

ESP TEACHERS TRAINING: AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN UKRAINIAN CONTEXT

The research focuses on the issue of preparation of future EGP teachers to teaching ESP as a significant component of their professional training in Ukrainian tertiary institutions. The importance of ESP teaching skills acquisition in the process of professional training of future teachers of English as a foreign language has been justified on the basis of several comprehensive surveys. The analysis of leading American ESP teachers' training programs has been provided. Ways of efficient American experience implementation in the context of Ukrainian universities have been defined.

Key words: ESP teachers, professional training, ESP teaching skills, acquisition, training programs, tertiary institutions.

Introduction. It is a well-known fact that in our rapidly moving world with all the technological progress, scientific discoveries, ecological problems and catastrophes there is a great need in collaboration between scientists and practitioners working in various spheres in different countries of the world. Now, when Ukraine is going through the transition period from post-Soviet system to employing democratic values of civil society adopted by many countries, this postulate is becoming even more topical within the sphere of professional training and development. Participation of young specialists and scientists from Ukraine in international conferences and programs has a number of constraints among which is unsatisfactory level of English professional communicative competence (EPCC).

The problem of ESP is not new to Ukrainian higher educational system. Therefore, the first step to improving the current situation with teaching ESP in Ukraine is proper professional training of ESP teachers or practitioners in Ukrainian tertiary institution and their professional adaptation to teaching ESP, especially for sciences and technologies, with the perspective of their sustainable development on the basis of gaining the experience from US leading institutions.

A lot of research has been done on dominating movements in ESP development over a few recent decades (T. Dudley-Evans [5], T. Hutchinson [8], J. Swales [11], A. Waters [8]). There is the series of works elucidating the importance of learners' needs analysis and target situation analysis in the process of ESP teaching (R. West, M. Long [10]). Some works are dedicated to ESP curriculum development (J. Ewer, W. Hullen [9]). The significant research has been conducted on the aspects of discourse and genre analysis in ESP teaching (D. Biber, Ch. Candlin [4], N. Fairclough, A. Henry [7], Ph. Riley [4], R. Roseberry [7], T. Yakhontova).

Although, in most cases, the focus of attention has primarily been on main approaches to ESP teaching and learning. No comprehensive study of future ESP teachers' training for their future professional activity has been undertaken yet.

This paper aims at attracting attention to the issue of ESP teachers' training for future professional activity with the focus on their further sustainable development on the basis of the correspondent American experience.

The country, where teaching ESP is rapidly developing and special attention is paid to ESP teachers training, is the USA. The American higher educational establishments have a lot to offer when it comes to the problem of ESP teaching since they have considerable as well as valuable experience in this sphere. The acquired Master degree in teaching English as a second language with an emphasis in ESP in the US Universities and colleges provides a broad background in ESP theory and praxis. As American programs are designed to prepare future ESP practitioners to develop courses and teach all categories of ESP in different settings, the practical application of their experience can be adopted in many educational environments.

The results of the research. A number of research done in Ukraine proves that the current state of ESP teaching and learning is in quite unsatisfactory condition which results in poor level (or no level at all) of a foreign language communicative competence of the university graduates of var-

ious majors. The traditional deductive approach to training teachers of foreign languages in the higher educational establishments of Ukraine can no longer meet the challenges put forward by the contemporary society towards professional education and training of specialists. Teaching ESP to university level students certainly requires from a language teacher methodological skills, some subject-specific knowledge and also developed ability of analysis and adaptation of this knowledge and skills to a certain educational environment [1].

The results of our doctoral research on ESP learning by the students of Science faculties clearly demonstrate the insufficient level of acquired EPCC [2: 226-274]. Our analysis was based on a sample of 1569 students of three Ukrainian universities – Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogic University of Ternopil, Uzhgorod National University. The results of the survey, held with the purpose to assess students' EPCC level showed that it was insufficient in 71,8% of students – B 1 or lower according to European Framework of Reference for languages [1: 22-23; 3; 12]. The average data obtained from the tests for students' EPCC level, have showed the following. The students from the control groups have gained only 8 scores (from total 20) for the whole period of ESP course studying at the university and their EPCC level has grown from A2 to B1. In the experimental groups specially trained ESP lecturers taught the ESP courses. As a result, the students from experimental groups have gained 17 scores (from total 20) for the whole period of ESP course studying at the university and their EPCC level has grown from A2 to B2. (fig. 1).

