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TYPES OF ACADEMIC ENGLISH TASKS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN MASTER'S STUDENTS

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This article analyses the tasks implemented in the Academic English course for Master's students and their contribution to developing professional communicative competence. Proficiency in English is increasingly recognised as a prerequisite for academic and professional achievement. The study outlines pedagogical approaches that incorporate authentic materials, simulation-based exercises, and task-oriented activities to enhance accuracy, fluency, and critical thinking. Four components of communicative competence (linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic) are defined, and the effectiveness of micro-tasks and simulations in fostering these competencies is demonstrated. The Academic English course at Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University illustrates that integrating linguistic accuracy, intercultural competence, and practical communication skills equips students for a range of professional environments.

Keywords: Master's students; Academic English course; professional communicative competence; course theme; task-based approach; types of micro-tasks.

ТИПИ ЗАВДАНЬ З ДІЛОВОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ДЛЯ РОЗВИТКУ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ КОМУНІКАТИВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ ЗДОБУВАЧІВ ОСВІТИ ОС МАГІСТР

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У статті проаналізовано систему завдань курсу Ділова англійська мова для здобувачів освіти ОС Магістр та визначено її роль у формуванні професійної комунікативної компетентності майбутніх фахівців. Підкреслено, що в умовах глобалізації та інтернаціоналізації освіти

оволодіння англійською мовою стає ключовим чинником ефективної участі у міжнародному науковому, освітньому та професійному дискурсі. Здійснено аналіз методу навчання на основі завдань (task-based approach), який орієнтований на виконання реалістичних комунікативних дій, що відображають потреби сучасного професійного середовища. Визначено, що традиційні вправи здебільшого орієнтовані на відпрацювання мовних форм, тоді як завдання спрямовані на досягнення конкретного комунікативного результату, що робить навчальний процес більш змістовним і наближеним до реальних умов спілкування. Окрему увагу приділено впровадженню симуляцій, кейсів та мікрозавдань, які забезпечують інтеграцію точності та плавності мовлення, сприяють формуванню критичного мислення й професійного самовираження. Розглянуто чотири структурні компоненти комунікативної компетентності (лінгвістичний, соціолінгвістичний, дискурсивний та стратегічний) і показано, як завдання курсу можуть сприяти їх збалансованому розвитку. Проаналізовано приклади змістового наповнення курсу Ділова іноземна мова в Уманському державному педагогічному університеті імені Павла Тичини, що базується на поєднанні завдань академічного письма, наукових презентацій, ділового листування та рефлексивного аналізу комунікативних ситуацій. Отримані результати підтверджують ефективність комплексного підходу, який об'єднує елементи симуляцій, мікроправ, забезпечуючи розвиток професійної комунікативної компетентності, міжкультурної адаптивності та готовності здобувачів освіти до успішної взаємодії в академічному й професійному середовищі.

Ключові слова: здобувачі вищої освіти ОС Магістр; Ділова іноземна мова (англійська); розвиток професійної комунікативної компетентності; тема курсу; метод навчання на основі завдань; типи завдань.

In the context of globalisation, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a critical factor for professional advancement. Proficient English communication facilitates cross-border and intercultural interactions, enabling precise and persuasive expression in diverse professional domains. Academic English, a specialised branch of ESP, extends beyond grammatical proficiency. Advanced academic English skills allow professionals to disseminate research, present complex ideas, and collaborate efficiently. These competencies directly influence professional outcomes and underpin effective workplace performance. Mastery of both formal and informal registers, as well as the ability to tailor communication for varied audiences and stakeholders, is required. Such adaptability is essential in multidisciplinary environments, where each sector maintains distinct communicative norms. Contemporary pedagogical approaches to academic English emphasise the development of professional communication skills through authentic, context-driven activities and practical exercises aligned with workplace demands.

Recent studies increasingly focus on developing communicative competence in specialised contexts and designing effective classroom tasks. For instance, Aguaguña Pilla M. et al. [3] provide an overview of ESP instruction in medical, business, and technical fields. They emphasise contextualised materials and authentic communicative tasks. Evans S. [5] analyses the design of Business English tasks and proposes frameworks for communicative learning. Kesting P. and Smolinski R. [6] contribute to negotiation simulations by offering guidelines for realistic scenarios. These scenarios enhance professional communication skills. Lemieux C. and Quiring B. [7] integrate narrative writing into a Business Statistics course. This approach helps decode complex data and fosters critical thinking, showing ESP's interdisciplinary potential. Veselinova A. [9] details summative tasks and describes a task-based approach to develop formal communicative competence. Collectively, these studies have a practical focus and combine theoretical frameworks with applied methodologies. They explore diverse techniques, including simulations, differentiated task design, and narrative

activities. The authors aim to bridge the gap between traditional exercises and real business needs, moving towards a communication-focused approach.

