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TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITTEN SPEECH TO FUTURE ENGLISH TEACHERS: A MODULAR APPROACH

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Abstract. *The article investigates written speech as a type of speech activity and analyzes the issue of development of this type of speech as a constituent of professional competence of future teacher-philologists. Special emphasis is placed on written speech displaying the unity of six components of communicative competence: linguistic, speech, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, subject and formal logical ones. As the aim of higher foreign education in terms of developing written speech is mastering canons of all basic types, genres and styles of written texts, the article substantiates expediency of introducing the modular approach to education, which provides with efficacy, purposefulness, technological character and completeness in gaining the aim. The authors specify the essence of modular education and the notion "educational module"; analyzes the structure of an educational module. Through the method of modelling there has been designed an educational module on development of foreign language written speech of students in the final year of Bachelor's studies. The module encompasses three mini-modules on different styles of written discourse: scientific, official and publicistic.*
Keywords: *written speech, future English teachers, module, modular approach, principles of modular education.*

Scientific and technological progress, expansion of using the Internet and mass media are bringing together oral and written types of foreign speech. Written speech is an effective means of in-depth study of a foreign language in terms of the absence of a foreign language environment in higher education space. It has a significant educational function that supports the process of listening, speaking and reading. A student aiming at development of foreign language writing skills learns to think actively in a foreign language and thus creates his\her own foreign language environment.

Teaching foreign language writing at a linguistic university has long been in the spotlight of scholars. The problem of developing foreign language writing skills at higher school was studied by I. L. Bim, S. G. Filatova, G. V. Lagveshkina, M. I. Popova, A. N. Shamova, E. N. Solovova and others. Significant contribution was made by foreign scholars, namely by A. Brookes, D. Byrne, M. Field, P. Grundy, J. Gutmann, M. Stephens, J. Whelen and others. Analysis of scientific and methodological literature and our own observations made it possible to acknowledge presence of certain difficulties faced by undergraduates in developing foreign language written speech, due to the lack

of purposeful teaching methods and uncertainty of conditions for development of written skills.

The **research actuality** is determined by the need of a carefully planned and organized theoretical and methodological basis for teaching foreign language written speech to students of higher school. This basis is aimed at replacing passive information acquiring educational paradigm by active forms of teaching; it promotes self-organization, self-education, increases interest in learning at the level of active cooperation between the teacher and student and allows the teacher to effectively carry out a consultative and coordinating function. This can successfully be achieved through implementing a modular approach to education.

The **aim of the research** is to ascertain a scientific and methodological basis for development of the written speech of future English teachers in the framework of the modular approach.

Research methods: theoretical analysis, generalization of scientific sources on the problem of the research and own professional experience; the method of modelling.

Teaching foreign language written speech is traditionally interpreted as an immanent part of the process of professional training of future English teachers. The general purpose of teaching foreign languages is formulated as development of students' foreign language communicative competence reflected in writing as a unity of six constituents: linguistic, speech, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, subject and formal logical competencies.

Written speech is considered to be a polyfunctional system of a high level of complexity. I. L. Bim believes that it is a relatively independent form of speech activity, aimed at arrangement of written statements, expression of thoughts on the basis of linguistic units. [1] It has a significant educational function. It does not only serve as a means of educational linguistic material, but also helps improve reading skills (internal speaking) and oral speech (proper construction of statements).

The purpose of university foreign language education with regard to foreign written speech implies acquirement of canons of all major types, genres and styles of foreign languages texts at the level of reception, reproduction, transformation (compression / expansion), creation and reflection. The language proficiency level of a graduate student-philologist is determined by the European Recommendations as C2 (the highest level). A philologist must possess all kinds of written speech skills (practical, academic, creative).

