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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHD STUDENTS WRITING SKILLS:
ACADEMIC ESSAY WRITING AT ENGLISH LESSONS**

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Writing is one of the four types of language skills which forms a person's communicative system and ensures its social and cultural existence. The purpose of this study is to analyze the ways to develop of PhD students writing skills at English lessons. The study analyzed the structure and basic requirements for writing an academic essay. A set of exercises for developing academic essay writing skills is offered. It is proved that writing an academic essay contributes not only to the development of students' written competence but also to their professional development.

Keywords: writing skills, PhD students, academic essay.

Резунова О. С., кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент. Розвиток навичок письма здобувачів ступеня доктора філософії: написання академічного есе / Дніпровський державний аграрно-економічний університет, Дніпро, Україна.

Письмо – один із чотирьох видів мовленнєвої діяльності, що формує комунікативну систему людини і забезпечує її різноманітне соціокультурне буття. Мета цього дослідження - проаналізувати шляхи розвитку навичок письма здобувачів ступеня доктора філософії на уроках англійської мови. В ході дослідження було проаналізовано структуру та основні вимоги до написання академічного есе. Запропоновано комплекс вправ на відпрацювання навичок написання академічного есе. Доведено, написання академічного есе сприяє не лише розвитку письмової компетентності студентів, а й їх професійному розвитку.

Ключевые слова: навички письма, здобувачі степеня доктора філософії, академічне есе.

Резунова Е. С., кандидат педагогических наук, доцент. Развитие навыков письма соискателей степени доктора философии: написание академического эссе / Днепропетровский государственный аграрно-экономический университет, Днепр, Украина.

Письмо - один из четырех видов речевой деятельности, формирующее коммуникативную систему человека и обеспечивающее ее разнообразное социокультурное бытие. Цель этого исследования - проанализировать пути развития навыков письма соискателей степени доктора философии на уроках английского языка. В ходе исследования была проанализирована структура и основные требования к написанию академического эссе. Предложен комплекс упражнений на отработку навыков написания академического эссе. Доказано, что написание академического эссе способствует не только развитию письменной компетентности студентов, но и их профессиональному развитию.

Ключевые слова: навыки письма, соискатели степени доктора философии, академическое эссе.

Introduction. Nowadays technologies and globalization allow to communicate with people all over the world, but the biggest problem is lack of foreign language knowledge. That is why PhD students should develop their foreign language skills to be successful.

Studying at university PhD students should write a lot of written works, including coursework, thesis, project papers, scientific articles, scientific reports and conference abstracts. Very often they must write papers in English.

Such tasks not only encourage students to develop their analytical and research skills, but also develop creativity and ability to express own opinion. But very often students do not know how to structure their paper, how to present thought, how to give evidences about the studied problem, how to link different parts of the text. So, the problem of PhD students writing skills are very important and the best way to improve writing skills is to write an academic essays.

Analysis of publications. Recently, the peculiarities of teaching foreign language writing as a type of four language skills have been actively studied by M.Spratt, A. Pulverness, O. Williams, O. Tarnopolskyi, S. Kozhushko, T. Yakhontova, A. Beresnev, N. Aristova, R. Pokhmelkin, G. Demidenko, A. Abramova, T. Leoniev, L.Razina. The problem of academic essay writing are studied by J. Hartley, V. Evans, M. Hewings, K. Shenderovskiy and others. However, the problem of development of PhD students writing skill by academic essay writing is not studied enough.

The aim of the article is to analyze current approaches for the development of PhD students writing skills and to give practical recommendations about academic essay writing.

Outline of main materials. Writing is one of the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. «Writing» is the process of using symbols (letters of the alphabet, punctuation and spaces) to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form. Writing skills allow students to put their feelings and ideas on paper, to organize their knowledge and beliefs into convincing arguments, and to convey meaning through well-constructed text.

Academic writing refers to a style of expression that researchers use to define the intellectual boundaries of their disciplines and specific areas of expertise. Characteristics of academic writing include a formal tone, use of the third-person rather than first-person perspective (usually), a clear focus on the research problem under investigation, and precise word choice [3].

Academic essay is a type of academic writing (like coursework, thesis, articles, abstracts, etc.) which helps students to improve their productive speech activity.

In European and American educational practice, the academic essay is widely used as a means of controlling the learned material. A lot of universities require writing academic essay for entering. Besides, one of the necessary part of the international language exams are essay writing. So, teachers must pay great attention to the development of essay writing skills.

The purpose of the academic essay is to diagnose the creative component of the student's cognitive activity, his or her ability to analyze, interpret information, formulate conclusions and give their own assessment [1].

Methodologists describe the main rules of academic essay writing and teacher must familiar students with them:

- The studied question must be analyzed carefully.
- Writer must use formal academic English – not slang or txt language.
- It cannot be written just somebody's opinion. Everything must be proved with evidence (what other people have written).
- Any information used in the essay must be referenced [5].

