

MASTERING EFFECTIVE BUSINESS COMMUNICATION WRITING SKILLS BY FUTURE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROFESSIONALS

The article under consideration is related to the problem of mastering writing skills by future international relations professionals. The problem is that for the last ten years its performance has declined in comparison with other foreign communication skills at all key stages. In our investigation, the history of teaching-of-writing approaches over the last 50 years was characterised by five phases, some elements of which have been and continue to be concurrent in the best practice. Modern review has differentiated six types of every-day writing, important in real life business intercourse: personal writing, public writing, creative writing, social writing, study writing, institutional writing. From a pedagogical point of view, techniques for improving writing will include practice in writing by the very teachers who are teaching it. Dialogic teaching is identified as an important element in improving the quality of interaction and thought on the part of students in the class. Also various types of barriers to effective writing communication were considered as a first step in improving communication style in future international relations professionals. Empirical teaching methods as well as creative context were outlined in the survey.

Key words: writing skills, communication, approaches, techniques, future international relations professional, dialogic teaching, communication barriers, practical ideas, creative background.

Problem stating of the issue. Based on a number of measures, the standard of students' writing has been increasing at key stages 2 and 3 in the last few years. The problem, however, is that for the last ten years, with the exception of the recent improvement in writing, its performance has lagged behind reading at all key stages. The gap is narrowest, though performance in writing has declined since 2003 because of a change in the marking system – there has been a fall in the last two years.

The significance of the problem is at least twofold: a) that students are not developing the productive skills of writing sufficiently well to aid their schooling in English and across the curriculum, and b) that if students can attain advanced level, they are likely to have a good chance of gaining the generally accepted level of a good working competence in the use of English at the end of compulsory schooling [1].

The *problems* noted above, along with the sticking points mentioned later in this paper, provide the challenges for the English curriculum, for teachers, teacher trainers, assessment designers and pupils. The *major challenge* is to reinvigorate writing practice and theory to increase engagement and to improve standards. To do so requires understanding of the writing paradigm in which we now operate as pupils, teachers, trainers and policy-makers.

Latest researches and publications analysis. According to our investigation, the history of teaching-of-writing approaches over the last 50 years can be characterised by five phases, some elements of which have been and continue to be concurrent in the best practice: 1950s-1960s: an approach to writing which set high store by quality within a limited range of genres derived from 19th century rhetorical categories.

Little emphasis was on the processes of writing; more on the finished product and on a distanced, 'academic' command of language types. 1960s–1970s to early 1980s: more emphasis was on expressiveness and the emergence of a personal 'voice' in writing. 1980s to early 2000s: a greater understanding of writing processes in expert writers that can be modelled in novice writers, deriving from the work of psycholinguistic and discourse modelling by Graves and Scardamalia and Bereiter. Emphasis was on drafting, editing, peer conferencing but still aiming to capture 'voice' in writing [2,3].

Mid-1990s to the present, and the model in need of development: a tension between the functions of writing in wider society and those in schooling and assessment. Writing as text-box filling, but not always briefly; much scope for extended writing, both in-depth and functional. The need for keyboarding skills [3].

The fifth phase, yet to arrive will probably see advances in speech recognition technology that might or might not obviate the need for keyboards or writing implements. The emphasis on composing written text (expression, articulation, framing, shaping) will shift towards oral composition, while not abandoning writing. There will be a renewed dynamic relationship between speaking and writing, with each finding their roles in a new economy of communication [3].

As E. Olshtain states, writing encourages thinking and learning for it motivates communication and makes thought available for reflection. When thought is written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and changed. Successful written communication is extremely important in the modern

world as interaction takes the form of not only traditional paper-and-pencil writing but also the most advanced electronic mail. According to its role in the process of communication writing is initiative (speaking), not reactive (as reading and listening). Writing is a productive skill, a developed or acquired ability to produce and reproduce some information in written form. The product of writing is a written text; the result is the ability to produce a written text; the subject of writing is someone's thought expressed in written form [1].

The purpose of the article. The aim of presented scientific survey is to give an account of general theoretical information of modern approaches in teaching writing. Alongside the paper is characterized with depicting practical features of writing, such as: dialogic teaching, writing communicative barriers, practical ideas and supportive context.

Reporting of the main issues.*Modern view on writing skills.* To begin with, considering covered ideas and views the elementary level in writing is categorized by two features. The first feature is the ability to maintain interaction, getting across the information in a range of contexts. The second is the ability to produce a range of texts on familiar matters. A student must possess such a vocabulary, grammar, spelling competence to express himself/herself appropriately both in official documents (such as questionnaires, blanks, forms and announcements), and in everyday writing (such as congratulatory forms, reports, informal letters).

