



УДК 378.041.011.3-051:811.111=111

SELF-EDUCATION STRATEGIES OF ESP TEACHERS
САМООСВІТНІ СТРАТЕГІЇ ВИКЛАДАЧІВ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЗА
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Abstract. *The article deals with teachers' self-education on the whole and ESP teachers' self-education in particular. The author analyzes the peculiarities of teaching English for specific purposes and comes to the conclusion that each teacher should create a program of self-management to improve their knowledge on the ESP course and develop their methodology. One more important strategy is interdisciplinary cooperation which will enrich both ESP teacher and professional course teacher.*

Key words: *self-education strategies, ESP teacher, self-regulated learning, motivation, program of pedagogical self-management*

Introduction. The urgency of studying the problem of organizing self-education of ESP teachers is determined by the strategic goals and objectives of the modernization of education in Ukraine. The new vector of education development involves intensifying self-education of not only students but also ESP teachers, which provides for lifelong education in the context of fast knowledge updating, and a great necessity in communicating in industrial and technical spheres of life, which makes ESP vitally important.

The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature, which addresses the issues of self-education, showed that many important questions of the theory and practice of self-education have already been studied. The essence, functions, peculiarities of self-education, its place in professional activity were determined by A. Gromtseva, N. Kuzmin, I. Naumchenko, G. Sukhobaska, etc.; its historical and social aspects were considered by A. Eisenberg, B. Raisky, M. Skatkin, O. Shuklyn, etc.; ways and means of forming the need for self-education were explored by V. Buryak, T. Klimova, I. Redkovets, etc.; the organization of self-education and its management were analyzed by T. Klimova, G. Serikov, A. Usov, etc.

The purpose of this research is to describe the main self-education strategies of ESP teachers.

Research results. English for specific purposes (ESP) refers to the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where the goal of the learners is to use English in a particular domain. The teaching of English for specific purposes, in its early days, was largely motivated by the need to communicate across languages in areas such as commerce and technology. This has now expanded to include other areas such as English for academic purposes (EAP), English for occupational purposes (EOP), English for vocational purposes (EVP), English for medical purposes (EMP), English for business purposes (EBP), English for legal purposes (ELP), and English for sociocultural purposes (ESCP) [1].



ESP teachers' role is to develop academic skills of future professionals. They teach English for the profession and encourage their students to use their background knowledge along with the academic skills in dealing with all sorts of authentic information they encounter in their profession. ESP teachers design courses in accordance with their students' professional needs.

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned ideas, we understand that ESP teachers have to educate themselves constantly. Our personal experience and recent research analysis have made it possible to create a list of self-education strategies for ESP teachers.

In the case of self-education, we speak of self-regulated learning, which was first described in the early 1980s. It mainly concerns students as subjects of training. Here the function of planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning progress is not performed by another person (the teacher), but by the student himself/ herself. Although during the training he or she can make a request to other people to evaluate his/ her results, the planning of such actions lies on the subject of the training.

By definition, self-regulated learning refers to self-produced thoughts and actions that are systematically geared toward achieving learning goals [6]. Not every mental ability or work skill includes self-regulation, although, naturally, feedback systems are necessarily included in their structure – but only those that presuppose self-instruction, that is, more or less conscious, associated with a special setting of the corresponding goals, a change in one's own mental processes included in the training. Through this, students become owners of their own learning processes and as a result, they transform their mental abilities into skills appropriate to tasks in a variety of fields (academic achievement, sport, leisure or health).

The very introduction of the concept 'self-regulated instruction' is important. With its help the accent in the field of academic achievement shifts from concepts which are fixed and difficult to control (for example, students' mental abilities, as well as social and learning environments) to processes that can be initiated by the learners themselves in order to improve their learning strategies and create an enabling environment for training.

However, theorists in self-regulated learning focus their attention on how students could initiate and enrich their own experience in educating themselves. In the case of ESP learning, both ESP teachers and students are educating themselves using foreign language learning strategies, the language itself, and its professional orientation. Moreover, these are not separate processes. They are interconnected and can be mutually beneficial.

Modern approaches to self-regulated learning have two features. They do not cling to a separate individual, but embrace different social realities. Now we are talking not only about self-education, which is carried out through self-reading, computer training, but also about self-education, which can also include social forms of learning, such as modeling, guidance and feedback received from other people (both coaches and teachers, and other students). Self-regulated learning is interpreted in interactive terms. This is related to the second feature of modern approaches to self-regulation, which argue that learners can regulate their own learning not only through hidden, internal means, but also through external actions, such as selecting,



changing and creating favorable learning environments or seeking social support. In this case, personal results are achieved through the use of physical resources of the environment, for example, authentic literature, learning on-line applications or interactive whiteboards, or through the assistance of other people, for example, colleagues and friends. However, in both cases the role of the learner's personal activity is not diminished.

A dynamic model of self-regulated learning, including metacognitive, motivational and behavioral processes that are launched by the individual in order to acquire new educational knowledge and skills, was developed by B. J. Zimmermann [6]. The efforts of learners to regulate their studies are presented here in the form of three cyclic stages:

- A *preliminary stage* involves the emergence of the intention to learn something and includes beliefs (for example, in self-efficacy), expectations of a certain result, intrinsic motivation, and skills in analyzing the learning task, including planning, setting goals and selecting a learning strategy.
- On the *implementation stage*, the training efforts are optimized. It includes the processes of time management, self-verification and self-observation.
- The following *reflection stage* provides understanding significance of the personal results. It includes making judgments about successes or failures, as well as self-correcting processes (for example, adaptive-protective reactions).