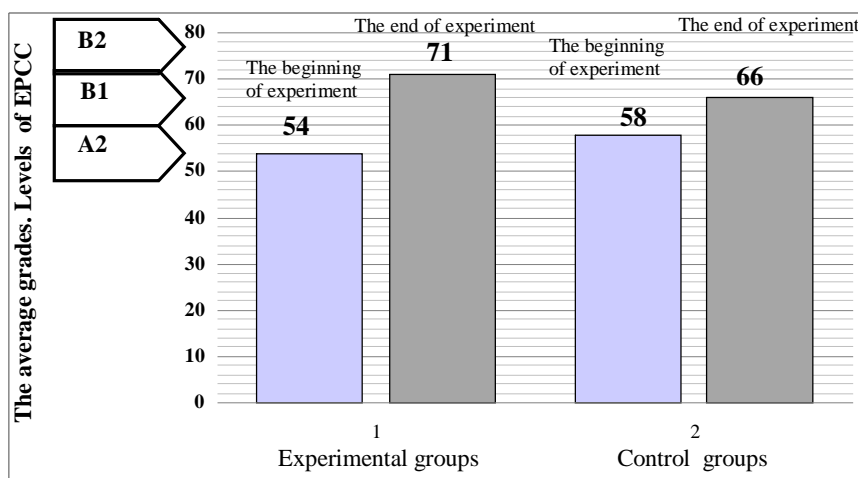


Figure 1. The growth of students' EPCC level for the period of ESP course studying at university in scores and language levels

For the period of ESP course studying at university the EPCC level of the students from the control groups has grown for only 14 %, while the EPCC level of the students from the experimental groups has grown for 31 % (fig. 2).

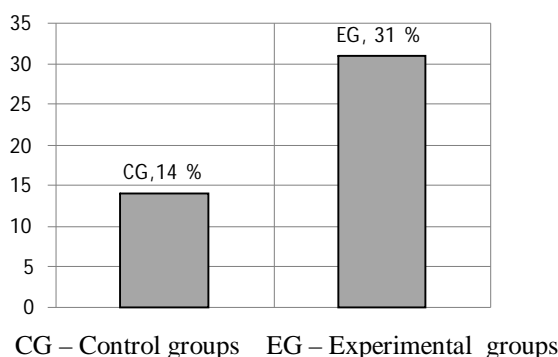


Figure 2. Percentage of students' EPCC level growth for the period of ESP course

Furthermore, the level of such acquired components of EPCC of the students from the control groups as pragmatic, strategic, linguistic, sociocultural and intercultural proved to be low. The unsatisfactory indicators of foreign language training for future specialists of various spheres call for the necessity of modernization of such training based on the founding of global pedagogic research.

Our personal teaching experience shows that current graduates of English philology departments lack competences in the area of teaching ESP. Even the majority of experienced teachers continue to teach students deductively, mostly employing the Grammar Translation Method. Thus, the outputs of their professional activities are relatively low.

On the other hand, quite long experience of supervising teacher training practice performed by the master degree students of English language department at the department of foreign languages for Sciences (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv) proves that future teachers of foreign languages have a very vague if not any idea about ESP, its linguistic peculiarities, methodological approaches and methods of ESP teaching. The current curricula of professional education and training of English language teachers in Ukrainian universities are of EGP nature and do not imply studying of ESP, methodology and methods of its teaching. While some programs of training future teachers of English as a foreign language mention the notion of ESP in some courses of methodology of teaching foreign languages, others omit this aspect at all. As a result, ESP practitioners are largely left to their own resources when it comes to teaching practice in a certain educational environment.

The students undergoing teacher training practicum at the foreign languages departments have to find their own way how to apply their linguistic knowledge – lexical, grammar, stylistic peculiarities – to the subject-specific context of certain spheres, and furthermore, to adapt their few methodological skills to the ESP environment. As a result, the whole process of teaching ESP does not employ any of the established approaches to ESP; the majority of trainees, based on their competence, qualification and experience, make chaotic attempts to achieve the aim – to teach ESP.

The situation with the teachers of foreign languages departments is similar. They have to cope with foreign languages for subject-specific purposes and develop methodology of teaching by themselves. Very often they feel demotivated as, according to our survey (conducted among 87 teachers of the departments of foreign languages of the same three Ukrainian universities), the lack of subject-specific knowledge and ability to transfer it to a foreign language is regarded by them as a major obstacle in performing their professional roles and functions.

Although, it is of great importance for future teachers of ESP to integrate the main components of ESP teaching practice, namely: methodology, methods and content of teaching, properly select the most appropriate methods and materials according to the syllabus, target situation and learners' needs. In Ukraine teaching ESP in higher educational establishments is not the elaborated direction of foreign languages teacher education. Only few higher educational establishments offer ESP courses for master degree seeking students, where they are taught some basics of academic English.

Teaching ESP is well developed in the American universities, institutes, colleges, language schools and other educational institutions. Such institutions as San Jose State University, University of Minnesota, California State University Los Angeles have a considerable experience of professional training of English teachers according to the TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) program with the focus on ESP where the principles of professional sustainability as well as significant experience in ESP courses delivery have been complied. In this respect, the experience of leading US universities as San Jose State University, University of Minnesota, California State University in Los Angeles are of special interest for the topic of our research and development of ESP teachers education in the Ukrainian higher educational establishments.

The content-based analysis of the relevant literature sources, universities' documentation, and appropriate courses' descriptions has proven that the following approaches to teaching ESP and various applications of ESP, namely EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and EOP (English for Occupational Purposes) have arisen in the last few decades – Learner-Centered Approach, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), CBI (Content-based Instruction), TBL (Task-based Learning), etc.