Besides, learner must avoid ambiguity and vagueness in his/her writing, delivering the message and his/her opinion efficiently almost on any topic. Though the nature of writing as a skill used to be underestimated in language teaching, the written aspect of a foreign language has gained more significance nowadays [1].

In addition, T. Hedge differentiates six types of every-day writing, important in real life intercourse: personal writing (diaries, journals, shopping lists, recipes), public writing (letters of enquire/complaint/request, form-filling), creative writing (stories, poems, autobiography), social writing (letters, invitations, notes, instructions), study writing (reviews, reports, essays, taking notes from lectures), institutional writing (contracts, posters, specifications) [1].

Writing techniques. From a pedagogical point of view, techniques for improving writing will include practice in writing by the very teachers who are teaching it. In other words, English teachers will need to be accomplished writers in themselves, not only of literary and fictional genres but in informational and argumentative genres too. They will not only be able to produce final products in this range of genres, but also to reflect on and model the processes of writing in the classroom.

Some of the excitement may have been lost from routine teaching, so a new balance needs to be struck between meeting targets and outcomes on the one hand, and generating impetus and significant communication on the other. Too much emphasis on atomistic targets out of context tends to devalue the learning experience itself; we are more likely to attain targets if we concentrate on the substance and quality of what we need and want to do [4].

Following from engagement will be a much greater willingness to go into depth in whatever kinds of writing are being taught. This will require commitment, time and imaginative energy. It involves critical engagement on the part of the teacher with the emergent written texts of students before and during the compositional process as well as after it. It also requires the engagement of the students as thinkers, establishing in them a purpose and giving them a sense of their independent choices and voices as writers. Greater consideration to different types of planning and composition will be required [4,5].

However, *dialogic teaching* will be an important element in improving the quality of interaction and thought on the part of students in the class. Dialogic approaches to teaching can support both speaking and writing, though it is not always the case that productive and purposeful talk translates directly into writing of such quality. As suggested earlier, we need to look not only at the transition from talk to writing (and vice-versa), but also at dialogic forms of writing in themselves, thus adding to the repertoire of largely monologic written forms that dominate the high-school curriculum and assessment regimes.

Finally, audiences and purposes need to be diversified so that communication has meaning rather than a performance in empty or purely academic 'school genres' served up for assessment [1,5].

What is more it is that writing, together with reading, is both a useful mechanical skill and a learning strategy on the one hand, and a means of communication on the other. While writing with an effort to express some ideas, the constant use of eye, hand and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning. At the same time the view of writing as purely 'writing to learn' reflects the principle of audiolingual theory, where writing is seen as a written form of spoken language, the basis for oral fluency, not as a means of communication in itself. Thus skill-using activities aimed at learning to write 'are neglected by this

approach. Instead learners are proposed to produce correct texts or «products» in which accuracy is all-important [4,5].

It is worth mentioning that this approach to writing is known as *product approach*. The limitations of product approach are on its concentration on the result rather than on the process of writing. By focusing on form and structure product approach at the same time neglects the process of composing this form and structure. Modern researchers stress the shift from language-focused writing activities to learner-centered tasks which help to create the atmosphere of communication in the language classroom. Writing is viewed as an interactive language process where learners are guided and taught how to write rather than what to write. This *process approach* focuses on discourse-level activities rather than sentence-level ones. Tasks for process approach include story writing, cooperative writing, or peer correction of subsequent drafts.

On balance, different researches show that writing as a process includes the following activities: setting the goal for the written communication; assessing the reader; gathering information and generating ideas; organizing writing a draft; revising, editing and proofreading. Nowadays the distinction between these two approaches seems to be less clear and teaching writing combines both approaches, with slight emphasis on product writing as far as beginner learners are concerned. It is possible, then, to teach writing in classroom using different approaches and a variety of activities. Moreover, the attention should be given both to the linguistic-accuracy level and to the message-transmission level. It is the combination of content and organization with accepted formal features that will lead learners to better utilization of the writing skill in their future use of English [3,4].

Barriers of writing communication. Recognizing barriers to effective communication is a first step in improving communication style in future international relations professionals. The process of selecting and organizing symbols to represent a message requires skill and knowledge. Obstacles listed below can interfere with an effective message.