Writing process is based on acquired skills and abilities. E. I. Pasov [2] highlights calligraphic and spelling skills, lexical and grammatical skills, compositional skills, punctuation and stylistic skills. In most cases, the main role is given to grammatical skills that launch the speech mechanism and formation of an active lexical base. Insufficient attention to development of

other skills and rapid pace of acquirement of genre diversity lead to emergence of some difficulties. For example, there are some "problem areas" arising during writing academic texts: 1) inability to logically organize the text in accordance with the requirements; 2) inability to use adequate linguistic means to provide logical connection; 3) use of lexical means and structures that do not fit the required register and level. Besides, language interference is widespread, therefore the sociocultural aspect of teaching emerges in the foreground.

Nowadays there is a range of diverse approaches to teaching written speech: formal-linguistic (I. A. Hruzynska, Ch. Fris, V. Rivers, etc.); formal-structural (L.V. Kaplich, Y.M. Kolker, A.Rimes, E.D. Hirsch, etc.); content-semantic (V. Zamel, T. Silva, I. Leki, etc.) and others. Combinations of different approaches in teaching written speech makes it more effective.

The efficacy of any approach is determined by appropriate methodological conditions. Developing skills of foreign language written speech of students is achieved in terms of fulfilling the following conditions: 1. Providing students with all necessary explanation concerning the format of the written text, its structure, layout, means of expressing thoughts, coherence and cohesion. 2. Implementing different techniques that help students generate and logically formulate ideas for writing different kinds of written texts. 3. Combining cooperative and individual learning. [3]

Analysis of scientific and methodological literature on teaching students foreign language written speech testifies a lack of a purposeful method of teaching, absence of a particular course in terms of bilingualism and continuity in education from year to year. Another problem is stipulated by a large number of genres of written discourse (formal, business, scientific, artistic), which must be mastered by undergraduates in terms of absence of academic time which naturally results in neglect of some of them or formal attitude to work on development of the skills mentioned.

In our view, the stated problem can be solved via implementing modular principles of teaching, imparting efficacy, purposefulness and technologal character to educational process, and enabling compression of academic time.

The essence of modular education, according to P.A. Yutsyavychene, is in the fact that a student can partly or completely independently work on the suggested training program, which consists of a target program of action, a bank of information and methodological guidance for achieving the stated didactic objective. In its essence, modular education, especially in the form of technology, is an effective and economical means of managing educational process, which intensifies student's activity through a clearly established sequence of actions.

Theoretical foundations of modular education in higher education are most fully represented in works by a Lithuanian researcher

P. A. Yutsiavychene: there has been clarified the essence of the concept "module", formulated modular principles, ascertained some distinctive features of modular education compared with the traditional one. Ideas of the modular approach in teaching foreign languages to students of higher school found development in research by V. P. Bludova, O. A. Kakurina, J. Yu. Kovaleva, V. Yu. Pasvanskene, N. M. Shevernitskaya, A.V. Suvorova, T. I. Tsaregorodtseva, V. A. Yamshanova and others.

The main concept of modular education is "module", which is considered a complete block of educational process. Most scholars agree that a module is part of the content of teaching, its simple, autonomous, independent, standardized, conceptual unit. [4, p. 32] An analysis of the concept "module" allows distinguishing several approaches to its understanding, namely:

- content-informational: module is considered a part of educational content, its simple, autonomous, independent, conceptual unit (O. G. Kukosyan, G. N. Knyazeva, Yu. A. Pavlichenko, etc.);

- content-operational: module is interpreted as an autonomous didactic set of educational materials bearing information loading, and algorithmic actions aimed at providing their complete mastering (Yu. K. Balashov, P. N. Husak, T. I. Tsaregorodtseva, etc.);

- operational: module is considered a parts of work in terms of vocational training, specialty or profession (O. L. Zadorozhnaya, etc.);

- organizational: module is understood as a package of means of organizing educational activity (M. V. Hrynyova, P. N. Husak, G. Owens, etc.);

- educational: module is defined as a functionally autonomous node that combines content, organizational forms and active methods and is intended for a comprehensive solution of pedagogical purposes regarding proper academic and personal achievements of students (A. V. Furman, etc.).