The purpose of the article is to analyse the system of tasks employed in Academic English instruction and demonstrate their direct impact on Master's students' development of the professional communicative competence required for effective interaction in their future professional environments.

The training of Master's degree students involves distinct requirements that differentiate it from general language instruction or undergraduate programmes. As prospective professionals and managers, Master's students are expected to engage in advanced communicative tasks beyond routine exchanges. They must demonstrate clarity in navigating complex professional scenarios. Emphasis is placed on the development of critical skills, including the analysis, composition, and evaluation of working papers and reports. Additionally, Master's students are required to communicate effectively in high-stakes contexts, including negotiations, discussions, meetings, and the provision of constructive feedback.

Professional communicative competence, as a key part of professional competence, combines the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for workplace communication. Foreign communicative competence refers to the ability to use foreign languages for professional tasks. It expands core skills and boosts engagement in international settings [1, p. 106]. This competence grows through professional development, direct interactions, lectures, practical classes, self-study, and training. Lecturers must move away from traditional teaching and use authentic, integrated tasks that reflect real professional scenarios.

Distinguishing between exercises and tasks is essential in designing a Master's-level Academic English course. Traditional exercises are discrete activities targeting specific grammatical rules or lexical items, often lacking communicative relevance. In contrast, tasks and case studies are oriented toward authentic communication, with the primary objective of conveying information and achieving professional outcomes. The task-based approach structures learning around central communicative activities, promoting sustainable development of language competence. In this framework, instructors are responsible for fostering interactive environments that encourage students to use the target language in realistic, simulated scenarios [9, p. 563].

A significant trend in academic English instruction is the prioritisation of authenticity and simulation. Studies on workplace communication indicate that traditional exercises are insufficient for preparing students for formal professional contexts. Consequently, there is a shift toward simulation-based methodologies. Instruction is increasingly centred on content-driven, meaningful activities that require learners to use language to accomplish professional objectives rather than merely replicate linguistic forms [9, p. 562]. The integration of case studies, data analysis, and simulations enables students to apply English in practical scenarios, thereby enhancing confidence and deepening their understanding of professional language conventions. Contemporary textbooks frequently incorporate discipline-specific tasks, such as technical report discussions for engineering students and persuasive writing assignments for humanities students. These targeted activities ensure that learners acquire the language competencies relevant to their respective fields.

Task-oriented learning offers advantages for both instructors and students. This approach enables students to integrate all language skills rather than focusing on isolated

elements. Instructors facilitate authentic learning environments by aligning students' experiences and linguistic requirements with their academic and professional trajectories [9, p. 570]. Contemporary Academic and Business English instruction increasingly prioritises brief, targeted tasks to facilitate efficient and practical learning, particularly for professionals and Master's students with limited time [4; 5; 9]. Micro-tasks, typically lasting approximately ten minutes, enhance communicative accuracy by allowing learners to refine language use while pursuing specific objectives.

The incorporation of micro-tasks, including interactive email writing challenges and writing support programs, establishes a hybrid instructional model. In this model, task-based language teaching and simulations constitute the primary framework for competence development, while focused exercises offer targeted linguistic reinforcement [4, p. 18–19]. At the Master's level, Academic English instruction now integrates both accuracy and fluency through diverse task formats, eliminating the need to prioritise one over the other.

As a result, tasks within the Academic English course for Master's students should be structured to promote the integrated development of all facets of professional communicative competence. This competence comprises four principal dimensions such as linguistic (mastery of grammar and specialised vocabulary), sociolinguistic (appropriate language use in social and professional contexts, including corporate culture awareness), discourse (ability to produce coherent and logically organised texts and presentations), and strategic (capacity to address communication challenges and maintain effective interaction in complex situations, such as negotiations) [3, p. 5998–5990].

The methodology for teaching English for Academic Purposes at the Master's level necessitates the implementation of functional exercises and tasks that extend beyond basic vocabulary acquisition to include mastery of register differentiation and genre-specific discourse organisation. The Academic Foreign Language (AFL) Course for Master's students at Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University adopts a holistic approach to skill development, fostering both personal and professional growth [2, p. 5–6]. The course materials address high-stakes academic and professional contexts, encompassing formal and academic writing styles, cautious language use, formal correspondence (such as complaint, cover, and apology letters), curriculum vitae and resumes, and academic texts (including structure, logical connectors, abstracts, and reference lists), as well as telephone communication and formal presentations [8, p. 5–100]. These tasks are designed to bridge the gap between general English proficiency and the specialised linguistic requirements of Master's-level study and professional practice.

