APPROACH TO TEACHING READING SKILLS FOR ESP WITHIN MODULAR LEANING PARADIGM

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Practical aspects of teaching reading comprehension skills in English for Specific Purposes are considered. The importance of modular learning paradigm regarding ESP course design is described. Discourse analysis strategies are proposed for every stage of reading.

Keywords: ESP, modular approach, reading skills, strategies, discourse analysis, information technologies

Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which is defined as "the branch of English language education which focuses on training in specific domains of English to accomplish specific academic or workplace tasks" [1, p. 9] requires delegating instructors the opportunity to teach within a curriculum-wide programme of ESP and be exposed to support and collaboration with specialists in this professional field. We have already discussed earlier the role of ESP course design [2] which should fully rely on those brunches of science and technology which this particular university or faculty specializes in.

This article will address the practical aspects of ESP course implementation regarding reading comprehension skills basing on the main principles of modular approach in education. In our case it is a one-year course in Information Technologies (IT) English for first-year students of intermediate level of English proficiency who have two 90-minute classes a week.

On one hand, the approach is based on the range of specially selected authentic reading materials according to their immediate relevance for future specialty and the current level of students and accompanied by various activities and tasks that spot structural and discourse features in order to facilitate comprehension of the specialized texts. On the other hand, modular structure of course organization allows to divide the materials into small discrete units or modules that are independent, rather nonsequential, and relatively short in duration. Such modules are determined as blocks of information that include logically completed units of educational materials, target action programs and methodological guidance that ensures the achievement of the set didactic goals [3]. Thus, in our case a module can be considered as a stand-alone complete mini course with some form of reporting on its completion.

Considering rigorous needs analyses made before designing this ESP course [4] we have concentrated on technical descriptions and specialized articles as key genre types within the wide discourse relevant to IT sphere. The modular structure implied in the course design allows to distribute all materials equally through the whole period of studying. As a result, a thematic modular

structure has been created where a thematic module represents integrated development of communicative skills and strategies on the material of one general topic.

The topical IT areas covered in the course are the following: Computers and Digital Basics, Computer Hardware, Computer Software, Operating Systems and File Management, Internet and LAN Technologies, Information Systems Analysis and Design, Computer Programming, Databases. The structure within four modules is represented by two separate units each of which contains three thematic texts illustrating different aspects of a problem that requires studying through reading with the subsequent output into either transactional/interactional speech or writing [5].

The whole process of teaching reading skills evolves through three stages which can correspond to traditional pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading phases. Lots of attention is devoted to each stage as they all have their own goals and strategies being used and contribute equally to developing reading skills.

The first stage includes an introduction of the topic the main goal of which is to get students involved into a particular discourse as a set of concepts through which they understand the topic and then will be able to relate it with other topics. At this stage we can use any visuals (pictures, graphs, concept maps, videos, etc.) or questions to provoke students' interest and analyse their background knowledge. Then, if necessary, essential vocabulary should be studied as we are not always sure whether our students are already familiar with it.

Next stage is devoted to actual reading and includes two substages characterized by analyses of macro-level and micro-level textual features. Students start with overall study of a wide situational context related to the text. It means that it is essential to find out where the material comes from and how it fits into the overall context. Also, they become familiar with genre characteristics of technical descriptions and specialized articles in IT sphere and are able to distinguish each of them.

Then students are offered to study how the textual structural elements specific for a particular genre are used in the text. Judging by the title and subheadings they can guess the main idea of the whole text and work out how all these layout features guide the argument. After that students skim through the first and the last paragraphs to predict the further development of the main idea. Finally, they skim through the whole text and try to pick discourse statements which allow collecting all major subtopics.

After that students get to intensive reading of the text that includes the analysis of micro-level textual elements which are characterized by the range of vocabulary and grammar. This phase is the most laborious but contributes greatly to the understanding how a discourse operates in detail. For technical descriptions and specialized articles in IT we consider some grammar notions to be the most salient such as passivization, modality and "stone wall"

constructions. Omission of information about the agent in the sentence, passive phrases are a common phenomenon in the technical language. It is done deliberately to focus on the object. Modals reflect on the general mode of the key information. And impersonal chains of nouns are always very meaningful in the context. Special attention is also given to the linkages between textual elements which make the text logical and coherent.

The last stage of discourse analysis implies further elaboration of the information received through its generalization in a wider context. Students share the knowledge they have obtained and what is more important try to apply it in practice. It can include different talks and discussions on the topic within a larger background, conducting researches or project work.

On the whole, in this article we have examined approaches to teaching reading skills within ESP environment and on the basis of a modular paradigm. There is, however, a need to go further in the analysis of strategies being used especially on micro-level textual elements and functions involved.

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ОБУЧЕНИЕ ЧТЕНИЮ В РАМКАХ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ДЛЯ СПЕЦИАЛЬНЫХ ЦЕЛЕЙ НА ОСНОВЕ МОДУЛЬНОГО ПОДХОДА

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Рассматриваются практические аспекты обучения умениям понимания прочитанного на английском языке для специальных целей. Описывается важность модульного подхода к обучению при разработке курса английского языка для специальных целей.

Предлагаются стратегии дискурс анализа для каждого этапа работы с текстом.