A.O. Khodtseva
Ukrainian academy of banking of the NBU

Sumy,Ukraine

Project work in the Business English Classroom as a way of enhancing students' professional competences

Current trends in the labour market, dynamism of the social changes call forth the need for professionals who are able to self-educate and self orre-train themselves.Consequently, involving students into self-directed improvement of their professional competences is regarded as one of the most prospective trends at tertiary level. In this context new approaches to teaching/learning English for Specific Purposes(ESP) are urgently important.As communicative competencies are viewed as an integral part of professional competences for students majoring in Economics and Business, an important outcome within the framework of an ESP course appear to be projects, which enable students to reflect on their learning, develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, provide them with the potential to consolidate already acquired knowledge and train specific language and professional skills.

Project work helps to bridge the gap between language study and language use by encouraging students to move out of the university classroom into the world of work. While working on a project students collaborate to achieve a common purpose, a concrete outcome.Typically project work requires students to work together over several days or weeks, both outside and inside the classroom.This work usually results in building students' confidence, self-esteem and autonomy as well as improving team-building and leadership skills. Unlike traditional language learning, working on a project places responsibility for learning on the students themselves.

Project work has a number of characteristic features: it focuses on content learning;it is cooperative rather than competitive; it is potentially motivating, stimulating, empowering, challenging; it leads to the authentic integration of skills and processing of information from various sources,mirroring real-life tasks which students will encounter in their future jobs; it culminates in an end product (e.g.an oral presentation, a poster presentation, a bulletin board display, a report or a stage performance) that can be shared with others[1.p.50].The following two project types [2, p.45]are essential for an ESP course in our institution:

- Text projects-which encourage students to use authentic texts on specialism-related topics to conduct a research, to carry out a survey, to create a product advertisement, etc.
- Correspondence projects- which involve e-mailing,blogging, on-line discussions and chat rooms as exchanges betweenstudents and potential employers or student groups from different universities.

This experience can be manifested in research projects, which are often guided and assessed in collaboration with subject teachers. They can be viewed as student- centered activities that involve learners in extensive practice of communication skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) and focus on the necessity to develop their study skills and use them in authentic speech situations. The format of the project reflects a student's ability to read scientific literature critically, assess the research situation, frame a tentative thesis and construct a preliminary outline, design a research paper and present it, explaining an insight on a topic.

The undergraduates are required to conduct an independent research in the area of their specialism in groups of 3 students and present the results of their investigation. As a follow –up activity the discussion and the analysis of the presented research findings are made by the fellow students. While preparing projects students learn how to generate ideas and select a topic for the research, maintain and follow a research strategy, compile bibliography, avoid plagiarism using different types of paraphrasing, draft the paper, revise and finalize it. In the process of

conducting an independent research they acquire basic academic writing skills that are extremely essential for their future research. The above mentioned skills result from students' acquirements to process scientific data, formulate objectives of the research, apply diverse research methods and techniques, work with statistic data, make use of references and quotations, structure logically the paper, and construct informative introductions as well as persuasive conclusions. The most challenging assignment in accomplishing mini-researches turned out to be the demonstration of certain oratorical skills, while presenting the results of the team investigation in public, and the effective and relevant use of audio-visual aids.

The report is written and presented in English and the assessment session is carried out in this language as well. The product is assessed as to its consistency, originality, relevance to the students' future professional activities and education, achievements of the project tasks, etc. Students are not assessed in the language proficiency as such but in their ability to work with the foreign language in the project and to communicate their results to others. The evaluation of written research papers and presentations of the research findingsshowed the most common faults falling into three main categories: paper formatting, the contents of the research and the presentation itself.

To sum up, the analysis of the performed projects highlights the tangible level of the acquired skills as to the students' ability to write and speak in the student-centered environment. Conducting different projects helps undergraduates plunge into professional or academic environment, enhances their production and interaction skills, develops intellectual habits and creativity,polishes the techniques of public presentations.

References

1.EnglishforSpecificPurposes (ESP) NationalCurriculumforUniversities. Колектив авторів: Г. Є. Бакаєва, О.А.Борисенко, І.І. Зуєнок, В.О. Іваніщева, Л.Й. Клименко, Т.І. Козимирська, С.І. Кострицька, Т.І. Скрипник, Н.Ю. Тодорова, А.О. Ходцева. – К.: Ленвіт, 2005 – 119 с.

2.Legutke, M.andH.Thomas (1991) Process and Experience in the Language Classroom. Harlow: Longman.

3.Jordan, R. (2001).Academic Writing Course. Pearson Education Limited.

4.White, R. & Mc Govern, D. (2009)Writing English for Academic Studies Series. Phoenix ELT Purdue University.

Summary.A.O.Khodtseva. **Project work in the Business English Classroom as a way of enhancing students' professional competences.** *The abstract explores project work in an ESP course as a valuable means of extending communicative skills in real-life situations which students will encounter in their future professional or /and academic environment. Project types, their characteristic features and advantages compared with the traditional ESP teaching /learning are identified.*

Key words: *Project work, communicative skills, professional competences.*

Анотація. Ходцева А.О.Проектна робота на заняттях з ділової англійської мови як один із шляхів вдосконалення професійних компетенцій студентів. *У тезах розглядається проектна робота в курсі англійської мови для професійного спілкування як цінний спосіб використання комунікативних вмінь в реальних життєвих ситуаціях, з якими студенти зіткнуться у майбутньому професійному і/або академічному середовищі.Виділено різновиди проектів, їх характерні риси та переваги у порівнянні з традиційним вивченням англійської мови.*

Ключові слова: *проектна робота,комунікативні уміння,професійні компетенції.*

Аннотация. Ходцева А.А.Проектная работа на занятиях по деловому английскому языку как способ совершенствования профессиональных компетенций студентов. *В тезисах рассматривается проектная работа как ценный способ использования коммуникативных умений в реальных жизненных ситуациях, с которыми студенты встретятся в профессиональной и/или академической среде. Выделены типы проектов, их характерные черты и преимущества в сравнении с традиционным изучением английского языка.*

Ключевые слова: *проектная работа, коммуникативные умения, профессиональные компетенции.*