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ASSESSMENT AS A MEANS OF ENHANCING STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN THE ESP COURSE
ОЦІНЮВАННЯ ЯК ЗАСІБ ПІДВИЩЕННЯ МОТИВАЦІЇ СТУДЕНТІВ ДО ВИВЧЕННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЗА ПРОФЕСІЙНИМ СПРЯМУВАННЯМ

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Abstract. The article studies the problem of assessing students' achievements in the ESP context. The author analyzes fundamental principles and methods of formative and summative assessments, which are aimed to improve both students' and teachers' activity. The integration of self- and peer-assessments in the ESP classes is seen as a way to foster language learning, increase students' motivation and autonomy.

Key words: formative, summative, diagnostic, evaluative assessments, self-, peer-assessment, motivation, feedback, autonomy

Introduction. One of the biggest challenges that higher education encounters today is to make graduates correspond to the requirements of the workforce market. Compared to graduates from many European universities, ours don't lack knowledge. They lack the skills of how to implement and adjust it to diverse, sometimes unpredictable, real-life situations. This forces universities to reevaluate their educational programs and graduate skill sets.
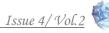
It's become clear that more time should be given to studying foreign languages, English in particular. Moreover, knowledge of both General English and English for Specific Purposes is essential. Many companies need specialists who are not only able to operate complex terminology and read special authentic literature, but also to discuss general topics or have e-correspondence with clients. Businesses also need specialists with well-developed skills like creativity, problem solving, self-management, self-assessment and critical thinking, team work and collaboration etc.

After obtaining these competencies at the university, students are likely to have better career offers and promotion in the fields they have chosen. This can become a good motivational force that can drive them to achieving their educational goals.

Recent research analysis. Equally to other disciplines studied at the university, ESP training can also make its contribution to developing students' professional competencies. In order to monitor and evaluate the level of students' progress in this process and to stimulate their learning activity, various types and methods of assessment can be implemented. Though ESP assessment mechanism and instruments are similar to the ones used for assessment in general and language assessment in particular, but nevertheless, there is a certain difference as ESP targets specific purpose language abilities [1].

Fundamental principles of assessment have been studied by T.Dudley-Evans, M.Allen, J.McMillan, L.Elton, T.Guskey etc. In general, the definitions presented by the researchers are similar. Thus, T. Erwin defines this notion as "a systematic basis

for making inferences about the learning and development of students" [4:14]. In his opinion, it includes defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and using information in order to enhance their success in learning [4].

B.Walvoord also regards assessment as a systematic process of gathering information not only about student learning, but also about the factors that affect it [7]. She mentions that assessment includes the following steps:

- Articulation of learning goals/ outcomes
- Gathering information about students' progress in achieving goals
- Using the received information for improvement.

Assessment used to be a tool of extrinsic motivation. The **aim** of our research is to analyze whether it can promote students' learning intrinsically.

Research results. Assessment being a part of the educational process serves as a link between teaching and learning. It can bring benefits to both sides by giving a full picture of the quality or efficacy of the teaching or learning processes.

Thus, performing diagnostic and monitoring functions, it allows students to identify certain gaps in their knowledge, the areas where they seem to be more vulnerable or less successful. Being aware of personal successes and failures, they can set new goals and plan their further actions to improve the situation. If students are systematically encouraged to monitor and process the information about their learning, this may develop persistence, a high level of responsibility, critical thinking and self-management skills.
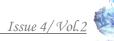
As for the teachers, Mc Millan states that integrating assessment and classroom instruction gives them a clue of what activities will be the most useful, and what level of teaching is the most appropriate [6]. Indeed, it enables them to evaluate the effectiveness of the course taught, of their teaching methods and techniques used and if necessary, to implement something new and more appropriate to stimulate learning.

The principles that teachers should base every assessment approach they choose include:

- validity;
- reliability;
- fit for the purpose;
- provide feedback;
- be motivating and supportive of learning;
- support teachers' professional judgment, etc.

In ESP training, based on the functions and in accordance with stages of the learning process, various types of assessment are used, including formative, summative, diagnostic and evaluative ones.

Formative assessment is considered one of the perspective directions of reforming education in many countries since it assists in continuous learning. It allows teachers to identify students' needs, adapting learning to them, thus making it possible to choose an individual mode of learning suitable for each. Formative assessment provides a diagnostic feedback to students and teachers. It demands changing the teacher's attitude, rejecting competition among learners and emphasizing the importance of their appraisal and encouragement. Here grades are

considered more to be a recommendation to acting or improving, but not a final verdict. So such assessment may be highly motivating as it is aimed at ensuring active learning.

Summative assessment reveals the scope of the learner's progress after completion of a certain activity (for example, a project), a unit, a module or a whole course. At the universities, it's accomplished with the help of language skills tests, progress tests, credit or exam tests, oral exams, complex test papers or control tasks initiated by the rector. All of these assessments are intended to determine if the students have coped with the material or skills they were expected to learn, so they perform more an evaluative than diagnostic function. However, analyzing and comparing the results (usually grades or scores) of students' previous summative assessments done during all years of studying ESP at the university, we can judge about their academic progress or regress.

In our opinion, these types of assessment don't oppose to each other. In language training, they work hand in hand to provide a complete picture of students' achievements.

Scientists traditionally argue about the role of self- or peer-assessment. The research we have conducted among the students of the engineering faculty reveals that though students are accustomed to being evaluated, as they have been experiencing it throughout their lives, still, for the majority, this process is rather psychologically stressful and less comfortable, except for self-assessment. For them (81.3%) it has appeared to be more beneficial, challenging and even motivating.