The learner-centered approach focuses on designing the instruction that is sensitive to the individual student's needs, abilities, and interests. CLIL presupposes studying situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language in which this content is encoded. It is widely seen as an excellent means of learning a language, and of introducing global and intercultural aspects into the teaching of content subjects. It is claimed to be a very effective way of learning a language as it provides the learners with meaningful input and authentic situations. Another popular in the USA approach to ESP teaching is CBI, which focuses on the teaching of academic English through content knowledge. Language learning and content of subject matter could be brought together because a foreign language is most successfully acquired when learners are engaged in its meaningful and purposeful use. The integration of language and content involves the incorporation of the content material into language classes. The content can provide a motivational and cognitive basis for language learning since it is interesting and of a certain value to the learner.

According to the TESOL programs of ESP teachers' training, the following courses appear to be the core of the syllabi: "ESP: Lexical and Functional Analysis", "Methodology of ESP Teaching and Learning", "Methods of ESP Teaching and Learning", "ESP Course Design". But, to launch the courses in Ukrainian universities, apart from purely academic challenge of designing appropriate ESP courses, Ukrainian educational establishments suffer some organizational and financial difficulties concerning reformation and modernization of the curriculum for training future teachers of English as a foreign language. Obviously, it is very important to critically examine and adopt relevant and justified elements of the experience of countries which have made significant progress in the field of study.

One more effective way of future ESP teachers' training reckons for active participating in scientific work – live and on-line interuniversity conferences, seminars and webinars, universities' documentation analyses and observations for the teaching / studying process.

The predominant characteristics of the efficient currently working American ESP teachers' training programs comprise the content-based, task-based, interactive instruction which provides cooperative and collaborative learning. The attempts should be made to adjust the predominant in the USA models of ESP teachers' preparation to the educational, didactic, financial, etc. conditions of Ukrainian higher educational establishments.

Conclusion. Considering the problems above, the educational reform in the field might presuppose:

- 1) gaining the experience from one of the US leading institutions, dealing with teaching ESP and development of future teachers' of ESP professional training;
- 2) development of the courses "ESP: Lexical and Functional Analysis", "Methodology of ESP Teaching and Studying", "Methods of ESP Teaching and Studying", "ESP Course Design" and introducing them to the syllabi along with intense practical experience to prepare future teachers of ESP for the challenges of their profession;
- 3) exploring the functioning of existing ESP teacher training models in the US higher educational establishments and the key factors of their efficiency;
- 4) development, justification and implementation of the ESP teachers training model by applying the gained knowledge and skills in order to reform education for teachers of foreign languages in Ukrainian tertiary institutions;
- 5) introduction of special preparation of ESP teachers to help prospective ESP teachers acquire ESP teaching methodology in Ukrainian higher educational establishments.

The next stage of our work will be dedicated to an effective model of future ESP teachers' training in Ukrainian tertiary institutions on the basis of the US university experience.

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ПІДГОТОВКА ВИКЛАДАЧІВ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ДЛЯ СПЕЦІАЛЬНИХ ЦІЛЕЙ: АМЕРИКАНСЬКИЙ ДОСВІД В УКРАЇНСЬКОМУ КОНТЕКСТІ

Дослідження висвітлює проблему підготовки майбутніх викладачів англійської мови (загального курсу) до викладання англійської мови для спеціальних цілей, що має бути невід'ємним компонентом професійної підготовки таких фахівців у вищих навчальних закладах України. Вагомість формування умінь викладання англійської мови для спеціальних цілей у процесі професійної підготовки майбутніх викладачів англійської мови як іноземної доведено на основі кількох комплексних досліджень. Представлено аналіз програм підготовки викладачів англійської мови для спеціальних цілей у кількох провідних американських університетах. Визначено шляхи впровадження кращого американського досвіду в українських університетах.

Ключові слова: викладачі англійської мови для спеціальних цілей, професійна підготовка, уміння викладання англійської мови для спеціальних цілей, оволодіння, програми підготовки, вищі навчальні заклади.

**ПОДГОТОВКА ПРЕПОДАВАТЕЛЕЙ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА
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В УКРАИНСКОМ КОНТЕКСТЕ**

Исследование посвящено проблеме подготовки будущих преподавателей английского языка (общего курса) к преподаванию английского языка для специальных целей, которая должна быть неотъемлемым компонентом профессиональной подготовки таких специалистов в высших учебных заведениях Украины. Значение формирования умений преподавания английского языка для специальных целей в процессе профессиональной подготовки будущих преподавателей английского языка как иностранного доказана на основе нескольких комплексных исследований. Представлен анализ программ подготовки преподавателей английского языка для специальных целей в нескольких ведущих американских университетах. Определены пути внедрения лучшего американского опыта в украинских университетах.

Ключевые слова: преподаватели английского языка для специальных целей, профессиональная подготовка, умения преподавания английского языка для специальных целей, овладение, программы подготовки, вузы.