We define educational module as a relatively independent part of educational process with all its inherent characteristics and components, built around one (or several closely related) theme, phenomena, and other content units according to modular principles.

Modular principles comprise orienting educational process at structuring educational content, dynamism, flexibility, realized perspective, versatile methodological counseling, and parity [5].

In the process of experimental work on development of undergraduates' written skills there has been developed a module in terms of an academic course "The English language" (for the fourth-year students), which comprises three mini-modules on different styles of written discourse:

1. Teaching written speech of scientific discourse (abstract, summary, article).

2. Teaching written speech of official documents (official correspondence, resume).

3. Teaching written speech of publicistic literature (speech, literary critical essays).

An educational module on development of undergraduates' written skills consists of several blocks (see Chart 1).
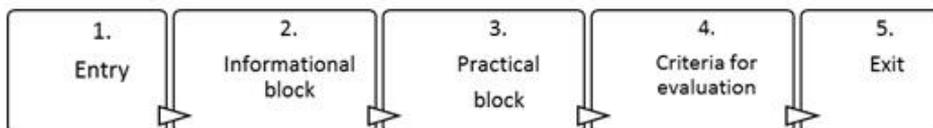

Chart 1. An educational module on development of writing skills of undergraduate students

The first block – entry – bears all characteristics of a technological process, according to which each educational process must begin with measuring the initial level of development of certain skills. It is realized in the form of an objectives block – a test with tasks identical to those of the exit test, which reflects and measure the level of students' knowledge and skills planned by the program.

The informational block is structured according to the criteria of conformity with the formulated objectives, connection with the procedural side of learning, structuring, "compression" of information, flexibility and variability. Thus, the three mini-modules are included in the set of the educational module, each of which contains the following elements:

- a concise lecture on the topic sections, presented in the form of schemes, tables and illustrations;
- a sample of a written text of the appointed style and genre for joint analysis;
- an intermediate test to assess acquisition of theoretical material.

While working in terms of a practical block students learn to use acquired theoretical knowledge in typical and non-typical conditions, work out invariant ways of educational activity. The structure of this block includes the following elements:

- a complex of propaedeutic exercises aimed at development of individual skills necessary for creation of the whole product of written speech;
- a task for writing;
- a set of recommendations for writing (a list of lexemes due to the genre of the work; recommended grammatical constructions; advice on the layout and composition, etc.).

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The block of criteria for evaluating written speech has been constructed in accordance with the criteria proposed within the international English language testing system (IELTS) and reflects the following parameters:

- Fulfillment / Context (depth of theme disclosure) which assesses the proposed idea, sequence of thoughts presentation, observance and disclosure of the topic, ability of structuring texts by paragraphs;

- Clearance / Cohesion / Coherence (consistency and connectivity of statements) assesses ability to clearly express thoughts, build expanded sentences using typical English constructions;

- Vocabulary / Lexical Resource (vocabulary used) evaluates student's vocabulary and ability to use it in practice in appropriate form and context;

- Grammatical Range and Accuracy (Grammar, spelling and punctuation) assesses the skill of using various grammatical constructions, appropriate prepositions, accurate spelling [6, p. 20].

Organization of work on informational and practical blocks of the module is fully oriented at achievement of clearly stated objectives of the educational module. The level of achievement of these objectives is checked in the exit test. In addition to its evaluating function, the test can also perform a diagnostic function allowing both the teacher and the student to identify gaps of learning.

Development of students' foreign language written speech organized on the basis of modular principles shifts focus onto an independent and active style of work that allows paying proper attention to development of writing skills in terms of time handicap. It brings this aspect of foreign language communication onto the level of a separate academic discipline and the student becomes a full-fledged and active participant of educational process.

We associate the prospects for further research with development of a full package of educational module on development of undergraduates' foreign language written skills due to the described structure.

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