

**MASTERING THE PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC WRITING IN ENGLISH:
THE “RESEARCHER CONNECT” EXPERIENCE**

У статті представлено досвід участі в тренінговому семінарі “Researcher Connect” Британської Ради в Україні. Проаналізовано методологічний потенціал чотирьох модулів програми (Foundation Module; Effective Abstracts; Persuasive Proposals; Presenting with Impact), спрямованих на розвиток комунікативних навичок молодих учених, необхідних для успішного міжнародного спілкування і співпраці. Досліджено механізми поліпшення навичок академічного письма під час вивчення англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням

Ключові слова: науковий стиль, комунікативні навички, Британська Рада в Україні.

The article presents the experience of participating in the “Researcher Connect” workshop of the British Council in Ukraine. The paper analyzes the methodological potential of the four modules (Foundation Module; Effective Abstracts; Persuasive Proposals; Presenting with Impact), which are aimed at developing the communication skills of young scientists and are necessary for successful international communication and cooperation. The mechanisms of improving the academic writing skills during the study of English for Professional Purposes have been explored.

Key words: academic writing, communicative skills, British Council in Ukraine.

В статье представлен опыт участия в тренинговом семинаре «Researcher Connect» Британского Совета в Украине. Проанализирован методологический потенциал четырех модулей программы (Foundation Module; Effective Abstracts; Persuasive Proposals; Presenting with Impact), направленных на развитие коммуникативных навыков молодых ученых, необходимых для успешного международного общения и сотрудничества. Исследованы механизмы улучшения навыков академического письма при изучении английского языка для профессиональных целей.

Ключевые слова: научный стиль, коммуникативные навыки, Британский Совет в Украине.

The internationalization strategy of higher education involves training of future professionals who will work in the English-speaking world of modern science. Therefore, studying English for Professional Purposes at medical universities involves mastering the relevant grammar structures and lexical units of English, which are necessary for the production of high-quality academic discourse (scientific articles, medical case reports, etc.). The aim of the research is to develop methodological strategies in the process of teaching the features of academic style in English.

It is worth noting that the mastering of the English academic writing skills by medical students involves a number of potential difficulties. First, there are significant differences between general English as a foreign language curricula and the requirements of academic writing in English [1]. Thus, based on the analysis of the corpus of scientific articles, researchers [2; 3; 4] suggest to distinguish between “grammar constructions that are essential in scientific literature and grammar phenomena, which are covered in almost all textbooks, but are almost not used in academic writing” [2]. Thus, the first group requires “intensive and continuous study”, whereas the latter should be given less attention from the standpoint of scientific style [6].

Secondly, scientific vocabulary also significantly differs from general education programs in terms of their content and context of using lexical units [2; 4].

In addition, there are some difficulties in mastering foreign scientific standards. It is well known that the transfer of the norms of the native language to the foreign language usually significantly impairs the quality of scientific discourse [1; 3].

In order to overcome these difficulties, we recommend focusing on the major differences in academic writing of native and foreign languages: (1) grammar of the scientific style of the English language; (2) vocabulary and spelling in academic writing of the English language; (3) the syntax and punctuation in academic writing of the English language; (4) comparative and contrastive studies of scientific standards in Ukraine and abroad; (5) the basic principles of preparing and submitting manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals.

In this context, it is appropriate to use the module materials from the British Council “Researcher Connect” program, namely: “Foundation”, “Effective Abstracts Writing”, “Persuasive Proposals” and “Presenting with Impact”. The “Researcher Connect” program is based on the “learning by doing” and “collaboration” principles. The skills of its Modules are related to the competencies of Achievement, which is “about having the sustained energy and determination in the face of obstacles to set and meet challenging targets, in compliance with quality, time and diversity standards, and delivering the required results” [5]; Analytical Thinking (“bringing disciplined analysis to data and situations, to see cause and effect and to use this to make effective decision” [5]); Professional Confidence (“a justified belief in one’s ability to do the job, providing an opinion or advice when necessary and being prepared to take a decisive course of action” [5]); and Relationship Building for Influence (“building bonds with others and using these to persuade, convince or gain support in order to achieve positive outcomes” [5]). Students should be familiarized with the basic concepts of academic writing in English, such as “Persuasiveness”; “Targeting Your Audience”; “Surface Purpose / Deeper Purpose”; “The WIIFM (What’s In It For Me) Principle”; “The PEEP (Point, Evidence, Evidence, Point) Principle”, etc.

The “Foundation” module is aimed at developing communication skills from the standpoint of understanding one’s audience, meeting their needs in an appropriate style, defining one’s purpose, achieving the concise and clear writing. The major objective of this module is to master the skills of persuading and engaging the audience with one’s writing or oral presentation. The 6Cs rule of academic writing is of particular importance: scientific communication has to be clear, concise, concrete, correct, coherent, and complete [5]. It is also essential to comprehend the surface and deeper purposes of any writing (“Why am I writing this?”).

The “Effective Abstracts” module provides basic understanding of functions of abstracts and their constituents. It is emphasized that different areas of research demand different style and structure of an abstract. In this context, the following two types of abstract are analyzed: (1) descriptive abstracts (generally used in humanities and social sciences), which consist of background, purpose, focus of the paper and overview of contents and (2) informative abstracts (background, aim, method used, findings, conclusions) [5].

The “Persuasive Proposals” module focuses on developing the convincing writing skills, adapting one’s writing to different audiences and their expectations, structuring papers to facilitate their reading and understanding. The concept of a “professional proposal” is given a particular attention. The module provides the essential “slots” of the

proposal scheme: Executive Summary, Situation, Objective(s), Method(s), Qualifications, Costs, Outcomes and Output, Benefits. The module also focuses on fundamental feature of persuasive writing in English (the so-called “Power language” which is endowed with maximum impact) [5]. Thus, the following recommendations are highly valuable:

- It is necessary to avoid such legalese lexis as “herewith, forthwith, aforementioned”, etc., as these words are redundant and unclear.
- The shorter the sentence is, the more impact it produces. It is preferred to split each sentence after 12-15 words. In this context, the linking words may be of use (e.g., “As a result”, “Furthermore”, “However”, etc.).
- Sentences with verbs are shorter and clearer, whereas sentences with nouns are generally long.
- Sentences in active voice are shorter than those with the passive.
- It is important to use positive words (e.g., “to improve”, “to reinforce”, etc.).
- It is required to avoid clichés and stock phrases, i.e., expressions that have been used so often that they have lost their real meaning. These phrases sound verbose, pompous and old fashioned (e.g., “Owing to the fact that...”).
- It is essential to use short words, which are easier to read.
- If technical jargon is used, the author must be 100% confident that the audience understands it; otherwise, an alternative word (or a glossary of terms) is needed.
- It is advised to use pronouns “I /we / you”, as they are addressing the audience directly and add a personal tone to the writing.

The “Presenting with Impact” module provides essential materials on developing one’s skills of presenting information clearly, concisely and with confidence [5]. Before delivering a presentation, it is necessary to analyze one’s strengths in public speaking, as well as the areas for improvement. The triad structural patterns of presenting ideas are of particular importance: e.g., “Problem – Effect – Solution” [5]. It is also important to use a relevant central theme, a question / answer approach, as well as transitioning between the sections of presentation. Furthermore, body language and vocal delivery are also crucial to make a persuasive presentation.

Thus, the “Researcher Connect” program provides a feasible basis for implementing these instructional strategies. The above elements can be integrated into the educational process, as well as implemented in the format of meetings of Students’ Scientific Club.

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