware of personal development. Language portfolio not only helps students develop their capacity for reflection, it enhances "learning to learn" and promotes the development of critical thinking skills [4. P. 56] Thanks to a purposeful collection of work there is evidence of mastery of language. Records prepared by students of their learning experiences and describing what activities they have done and the progress they have made help them become more involved in and responsible for their own learning. They help them develop their language learning strategies.

Being aware of the nature of learning strategies the students will differentiate between effective and ineffective strategies. They need strategies monitoring for their effectiveness, replacing and revising them if necessary.

Awareness of the mentioned-above metacognitive strategies (being aware of one's own learning, monitoring learning while it is taking place, evaluating learning after it has occurred, making decisions about what to concentrate on in the future) are very important for the students to be successful in their studies.

Those students who are aware of the cognitive strategies and are able to analyse the language, compare what is newly encountered with what is already known, organize information summarizing what has been read or heard may greatly enhance their learning.

The main task of any English for Specific Purposes course is to promote autonomous lifelong learning. The English for Specific Purposes (ESP) national curriculum for universities [4] encourages lifelong learning and autonomy. Students must not only learn but also "learn to learn", that is, develop the autonomous learning strategies needed to adapt to new technologies and new situations they will encounter in their professional environment. Developing learner autonomy is a necessity because once teaching stops, further learning has to be autonomous. To become an autonomous learner means to be completely responsible for their decisions and their implementations [6. P. 116]. Monitoring their own work helps the students to watch the changes in their progress and learn to correct themselves. Students learn how to evaluate and assess their own work.

The wisdom of Alan Rogers' words is quite appropriate in this context: "I know I cannot *teach* anyone anything. I can only provide an environment in which he can learn" [8. P. 198].

Study skills are aimed to develop professional communicative competences of students, thus becoming an integral part in teaching and learning a language. Study skills are also professional transferable skills, which can be used by students in learning other subjects as well as in many other different contexts including their careers and personal lives.

In order to develop students' professional language competences, self-study should be paid much greater attention. Self-study should be developed in such a way as to develop students' creative approach to the tasks and encourage the development of skills of problem solving. The study process itself should motivate students' self-education.

The task of the teacher is to help students organize their self-study thoughtfully and carefully, find effective ways of working, so that they can continue working efficiently and usefully even when away from their teacher and the classroom. The teacher should provide an environment and create the atmosphere in the language classroom in which students can learn. The teacher also should raise students' awareness about how they are learning, get them actively involved in the learning process, and make the learning process transparent for students.

A special emphasis should be given to assessing students' self-study. It must be done regularly; students must be aware of assessment criteria. The purpose of assessment lies in receiving quality feedback, which encourages students to become self-motivated independent learners. Therefore, teachers should give positive feedback to support students' beliefs that they can do well. Whatever feedback strategy is used, it should help students develop a clear sense of their own progress.

In order to help students promote autonomous lifelong learning and develop learning skills teachers can provide their students with the language portfolio which includes grids for self-assessment of language achievement and the setting of personal learning goals. The language portfolio helps to make the language learning process more transparent to students, to help them reflect on and assess their progress to identify problems, to emphasize achievements and motivate [9]. A language passport is aimed to assess students' own proficiency using the scales and descriptors derived from the Common European Framework; and a dossier, in which the owner collects evidence of his or her developing proficiency in a foreign language.

The Language Portfolio helps students to organize their self-study as it provides students with grids for self-assessment of language achievement and the setting of personal learning goals. It also promotes autonomous lifelong learning and helps to develop learning skills by providing suitable guidance and instruments students use. The Language Portfolio helps to make the language learning process more transparent to students, to help them develop their capacity for reflection and self-assessment, and thus to enable them gradually to assume more responsibility for their own learning. Regular goal setting and self-assessment are central to the Language Portfolio. This emphasis on self-assessment coincides with the Council of Europe's concern to promote autonomous lifelong learning. The introduction of self-assessment can lead to an open dialogue with students and give them a better understanding of students' problems.

References

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Статья посвящена вопросам эффективного преподавания и изучения английского языка для специальных целей. Обращается особое внимание на тот факт, что уровень владения английским языком для бакалавров является B2. Указывается необходимость применения интегративного подхода в обучении основным речевым навыкам. Предложены эффективные методы изучения английского языка для развития у студентов общих профессиональных умений. Проанализированы подходы к организации самостоятельной работы в курсе «Английский язык для специальных целей». Описаны роли студента и преподавателя.

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