Analysis of instructional materials reveals three primary categories of exercises that collectively support the comprehensive development of professional communicative competence among Master's degree students:

1. Linguistic Competence. This category includes tasks that require transforming colloquial, idiomatic, or phrasal expressions into monolexical, neutral, or formal equivalents, such as replacing phrasal verbs with Latinate verbs. Activities also focus on minimising grammatical markers of informality, particularly by avoiding contractions that compromise textual completeness and formal integrity. Additional objectives include ensuring grammatical accuracy in formal writing, fostering the use of complete and complex syntactic structures, and promoting the conscious application of lexical and orthographic standards across major English variants, primarily British English (BrE) and American English (AmE).

These tasks are designed to promote precision and adherence to formal register at both the word and sentence levels.

The primary instructional objective is to reduce stylistic errors by encouraging deliberate selection of linguistic forms and correction of lexical and grammatical register at the micro level. This approach is essential for sustaining an objective and impersonal tone in professional communication. Instructional activities foster the development of a formal tone required for official reports, protocols, and business correspondence, where objectivity and impersonality are paramount. They also reinforce grammatical accuracy and cautious language in formal writing.

2. Sociolinguistic Competence. This set of tasks introduces pragmatic strategies for modifying speech acts, such as employing modal verbs and lexical connectors to mitigate categorical statements and express hypotheses. Activities also include critical reading and analysis of English as a global lingua franca, as well as exercises that require strategic selection of communicative style (formal, neutral, or informal) based on the specific context, audience, purpose, and communication channel.

These activities are designed to prepare Master's students for authentic language use by fostering pragmatic appropriateness and the deliberate management of communicative strategies. They cultivate professional caution in formulating scientific conclusions and recommendations, thereby reducing the likelihood of inaccurate or overly definitive statements. Additionally, these tasks enhance contextual awareness, promote professional reasoning, and support students in identifying as members of the international professional community by adhering to its standards.

3. Discourse Competence. The proposed activities focus on deconstructing and reconstructing the macrostructures of professional texts, such as the IMRAD format for scientific articles, formal letter structures, and curriculum vitae formats. They also address paralinguistic elements, including conventions for formatting addresses and dates, and the use of standardised phrases for initiating and concluding formal correspondence. Tasks emphasise the use of adverbial phrases and advanced conjunctions to ensure textual cohesion and logical progression. This group of activities enables students to internalise canonical text patterns, maintain logical coherence and consistency, and adhere to international reporting standards. Additionally, these tasks develop professional etiquette and accuracy, enhance the clarity of argumentation, and equip students to construct complex, well-connected arguments in reports, proposals, and analytical documents.

Concerning strategic competence, the tasks are to focus on strategies. These may include guessing the meaning of an unknown word from the context, using a dictionary to locate a meaning or asking somebody to slow down when speaking or to repeat or rephrase what they have said [4, p. 19]. Academic English course material develops such strategies indirectly through tasks that require deliberate planning, monitoring, and adaptation of communicative activities. The previously described categories (linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse) incorporate strategies such as pre-writing text structure planning, selection of appropriate style and lexical items, and ongoing self-correction, including the replacement of informal elements with formal equivalents. Instructional materials also include exercises on oral compensation strategies, such as providing descriptive explanations for forgotten concepts, requesting repetition or clarification, and utilising pause words to manage communication breakdowns.

In summary, the Academic English task system constitutes a multi-level framework of educational activities essential for the holistic development of professional communicative competence. It includes a range of activities, from terminology quizzes and grammar exercises to document drafting and role-playing. Tasks are designed to promote authentic communication and the integrated development of all language skills, i.e. speaking, listening, reading, writing, and grammar, within a single activity. They are grounded in authentic professional materials and realistic scenarios, enabling students to apply their knowledge in practice and fostering collaborative work, which supports the development of teamwork skills. This approach advances both linguistic fluency and critical thinking, equipping Master's students to adapt to the evolving requirements of their professional fields [3, p. 10265].

In conclusion, the Academic English course plays a pivotal role across diverse professional fields by facilitating effective communication and collaboration. Contemporary instructional approaches emphasise not only linguistic accuracy but also the practical skills necessary for professional communicative competence. Analysis of academic English textbook tasks provides insight into how these methodologies prepare students for future career success.

Future research should prioritise the development and evaluation of standardised, culturally adapted scenarios for Master's students that reflect the unique characteristics of the business environment and legal sector in Ukraine, thereby ensuring optimal authenticity.

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