1. *Lack of sensitivity to receiver.* A breakdown in communication may result when a message is not adapted to its receiver. Recognizing the receiver's needs, status, knowledge of the subject, and language skills assists the sender in preparing a successful message. If a customer is angry, for example, an effective response may be just to listen to the person vent for awhile.

2. *Lack of basic communication skills.* The receiver is less likely to understand the message if the sender has a trouble choosing the precise words needed and arranging those words in a grammatically-correct sentence.

3. *Insufficient knowledge of the subject.* If the sender lacks specific information about something, the receiver will likely receive an unclear or mixed message.

4. *Information overload.* If you receive a message with too much information, you may tend to put up a barrier because the amount of information is coming so fast that you may have difficulty comfortably interpreting that information.

5. *Emotional interference.* An emotional individual may not be able to communicate well. If someone is angry, hostile, resentful, joyful, or fearful, that person may be too preoccupied with emotions to receive the intended message.

6. *Lack of interest.* If a message reaches a reader who is not interested in the message, the reader may read the message hurriedly or listen to the message carelessly. Miscommunication may result in both cases.

7. *Lack of knowledge.* If a receiver is unable to understand a message filled with technical information, communication will break down. Unless a computer user knows something about the Windows environment, for example, the user may have difficulty organizing files if given technical instructions.

8. *Lack of communication skills.* Those who have weak reading and listening skills make ineffective receivers. On the other hand, those who have a good professional vocabulary and who concentrate on listening, have less trouble hearing and interpreting good communication. Many people tune out who is talking and mentally rehearse what they are going to say in return.

9. *Emotional distractions.* If emotions interfere with the creation and transmission of a message, they can also disrupt reception. If you receive a report from your supervisor regarding proposed changes in work procedures and you do not particularly like your supervisor, you may have trouble even reading the report objectively. You may read, not objectively, but to find fault.

10. *Physical distractions.* If a receiver of a communication works in an area with bright lights, glare on computer screens, loud noises, excessively hot or cold work spaces, or physical ailments, that receiver will probably experience communication breakdowns on a regular basis.

11. *No provision for feedback.* Since communication is a two-way process, the sender must search for a means of getting a response from the receiver. If a team leader does not permit any interruptions or questions while discussing projects, he may find that team members may not completely understand what they are to do. Face-to-face oral communication is considered the best type of communication since feedback can be both verbal and nonverbal. When two communicators are separated, care must be taken to ask for meaningful feedback.

12. *Inadequate feedback.* Delayed or judgmental feedback can interfere with good communication. If your supervisor gives you instructions in long, compound-complex sentences without giving you a chance to speak, you may pretend to understand the instructions just so you can leave the stress of the conversation. Because you may have not fully understood the intended instructions, your performance may suffer [2,3].

Empirical teaching methods. Taking mentioned above barriers in business writing, we have defined verbal communication skills we should all strive to master in our future international relations professionals. What follows are some *practical ideas for teachers* to support high school writers in the audience. Thus, assist students to generate ideas for writing by the following techniques:

– asking students to close their eyes while you take them on a ‘guided journey’, describing a scenario such as a hike up a mountain or entering a deserted house. Take the opportunity to feed pupils with ambitious vocabulary which can be noted on the board for later use. At the end of the process, give them time to verbalise what they saw and how they felt;

– giving future international relations professionals a word, such as storm and asking them to write down as many associated words as they can think of in one minute. Repeat the process, using a different stimulus word, encouraging them to generate more words and phrases each time;

– asking students, in small groups, to think of points for and against an argument, writing each point on a sticky note. Then ask each group to display its sticky notes on a table, and invite them, in their groups, to visit each other’s tables and trade their sticky notes. Pupils should be encouraged to read as many ideas as possible before they start to trade [2];

– giving them a writer’s journal in which to record powerful words, ideas and observations. Remind them that all good writers observe, borrow and store ideas until they have a use for them.

In addition teacher should *create a supportive context* for writing with help of such tools as:

– drawing on students’ own experiences and interests, allowing them to write about what they know and are interested in. Provide them with real or simulated experiences as a basis for writing in more formal or less familiar genres, for example, setting up a mock trial in the classroom prior to writing a balanced argument helps pupils to get inside the mind of the opponent and anticipate objections;

– using a shared text as a stimulus for writing, for example, asking future professionals to write from the point of view of a different character in a class novel or writing an extra section in the same style as the author. Invite them to produce a non-fiction text in response to an issue in a novel, play or poem or ask them to recast a text in another form, such as rewriting a scene from a story as a newspaper report or an explanation text as a Power Point presentation;

– using drama techniques, such as placing ‘texts’ within a tableau created by selected pupils. Ask the rest of the class, in pairs, to create a piece of text that could appear in the frozen scene, for example, a crumpled letter or a telegram bearing bad news. Two identical versions of the text are produced, one of which is placed within the scene. Once all the texts have been placed, the frozen characters ‘come to life’ and pick up each text, then freeze whilst the writer reads aloud from the second copy [5].

