

EALTA-funded WORKSHOP

'Building Assessment Skills of Ukrainian ESP Teachers'

KEYNOTE SPEAKER AND WORKSHOP LEADER:

Dr John Pill

Lancaster University, UK

October 10 – 12, 2018

Sumy State University, Ukraine

Report by Lyudmyla Hnapovska, Olga Kvasova, John Pill



Introduction and Workshop rationale

Starting in 2014, the British Council Ukraine, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, has conducted in-depth baseline studies of 15 classical and technical universities across the country within the framework of the *‘English for Universities’* project aimed at evaluating “the current English provision as well as the role and status of English” (Bolitho, West 2017, p. 11). The project targeted at University ESP and EGAP teachers, EMI teachers and students who need to use English.

The major findings and recommendations of the British experts R. Bolitho and R. West who were involved in the study were presented in the publication “The internationalization of Ukrainian Universities: the English language dimension”. Commenting on their findings concerning assessment issues, the experts claim that *“there are generally poor standards of tests and examinations There is a pressing need for training in modern, valid testing and assessment procedures to enable English teachers to feel confident in assessing their students against international standards, and to assure the Ministry that standards are being achieved.”* (Bolitho, West 2017, p. 81).

In line with these recommendations, standing to the above assessment challenges has become the major concern of Ukrainian Association for Language Testing and Assessment (UALTA) whose long-term goal is to ensure valid and fair assessment of students’ English language abilities in ways that benefit learning. Since its foundation in 2015, UALTA has organized a series of events that contributed to building and enhancing university teachers’ assessment competence, and EALTA-funded Workshop ***‘Building Assessment Skills of Ukrainian ESP Teachers’*** constitutes one more significant step in implementing UALTA’s goals.

The Workshop appeared to be the first attempt to address a very specific field of LTA – assessment in ESP, the fundamentals as well as practical applications of which in majority of Ukrainian education settings are still uncertain and not clear.

The Workshop aimed to create a platform for Ukrainian ESP teaching community to:

- update their LTA skills under the guidance of an international expert;
- exchange positive ESP assessment practices;
- enable them to cope with ESP assessment challenges in their educational settings.

These objectives comply fully with the above recommendations on British Council *‘English for Universities’* project findings.

References

Bolitho, R., West, R. (2017) *The internationalization of Ukrainian universities: the English language dimension*. Kyiv: Publishing House “Stal”.

Workshop participants

The number of participants was 37. They are all ESP teachers who work in various types of universities in Ukraine, thus representing all regions of the country:

- Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv
- National Aviation University of Kyiv
- National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”
- Vadym Hetman National Economic University of Kyiv
- National Pirogov Memorial Medical University (Vynnytsa)
- Vasyl’ Stus Donetsk National University (relocated to Vynnytsa)

- V.N. Karazin National University of Kharkiv
- Alfred Nobel University (Dnipro)
- Dnipropetrovsk Regional Institute of Public Administration under the President of Ukraine
- National Technical University “Dnipro Polytechnic” (Dnipro)
- Zaporizhzhia National Technical University
- Lviv National Music Academy
- Flight Academy of National Aviation University (Kropyvnytskyi)
- Kryvyi Rih National University
- Oleksandr Dovzhenko National Pedagogical University of Hlukhiv
- Sumy State University

19 workshop participants are UALTA members who have already received some training in LTA through participating in various UALTA events aimed at enhancing assessment literacy of Ukrainian EFL teachers. 28 participants hold a PhD degree in Pedagogy, EFL Teaching Methodology or Linguistics. 4 participants are British Council certified trainers who have already conducted a series of CIVELT (Certificate in Vocational English Language Teaching) training sessions within the framework of the BC ‘English for Universities’ project.

All participants are experienced teachers with 10 to 35 years of working experience – the ones who are committed to develop professionally life-long and actively participate in the British Council Ukraine projects, workshops conducted by European or Ukrainian experts, on-line courses on ESP teaching and LTA.

To identify the participants’ background and tailor the Workshop content and activities to particular needs of various ESP settings in Ukraine, a brief survey was conducted at the pre-workshop stage: the potential Workshop participants were asked to complete the questionnaire which covered 5 questions.

Responses to **Q1** *“What type(s) of specific-purpose English do you teach and test?”* showed that majority of Workshop participants teach Business English, EAP, English for Engineering, Economics & Financial Sector, IT, Law, Aviation and Medicine. Minor groups included teachers of English for Mining, Travel, Tourism, Hotel Industry and Catering as well as English for Training School Teachers of Various Subjects.

While answering **Q2** *“What parts do the summative tests you administer typically include?”*, the respondents opted for Reading (66%) and Vocabulary (55%) being most frequently included parts. Speaking and Grammar tasks go second in terms of being typically included in the summative assessments by 43% of ESP teachers, while Listening, Writing, Language-in-use and Translation are less popular as assessment instruments – only 28% of ESP teachers mentioned them in the category of “most frequently used”.

Q3 *“Who develops the summative tests that you administer?”* discovered that 50% of the Workshop participants develop the summative tests on their own, 40% do it with other colleagues, around a quarter (26%) use standardized proficiency tests like BECs, IELTS etc. and tailor them to their needs, 15% use these tests without adapting them to the outcomes specified in their syllabi, and only 1% of respondents stated that they use tests developed by other teachers of their departments.

Q4 *“Which parts of a test are difficult for you to develop/select/modify?”* (choose from “5” (the most difficult) to “1” (the least difficult)) revealed that Ukrainian ESP

teachers experience most difficulties with designing tests of Listening (51% ranked this as 4 or 5), Writing and Speaking (40%) and Language-in-Use (38%), while developing tests of Grammar, Vocabulary and Translation doesn't cause much difficulty.

