SPECIAL APPROACHES IN TEACHING ADVANCED ENGLISH TO ENGINEERING STUDENTS

Igonina Galina,
Candidate of Philosophy,
Associate Professor,
Foreign Languages Department for Engineering Faculties
Novosibirsk State Technical University,
630073, Novosibirsk, Karl Marx Prospect, 20,
*Teaching Block #1, Office 503a*
gala_igonina@mail.ru

The analysis of the key approaches in teaching academic and scientific English to the Master of Science and Post Graduate Course takers at Engineering Faculties of a technical university is under consideration. Engineering students of different specialities attend classes in the same group, meanwhile, study the same grammar phenomena and writing formats for abstracts and articles publication as well as get acquainted with appropriate samples and language for the presentations development and delivery at various academic public events. Nevertheless, each student has got a unique object of research, glossary, content, supporting one's particular sphere of application and is working on one's own thesaurus to enrich professional communication with interested and involved colleagues from different countries all around the world.
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Engineering, as well as science and technology, is a global phenomenon experiencing a sustainable development. That is why the role of teaching English is rather important in training future engineers, especially those who take their Master of Science or Postgraduate course. Reading articles on the topic of their research, written by the authors, belonging to the international scientific community, contributes a lot into their scientific worldview, enlarging the horizon of engineering vision and enriching one's individual ESP vocabulary. During the English course, taken in the frame of their academic program, graduate and postgraduate students gain a good opportunity not only for theoretical updating of their knowledge; a number of authentic tasks and projects contribute a lot into brushing up their practical English language skills application. National and International students' conferences held by the university on a regular basis, with the possibility to forward proceedings and deliver a presentation, should be mentioned in the first place as an example of authentic events contributing into the development of students' skills on learning English in an appropriate context.

Students taking regular graduate and postgraduate courses on English have also the opportunity to enhance their command of English at special elective courses on Technical English having at the same time abundant Internet resources on the object of their study. As Pauline Robinson mentioned in her famous book on ESP, - "Given the great variety of contexts and of ESP courses around the world today, perhaps what we are really involved in as ESP practitioners is not so much teaching English for specific purposes but teaching English to specified people". (Robinson 1991, p.5)

Future engineers, as specified people, are taught several general topics at their mutual classes in addition to their independent investigation on their individual research. Recent survey demonstrated that the English course takers are quite satisfied with the content of their obligatory program, nevertheless, having certain preferences. Diagram #1, given below, presents the results of the students' English Course assessment from "5" – "excellent" to "1" – "very poor".
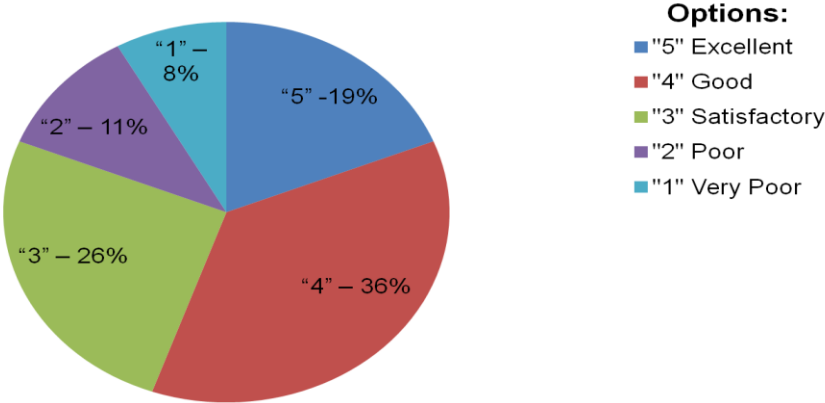
The majority of the current English Course takers have given excellent and good marks to their university teachers. Although, a rather big number of satisfactory marks and a certain number of bad marks make us work further, looking for new more efficient approaches in teaching English to Engineering students.

As it has been aforementioned, not all program topics under study are equally appreciated by students. The same preliminary survey demonstrated that authenticity has become in a greater demand among the modern students, as the majority of them consider the "Research" topic to be a better developed one in the program in comparison with the two others: "How to read a scientific article" and "International scientific contacts". And the diagram #2, given below, supports and illustrates this statement. The interviewees answered the question about the best developed and taught topic of th

Certainly, the state of the art in academic writing is still far from being perfect, anyway, the emphasis on theses and articles writing, gives the opportunity to the Master of Science and postgraduate program takers to work on their authentic publications already during the period of the university study. It has contributed a lot into their motivation, having consequently improved students' writing skills. One of the valuable resources which should be mentioned in connection with working on writing skills is the Online Writing Laboratory at Purdue University in the USA [6].

The mentioned above online resource illustrates the efficiency of education supported by ICT – Information and Communication Technology. It also should be emphasized that even a restricted application of ICT gives rather beneficial results in the English language study. The accessibility of free qualitative internet resources and new course books has, undeniably, contributed a lot into the improvement of students' writing skills [1].The course book written and published with the support of the British Council has been recently successfully used in teaching English to graduate and postgraduate students. The given course books are supplied with abundant online resources and can serve as an example of a blended learning approach, combining the key components of the fundamental European models: face-to-face learning, distant learning, online learning, long life learning. The module structure of the course books corresponding to the key basic skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, provides a more comfortable interaction with the course information, not necessary in a traditional linear order; it can be a random approach depending on the learner and teacher's needs, looking rather like a hypertext.   Thus, the content and the structure of the text appeal to one of the basic competences of the modern specialist – the ability to work with information and to interact in the society of information, proclaimed by the European Council [3].

But still, mentioning the competences, declared by the Council of Europe, it is crucial to emphasize their hierarchy and the necessity to develop a communicative competence, no matter how challenging and hopeless the current situation in the international relationship may look, is in the first place.

Authentic tasks and authentic assessment contribute a lot into the teaching English for Academic and Scientific purposes. Being more time consuming an authentic assessment, nevertheless, helps to personalize education and develop individual learning strategies for students thanks to specially developed individual instructions [O'Malley, J.M. & Pierce, L.V., 1996]. Authentic tasks, being developed, for application of students' language skills in the environment, maximum close to a real life, help to implement theoretical knowledge and evaluate its benefits and drawbacks. Jon Mueller defines an authentic task as an assignment given to students designed to assess their ability to apply standard-driven knowledge and skills to real-world challenges. [6]. The author presents projects, conferences, role-plays, journals, portfolios as an example of authentic tasks. The list of authentic tasks examples is in a permanent development and is presented at different levels, starting from a secondary school and finishing by graduate university students. Various subjects are under consideration, both of natural sciences and humanities cycles.

To sum it all up, it possible to state that teaching engineering graduate and postgraduate students, should be based on an abundant accumulated and tested methods and rich experience of teaching general English with respect to professional and academic specific of graduate and post graduate educational programs. Authenticity and productive skills development present one of the key points and clue to the solution of the problem.

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