Conclusions. To sum up, writing is enormously important communicative skill which should be shaped in future international relations professionals. As a result, modernized and optimized approaches have to be applied due to achieve satisfactory results. Nowadays there are a lot of new models and methods of reaching the goal, but there is no an ideal one. Thus, in our piece of scientific investigation we have attempted to outline such helpful theoretical and practical advances as: dialogic approach, writing barriers, practical ideas and creative context implementation of which can be effective and overrated. Further surveys can be made in discovering peculiarities of email business writing.

References

1. *Анісімова А. І.* Сучасні аспекти методики викладання англійської мови. Теорія і практика / А. І. Анісімова, Л. С. Кошова. –Д.: ПБВ ДНУ, 2010.–326 с.

2. *Olshain E.* Functional Tasks for Mastering the Mechanics of Writing and Going Just / E. Olshain //Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language. – Boston : Heile and Heile Publishers, 1991. – P. 235–245.

3. *One-Month In-Service Training Course for English Language Teachers. WB(Pilot version).* – Kyiv : The British Council, 1999. – 263 p.
4. *Raimes A. Techniques in Teaching Writing / A. Raimes.* – Oxford : OUP, 1983. – 162 p.
5. *Tribble Ch. Writing / Ch. Tribble.* – Oxford: OUP, 1996. – 170 p.

Н. М. Василюшина

Оволодіння вміннями ефективної ділової письмової комунікації майбутніми фахівцями міжнародних відносин

Представлена стаття стосується проблеми оволодіння вміннями письма майбутніми фахівцями з міжнародних відносин. Проблема полягає в тому, що за останні десять років їхня демонстрації знизилася порівняно з іншими іншомовними комунікативними вміннями на всіх ключових етапах. В рамках нашого дослідження історія навчання письма за останні 50 років охопила п'ять стадій, деякі елементи яких були і є присутніми як найкраща практика сьогодення. Сучасний аналіз продемонстрував шість типів сучасного письма, які є важливими у партнерських взаємостосунках: особисте письмо, громадське письмо, творче писання, соціальне письмо, навчальне та інституційне письмо. З педагогічної точки зору, вдосконалення письмових вмінь досягається шляхом безпосередньої активної участі викладача. Діалогічне навчання вважається основним фактором міжособистіної взаємодії та основним видом діяльності студентів в аудиторії. Також були розглянуті різні бар'єри ефективного письмового спілкування, як одні з перших кроків до покращення комунікативного стилю майбутніх фахівців з міжнародних відносин. У дослідження також були виокремлені емпіричні методи навчання та креативний контекст.

Ключові слова: письмові вміння, комунікація, підходи, техніки, майбутні фахівця з міжнародних відносин, діалогічне навчання, мовленнєві бар'єри, практичні ідеї, креативний фон.

Н. М. Василюшина

Овладение умениями эффективной деловой письменной коммуникации будущими специалистами международных отношений

Представленная статья касается проблемы овладения умениями письма будущими специалистами по международным отношениям. Дилемма заключается в том, что за последние десять лет их демонстрация снизилась по сравнению с другими иноязычными коммуникативными умениями на всех ключевых этапах. В рамках нашего исследования история обучения письму за последние 50 лет охватила пять стадий, некоторые элементы которых были и присутствуют как лучшая практика нашего времени. Современный анализ продемонстрировал шесть типов письма, которые являются важными в партнерских взаимоотношениях: личное письмо, общественное письмо, творческое письмо, социальное письмо, учебное и институциональное письмо. С педагогической точки зрения, совершенствование письменных умений достигается путем непосредственного активного участия преподавателя. Диалогическое обучение считается основным фактором межличностного взаимодействия и основным видом деятельности студентов в аудитории. Также были рассмотрены различные барьеры эффективного письменного общения, как одні из первых шагов к улучшению коммуникативного стиля будущих специалистов по международным отношениям. В исследовании также были выделены эмпирические методы обучения и креативный контекст.

Ключевые слова: письменные умения, коммуникация, подходы, техники, будущие специалисты по международным отношениям, диалогическое обучение, речевые барьеры, практические идеи, креативный фон.