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MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO EFL UNIVERSITY COURSE DESIGN: EXPERIENCE AND CHALLENGES

Nowadays there is a strong need in English as a means of communication between the professionals of different countries that is dictated by the globalization and integration processes. That is why EFL course is obligatory for students of different specialism areas trained at higher educational establishments of Ukraine.

Educational qualification standards (EQS) and educational professional programmes (EPP) clearly identify the target situation in which graduates will use their English in future. From this perspective, EFL university courses can be seen as ESP courses, i.e. courses designed for specific purposes of learners.

In accordance with Hutchinson and Waters ESP is defined as an approach to course design (1987: 53) which starts with students’ needs. Therefore, the specific nature of a typical ESP university course is specified by students needs, among which are immediate needs: study and exam/test needs and delayed needs: pre-service or pre-occupational needs listed in EQS. In this context ESP encompasses EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and EOP (English for Occupational Purposes).

This paper is focused on what is taught at ESP course and how students’ competences and strategies needed to function effectively in the study process and in the professional situations they encounter are developed.

The content of an ESP university course is aimed at help students to achieve target B2 language proficiency level that will enable graduates to function competently in a professional and academic context and provide them with a platform for life-long learning (ESP National Curriculum for Universities: 2005).

These can be achieved by developing students' general and professionally-oriented communicative language competences in English including sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences. Learning English is not limited by developing language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), vocabulary use and grammar structures usually taught at General English courses.

As EAP is a component of ESP course study skills and ability to learn are also developed through the course. Study skills identified in the ESP Curriculum as information location, academic speaking and writing, organization and self-awareness, assessment skills including self-assessment can be added by IT skills and soft skills as information technology has created change in all aspects of society and is widely used nowadays in all spheres of human life that influence greatly on our expectations of what students must learn in order to function effectively. Besides, exploitation of the modern technologies radically changes EFL teaching providing shift from teacher-centered approach to student-centered approach. The use of computers and IT facilitates the teaching/learning process, contributes to students' motivation and effectiveness of ESP course.

Developing all the mentioned skills in integrated way will make the learning process interesting, close to real life and appropriate to students needs that will lead to the outcomes relevant to the future specialism of students. In addition to communicative approach a multi-disciplinary approach and learning-centred approach are widely used.

Proposed by Tony Dudley Evans and Maggie Jo St John multi-disciplinary approach has proved its efficiency in teaching/learning English. Multi-disciplinary approach usually is used to problem solving that involves drawing appropriately from multiple disciplines to redefine problems outside of normal boundaries and reach solutions based on a new understanding of complex situations. It is also known as task-based approach used while teaching various specialist subjects and aimed at developing skills namely.

According to Widdowson, the task is concerned with 'pragmatic meaning' and outcome, which 'refers to what learners arrive at when they have completed the task'

(Ellis 2004: 8). Tasks engage cognitive processes, which are sorting, classifying, ordering, reasoning etc. and have clearly defined communicative outcome. While performing tasks students interact with each other, using the language and in this way develop all the mentioned above competences.

Cooperation and collaboration at English classes while doing tasks students develop their soft skills as well as tolerance and flexibility that will help them to function adequately in the professional environment.

All these ideas have found their implications in an ESP coursebook '*English for Study and Work*' (2010) soon to be piloted by the Ukrainian universities specialized in Engineering and Mining, in particular. The results of its piloting at the National Mining University and students' feedback are encouraging. Students who have used the coursebook found the process of learning English interesting, materials of the book - appropriate to their needs, tasks - motivating and encouraging, self-study – useful, self-assessment – challenging.

Among the main challenges of ESP course design is the number of time allotted to EFL university courses and low entry level of students, which is often A2 that makes it difficult for students to reach B2 proficiency level. This challenge may be overcome by the additional time of the courses, increased time for self-study and redesigning the EFL course keeping in mind students' gaps and lacks in English.

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