For successful writing student should know the types of essays. British methodologists divide academic essay into three types according to their functions: describe, discuss or defend [4]. Each type has its partialities, and PhD students should understand the difference between these types. Students can do the following task:

Which essay type are questions 1-4: describe, discuss or defend?

1. *Discuss the impact of out-of-town shopping centres on the regions in which they occur. Answer: discuss*

2. *It has been claimed that democracy is the best form of government in the modern state. How far do you agree? Answer: _____*

3. *To what extent does the media influence how the general public views scientists and their work? Answer: _____*

4. *What factors affect people's choice of career? Answer: _____ [4].*

To familiar student with for and against essay writing procedure teacher can offer the following task:

Study the instruction about for and against essay writing:

Step 1. Give a general statement of the problem;

Step 2. Outline the points FOR;

Step 3. Outline the points AGAINST;

Step 4. Draw a conclusion weighing up the points outlined.

Each of the main essay types has a typical general structure with three main sections: introduction, body and conclusion. For better understanding of essay structure students can be supposed the following task:

In which section (introduction, body or conclusion) would you be most likely to find:

1. a statement of the writer's position on the topic? introduction
2. a summary of the main arguments in support of the writer's position? _____
3. a series of generalisations relevant on the topic _____
4. an outline how essay is organized? _____
5. definitions of key term used in essay? _____
6. evidence to support each generalization? _____
7. a restatement of the writer's position on the topic? _____
8. background information on the topic? _____

So, essay is quite effective and very important tool not only for developing PhD students writing skill, but also professional communication skills [4].

As an introduction is the most important part of the essay, students must be taught how to write it properly and understand the sequences of sentences. The following task may help them to master rule of introduction writing:

Put the following sentences in order to make a first draft of the introduction to an essay:

___ *This will be seen, firstly by discussing the characteristics of cane toads and then, examining their predicted long term effects on the animals of Kakadu and the tourist industry.*

___ *Because there is data available only on the effects of cane toads on goanna, frogs and crocodiles, these are the only animals that will be discussed.*

___ *This essay will discuss the effects of cane toads on the environment of Kakadu National Park and show that they will cause permanent damage to the environment.*

___ *Their numbers continue to steadily increase in Kakadu National Park and they are causing damage to this pristine environment.*

1 *In the past two years the threat of cane toads to the Top-End of Australia has become an increasing reality.*

It is extremely important to link the text and its paragraphs logically. The logical order is ensured by the order of ideas stated in the top sentence, while the logical link is provided by the implicit and explicit logical connections. To improve PhD students skills to connect the text logically, we offered them the following task:

Complete the essay with the title «For and against living in the big city» with the following linking words:

a) *Nowadays* b) *On the other hand* c) *Besides* d) *To make things even worse* e) *To my mind* f) *Furthermore* g) *Thirdly* h) *Furthermore*
i) *To sum up* j) *Firstly* k) *on the one hand* l) *Secondly* m) *but*

1) ***a-Nowadays*** *more people are inclined to leave small towns and villages for big cities. Life in a big city seems to be easy and comfortable, 2) _____ it is not always like that.*

3) _____, *big cities have a lot of advantages and offer diverse opportunities.*
4) _____, *there's a wide choice of places where to spend your free time: clubs, discos, museums and art galleries.* 5) _____, *there are good transport connections and variety among shops.* 6) _____, *it's easier to find a job. New companies are being established, providing people with job vacancies.* 7) _____, *there are comfortable flats with all modern conveniences and good sport facilities nearby.*

8) _____, *any available work might be menial and low-paid. You have to work long hours with little time for entertainment. A big city means long distances. It usually takes a lot of time to get to work or to school.* 9) _____, *you can be stuck in traffic jams during rush hours.* 10) _____, *the cost of living is rising.* 11) _____ *people's lives in big cities are stressful: there is no sense of community, pollution and crime.* 12) _____, *big cities offer diverse opportunities for finding jobs and spending free time. Among the main disadvantages are the long distances, traffic jams, high prices and pollution. As for me, I wouldn't choose to permanently live in a big city.*

So, essay writing, as a part of academic writing, helps to improve foreign language skills by expanding students vocabulary and grammar skills. Besides, preparation process requires a lot independent work with reference books, dictionaries, textbooks, scientific journals, websites and promote the development of professional skills.

Conclusion. Essay writing compels student to create coherent texts from different disciplines, and thus facilitates a clearer expression of thoughts. The student is also accustomed to self-discipline as he or she must read carefully additional information, comprehend it, grasp the subject matter and organize own thoughts, present them in the correct order. The essay writing helps PhD students to master the terms and concepts of a particular subject area, improve academic literacy and individual style skills, develop observational, analytical, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary communication, teaches students how to use examples and give arguments.

Thus, academic essay writing plays an important role in students training. It develops cognitive and linguistic skills, stimulates cognitive activity, broadens professional knowledge, and therefore helps to develop skilled specialist.

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