Obviously, self-assessment can promote students' autonomy in learning. Participating in it, they become critical judges who learn to take responsibility for their learning. They are encouraged to identify and analyze their mistakes without anybody's interference, to predict the results of their activity, to set new goals, to compare what has been achieved and can be achieved in the future. With this purpose, at the end of the lectures, they are asked to answer the following questions: "Is there any new information that you have learnt? What impressed you most of all? Have you changed your attitude to …?" and so on. This way self-evaluation is an important means of mental and moral development of an individual.

The conducted research has also indicated that though teachers sometimes apply to peer-assessment at their classes as an element of collaborative learning, the majority of junior students (59%) are reluctant to admit its benefits. They consider it to be unfair and unreliable, respectively less effective. In their opinion, though it is similar to the teacher's assessment, but it can hardly be trusted, mainly taking into consideration lack of experience and objectivity of the assessing students. We are sure this is the matter of their social integrity and inability to interact with their environment.

However, to support the idea of peer-assessment we emphasize that it can help make lessons more interactive and communication-oriented. Moreover, it is likely to provoke feedback discussions and lessen the teacher's involvement into the learning process, thus encouraging students' autonomous work.

One of the peer-to-peer techniques which got positive reaction of the students was "Two stars and one wish". In it, learners are asked not to give grades to each

other, but to give comments, pointing at two positive sides ("two stars") and one less successful ("wish"), which needs improving or modifying. Those students who were highly-motivated appeared to be more interested in getting a feedback in the form of comments, perceiving this as a good stimulus for their self-improvement.

We widely use this technique to provide adequate assessing of, for example, project work results, which apart from this, also involves self- and a teacher's assessments. After getting scores both from a teacher and other groups, students divide them among all teammates in accordance with their contribution to the mutual work. They learn not only to collaborate with each other while solving a common task, but also to evaluate their group and individual results, and this is very motivating.

In general, ESP classes create the best environment for mastering assessment skills. It's important, especially if we take into account the fact that formative assessment can be a learning experience in itself. While planning either formative or summative assessments, the teacher should be aware of the variety of methods available. The most common written ones are tests with multiple choice or true-false statements, short answers, letter or essay-writing, information-gap activities, while performance-based assessments include problem-solving situations, interviews, role plays or presentations. Students, as a rule, become more engaged if assessment tasks are problem-solving, relevant to their needs or interests, meaningful or need a creative approach.
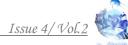
According to T.Dudley-Evans and St.John, any assessment should test how well learners fare when using language in their target situation [2]. While testing receptive skills the teacher should check the learner's ability to comprehend the communicative intent of the speaker, whereas testing communicative skills the accent must be placed on dealing with real-life situations. Thus, in the ESP course, these include professionally-oriented situations, taken from real life.

A good ESP test, like any language test, should be clear, comprehensive, valid and appropriate in difficulty. Being too weak or too easy may serve as a demotivating factor. Moreover, it can't test the skills the students haven't mastered during the language course. Content validity means that the test assesses the course content and the skills which need to be developed in it. Authenticity of the test implies the degree to which the materials chosen for it correspond to the real-life situations. Besides, the teacher can compile the tasks, taking into consideration different levels of students' proficiency. Before testing the learners should be acquainted with the criteria they are going to be evaluated by as well as time limitation given for doing definite tasks.

For a competent teacher, it's not problematic to combine these options while devising or selecting tests, as well as other assessment methods, since they understand how motivating or demotivating they may be. We stress that important fair conclusions about students' achievements can't be made on the basis of a single test. This is an integrated series of judgments taken after a continuous monitoring and thorough analysis.

Conclusions. To sum up, we can state that fundamental principles and methods of formative and summative assessments can be used to foster language learning. They can also become a motivating factor for teachers striving for effectiveness.

Though ESP classes create the best environment for mastering assessment skills, too much assessment is unnecessary in the ESP course. This may have a counterproductive effect, killing the students' desire to study. Even peer- or self-assessment must be supplementary to the teacher's one, but not become its full substitution. As nowadays teachers have become more proficient in using the technology, we think the aspect of integrating it into the training process to assist assessment needs our further investigation and analysis.

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Анотація. *Оцінювання є невід'ємною частиною навчального процесу. Стаття присвячена проблемі оцінювання досягнень студентів у вивченні англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням. Автор аналізує основні принципи та методи формуючого та підсумкового контролю, вказуючи на те, що вони можуть позитивно вплинути на підвищення внутрішньої мотивації студентів до навчання. Якщо формуюче допомагає їм активно вчитися, то підсумкове визначає рівень сформованості компетенцій. Якісний зворотний зв'язок надає студентам можливість усвідомити й відкоригувати особистий прогрес, а також спланувати подальші кроки для самовдосконалення.*

Викладачі, у свою чергу, визначаючи потреби студентів, адаптують до них процес навчання. Вони мають змогу оцінити ефективність курсу, що викладається, і навчальних методів та стратегій, що використовуються. Залучення студентів до самооцінювання та взаємного оцінювання сприяє їхньої автономії, вчить бути відповідальними за власні здобутки, ставити цілі й визначати шляхи їх досягнення.

Головні принципи, на яких має базуватися підхід до оцінювання, включають: надійність, відповідність цілям, наявність зворотного зв'язку, мотивація тощо. Від правильної організації оцінювання залежить ефективність управління навчальним процесом.

Ключові слова: *формуюче, підсумкове, діагностичне оцінювання, самооцінювання, взаємооцінювання, мотивація, зворотний зв'язок, автономія*