This model can be implemented both for students and teachers and it describes whether their self-regulation strategies in training are effective or ineffective. If we take students, the tendency is that high-achieving, well-performing students show effective self-regulation, especially at the initial stage of training. But low-achieving students try to manage their education, too. However, the quality of their self-regulation is low, because they use naive strategies. For example, they set ambiguous and distant goals, use non-strategic methods, inaccurate forms of self-monitoring, put forward attribution, which transfers responsibility to sources that are beyond their control. They are not able to set immediate goals and select relevant training strategies. They are usually guided by the experience that has arisen after previous, often unsuccessful, attempts at training. Such unsuccessful attempts evoke negative self-esteem, lead to dissatisfaction and fear, and cause defensive forms of reflection. All this undermines the motivational basis necessary for their more efficient training.

In terms of the ESP course, these processes can be illustrated like that: a student who starts learning an ESP course at the university tries to use general English structures and vocabulary which he/she studied at school instead of actively doing ESP tasks which demand both knowledge of English and knowledge of future profession. Thus, students get negative motivation to further studies. The teacher's function is to notice this negative tendency and drive it into the necessary direction.

As for ESP teachers, there are also many challenging aspects in self-education. First of all, ESP teachers should get at least minimal knowledge of the professional sphere of his/her students and be ready to widen it. Theoretical part is less important



for English classes. Instead of reading special textbooks overloaded with theoretical information and specific terms, the ESP teacher should better apply to more captivating, cognitive and interesting topics or articles which are also connected with students' specialization and are also full of terminology, but are more likely to provoke their vivid interest in learning the language. Thus, in the ESP course, teachers not only master their teaching strategies and methods, but also undertake steps to become specialists in "purpose" of learning a foreign language. It's a difficult task which demands a lot of time, effort and constant self-work.

According to the research conducted by the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine and the British Council [3], ESP courses are compulsory in the majority of universities (68.7%), but only 37.3% of teacher respondents think they should be. This feeling may be attributed to the fact that English teachers mistakenly associate ESP teaching with having substantial background knowledge of their students' specialism. Hence, without a proper education in their students' subject area, teachers find it difficult to comprehend ESP subject matter. As a consequence, they are "reluctant settlers in the new territory" [2: 45].

It's evident that this problem results from the absence of training in ESP methodology and from misunderstanding of what ESP teaching entails. For example, ESP teachers, especially inexperienced ones, at their classes pay too much attention to teaching grammar structures, going into a great deal of details, though for students who don't major in philology, this isn't compulsory. The ESP language is taught to be used in the professional activity, so the emphasis should be made on developing competencies which would make this activity more productive and fruitful.

In reality, a larger proportion of ESP is favored only when more classes of English are built into the syllabus, as it is, for example, foreseen at the Computer Sciences Faculty at Petro Mohyla Black Sea National University. Then it is possible for the teacher to combine EGP and ESP especially on the initial stage. What worsens the situation is that students are of different level proficiency and have different commands of English, so groups must be adequately streamed on the basis of their competence in English to make ESP teaching and learning more efficient.

ESP teachers' self-education can be also enhanced through interdisciplinary cooperation between them and subject teachers. It is seen as a necessary and important option as it can lead to the success of the whole ESP course. The objectives of both English and subject courses should to some extent complement each other. ESP teachers have positive attitudes towards team-teaching and see it as a final level of subject-language integration [4: 162]. Unfortunately, there is no clearly-understood model for language and subject teacher cooperation and/or team teaching.

Undoubtedly, ESP teachers should constantly master their language and teaching competence either by completing advanced teacher training courses or by attending different seminars, participating in conferences or webinars, sharing their professional experience and getting acquainted with the latest innovative technologies which they can later use to make their classes more interesting and cognitive. There are a lot of opportunities and resources (printed, visual, online) for them to develop. But the thing is that they should be eager to achieve some progress themselves. Motivational constituent for them is very important. The motivation for lifelong self-



education is based on understanding the necessity of internal and external forces that excite the teacher to work and give some meaning. The motives for the formation of lifelong education are very diverse. Here are the most frequent of them:

- desire for constant self-improvement;
- desire for self-expression and self-affirmation;
- expansion of the horizons;
- personal and professional growth;
- raising the qualification during the certification process;
- development of all types of competencies;
- cognitive interest;
- creating a positive image among students, parents and colleagues;
- increasing personal ratings at different levels of subordination, etc. [5].

Conclusions. The main means of improving teachers' professional competence may be a program of pedagogical self-management based on the reflection of personal activity and professional growth monitoring. The main goal of the program is the comprehensive development of the teacher's personality in order to further ensure optimal conditions for his effective teaching and upbringing the students. ESP teachers can be also engaged in interdisciplinary cooperation to fully understand the peculiarities of the course which is taught.

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Анотація. У статті розглядаються питання самоосвіти викладачів закладів вищої освіти у цілому та самоосвіти викладачів англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням. Проаналізувавши особливості викладання англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням, автор наголошує, що проблеми виникають переважно через нерозуміння специфіки викладання цієї дисципліни. Існує необхідність постійного самоконтролю та самовдосконалення з боку викладача, що, по-перше, надасть йому можливості поглибити власні знання у галузі, на якій спеціалізуються його студенти, а по-друге, дозволить досягти



ефективності навчального процесу через використання новітніх технологій, залучення нового автентичного матеріалу тощо. Через участь у семінарах, тренінгах, конференціях, вебінарах відбувається обмін досвідом, що є необхідною складовою його професійної діяльності.

Для покращення власної професійної майстерності кожен викладач повинен створити програму самовдосконалення, яка б відображала його здобутки і націлювала на подальші успіхи.

Ключові слова: стратегії самоосвіти, викладач англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням, саморегульоване навчання, мотивація, програма педагогічного самовдосконалення

Article sent: 08.05.2018 г.

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