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**PARAGRAPH WRITING: A WAY TO STRUCTURE STUDENTS' MINDSET
IN WRITTEN AND ORAL UTTERANCE**

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Summary: The article states that the skill of writing a paragraph is a primary task in the process of successfully mastering educational bachelor programs as preparation for academic activities, namely written and oral.

Professional experience shows that the lack of ability to build an opinion, using the appropriate linguistic structures and techniques of the English language, can become a challenge. The authors analyse this issue and offer ways to overcome the use of linguistic template models of the Ukrainian language for oral or written utterance in English.

Keywords: academic writing, paragraph structuring as a basic element of speech activity (main components), cohesive, mindset

Introduction. Students and young researchers are expected to meet the academic writing requirements to present their theses, articles and course papers to fit academic purposes. It implies awareness of appropriate structuring.

Since schools in Ukraine do not offer structured writing as an integral part of the curriculum, students mostly do not acquire the basic writing skills to authentically organise ideas according to relevant writing techniques. They often practise / overdo it with the techniques of the Ukrainian language, which makes their writing different in thinking.

Therefore, **the aim** of the article is to offer ways to overcome the use of

linguistic template models of the Ukrainian language for oral or written utterance in English.

Writing is not just putting down what needs to be said. It lacks the acoustic and visual aids of pitch, stress, rhyme, gestures, and facial expressions that help speakers engage their audience in what they are saying, and writers cannot rely on immediate feedback to ensure that they are sufficiently expressive and persuasive.

As practice shows, English-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking people have different ways of sharing their thoughts, which makes writing so awkward to students that they commonly find it challenging and unmanageable.

Paragraph writing is an essential language skill which is mandatory for academic writing assignments [1; 2; 4; 5].

Learning to write requires knowledge of appropriate writing techniques and practising acquired skills at each stage, namely, pre-writing, writing a draft, editing and revising.

It is recognised [3] that the pre-writing stage takes various forms of brainstorming techniques such as, short-list-making, mind mapping, looping/cycling and asking six-journalists' questions, which aims at generating and refining ideas.

- **Mind mapping** is a strategy that allows us to determine the relationship between ideas.

- **List making** is the process of getting focused information within a short time by developing some general ideas in a bullet list, which is finalised in a shortlist.

- **Looping / cycling** is a free writing technique that allows you to continuously focus your ideas while trying to find a topic to write about. While cycling, you have to write fast, not to edit and not to stop.

- **The six-journalists' questions** *Who?, What?, Where?, When?, Why?, How?* are a powerful way to get a lot of information about a topic very quickly [3].

Paragraph writing training can be implemented in two forms: group or individual work. Obviously, group work is more efficient at the initial stage. Once assigned, students can generate related ideas and evaluate their relevance to the topic. Discussing aspects familiar to students facilitates the process of moving from general

to more specific.

Apparently, speaking is preparation for writing a paragraph. Experience shows that defining and polishing a single thought in oral speech contributes to its successful writing.

So, in the **prewriting** stage a topic is selected, limited and details for it are listed.

The next step is **drafting** a paragraph considering an appropriate structure (a **topic sentence**, that states the only main idea (**controlling idea**) of the paragraph; **supporting sentences**, which offer specific facts, examples, reasons to explain or develop what is stated in the topic sentence; and a **concluding sentence**, the one which restates the topic sentence or offers a final comment about the topic.

Evidently, students have difficulties in a topic sentence design tending to present more than one limited topic and / or more than one aspect/controlling idea. To avoid developing multiple ideas in a single paragraph, students are given a series of practice exercises to make up a well-structured topic sentence.

It is worth mentioning that the topic sentence is a statement, thus it cannot be interrogative or personalised.

For instance, students are working on the topic “A House.” The phase of brainstorming and mind mapping is followed by shortlisting, which is resulted in stating a limited topic, e.g.

Restructuring an old house.

The shortlist must indicate some options for a controlling idea: e.g.

1. *frustrating*;

2. *Inspiring*,

etc.

The controlling idea is the promise to any reader that the paragraph will be about one particular aspect on the given topic.

Considering the examples above, two different topic sentences can be made up regarding the choice of a particular controlling idea:

Topic sentence one: “*Restructuring an old house can be frustrating in several*

ways.”

Topic sentence two: “*Restructuring an old house can be inspiring for those who are looking forward to a change.*”

Next, each topic sentence will be followed by a corresponding set of sentences which are developed from the supporting ideas (such as facts, examples, reasons). Supporting sentences should be in a focused control too observing fluency / the principle of text unity. Sometimes they go further than the topic sentence demands and may tend to digress and get sidetracked. Thus, the short list prepared in the pre-writing phase is a skeleton in the paragraph body.

Suggested supporting ideas for the Topic Sentence Two “*Restructuring an old house can be inspiring for those who are looking forward to a change*” are:

- *It is good for the soul;*
- *You want to achieve something special;*
- *You might find fantastic inspiration and help from start to finish with your creation;*
- *You can look at specialised online magazines as well as paper magazines, where you will find some spectacular DIYs;*
- *Make a note of what you like and see what you can come up with!*

While designing the supporting sentences, it is essential to use appropriate linkers so that the text is cohesive.

Finally, a concluding sentence goes at the end of a paragraph and can be designed in different ways: for example, by restating the topic sentence, which helps the author ensure that readers understand the point of the paragraph: “Therefore, if you are ready for a new ambition, remodelling an old house is the right challenge for you.”

Alternatively, it offers a final comment about the topic. The author may also state a logical conclusion, give a personal impression, pose a question, or recommend a course of action: “You will learn a lot about architectural designs to make your old house an inviting place.”

A concluding sentence is obligatory in line with the purpose of a paragraph and

accurately correlated with the topic sentence.

When a draft is complete, a revision is necessary, which may require rewriting or refining the draft.

Well developed paragraph writing skills are helpful and essential for delivering well structured oral presentations.

Therefore, students' desire to learn how to write paragraphs is highly motivated these days. They have their own experience of facing the problem of being misunderstood due to an undeveloped writing skill, namely paragraph writing.

Considering the above, it can be argued that our joint results will contribute to the fact that students will become more effective in writing and meet modern requirements.

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