Q5 "How do you plan to implement the ideas gained from the Workshop in your educational setting?" was an open-ended one with most responses focusing on ambitions to implement and disseminate ideas gained from the workshop.

Workshop presenters

The *keynote speaker and workshop leader* was *Dr. John Pill*, a Lecturer in Language Testing at Lancaster University, whose experience and expertise in the field of ESP assessment provided solid input on the specificity of LTA in ESP, provoked and stimulated fruitful discussions, inspired Workshop participants to reconsider and improve assessment practices in their educational settings.

The co-presenter on Day 1 was *Dr. Lyudmyla Hnapovska* (UALTA expert member), while two workshops on Day 2 were facilitated by *Dr. Olha Pavlenko* (British Council certified trainer in ESP teaching methodology).

Workshop organization and programme

The workshop was hosted by Sumy State University, one of the top-ranked Ukrainian universities, whose Congress Centre provided comfortable premises for the Workshop sessions, refreshments and variety of social events. The venue is situated in the city centre and lies within convenient reach for both resident participants and the non-residents who were accommodated in the university hotel nearby.

The Workshop programme below gives a broad overview of how the 3-day event was organized as well as updates briefly on the content of each session.

DAY ONE: October 10, 2018		
Time	Event	Venue: Congress Centre, Room 118
9.45 – 10.30	Registration / Welcome tea & coffee	
10.30 – 11.00	<p><i>A word of welcome from the Workshop organisers</i></p> <p><i>Dr. Volodymyr Lyubchak</i>, Deputy Rector for International Affairs, Sumy State University</p> <p><i>Dr. Iryna Dyakonova</i>, Director of Education and Research Institute for Business Technologies, Sumy State University</p> <p><i>Kostyantyn Kyrychenko</i>, Head of Foreign Relations Division, Sumy State University</p> <p><i>Dr. Olga Kvasova</i>, President of Ukrainian Association for Language Testing and Assessment (UALTA)</p> <p><i>Dr. Lyudmyla Hnapovska</i>, Head of Foreign Languages Department of Education and Research Institute for Business Technologies, Sumy State University</p>	

11.00 – 12.30	<p style="text-align: center;">Symposium</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Insights from ESP Teaching, Learning and Assessment: the Voices from the Regions”</p> <p><i>(talks delivered by representatives of participating universities from different regions of Ukraine which addressed ESP assessment issues specific for their educational settings, and were reflective of particular challenges, concerns and practices)</i></p> <p>Dr. Olga Polotska, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University Dr. Galyna Miasoid, Alfred Nobel University (Dnipro) Dr. Olena Zotova-Sadylo, Kryvyi Rih National University Dr. Yuliya Sobol, Zaporizhzhia National Technical University Dr. Olha Pavlenko, National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”</p>
12.30 – 13.30	<p>Lunch break</p>
13.30– 14.30	<p style="text-align: center;">Plenary talk</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Defining ESP Testing: Where are the boundaries?”</p> <p><i>This talk considered the variety of assessments in ESP and how we might establish characteristics of the field of ESP to distinguish it from others, for example, general-purpose language assessment or professional skills assessment. Examples were taken from several contexts, including academic, medical and aviation English tests.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dr. John Pill, Lancaster University</p>
14.40-15.40	<p style="text-align: center;">Workshop 1, Part 1:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Revisiting the Fundamentals of LTA”</p> <p><i>This workshop aimed to recap on the cornerstones of LTA, thus making university ESP teachers reflect on how ‘testwise’ they are and to what extent their own LTA experience is based on the world-wide approved principles and standards.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dr. Lyudmyla Hnapovska, Sumy State University</p>
15.40 – 16.00	<p>Coffee break</p>
16.00– 17.00	<p style="text-align: center;">Workshop 1, Part 2:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Designing the Model of ESP Classroom-based Assessment”</p> <p><i>In this workshop participants addressed the issue of CBA – its functional identity and practices relevant in the ESP classroom, thus benchmarking the CBA techniques they use against certain approved patterns. The participants also gained hands-on experience of designing the CBA model appropriate within their educational context.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dr. Lyudmyla Hnapovska, Sumy State University</p>
17.30 – ...	<p style="text-align: center;">Welcome dinner & special treat from the Workshop organizers</p> <p><i>This was an opportunity for Workshop participants to relax after an events-stuffed first working day, listen to lovely lyrics and music which evoked lots of thoughts, and enjoy informal friendly chat, share insights, make new contacts ...</i></p>

DAY TWO: October 11, 2018		
Time	Event	Venue: Congress Centre, Room 118
9.30 – 11.00	Workshop 2, Part 1: “How to Design ESP Tests of Speaking and Writing” <i>This workshop focused on options for testing productive skills in an ESP context. Examples of tasks were presented for discussion. The participants also reviewed ways of developing and applying assessment criteria to measure students’ performance.</i> Dr. John Pill, Lancaster University	
11.00 – 11.30	Coffee break	
11.30 – 13.00	Workshop 2, Part 2: “Developing Useable Test Specifications” <i>In this session, participants considered the elements required to specify a test. They were challenged with a series of prompting questions on key topics and set about answering them for a particular context. In this way, they created a draft test specification that can serve as a prototype for other contexts.</i> Dr. John Pill, Lancaster University	
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch break	
14.00 – 15.30	Workshop 3, Part 1: “Making the Most of ESP Test Design” <i>This workshop engaged the participants in team work aimed to develop assessments based on the specifications developed during Workshop 2.</i> Dr. Olha Pavlenko, Kyiv National Technical University of Ukraine <i>‘Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Politechnic Institute’</i>	
15.30 – 16.00	Coffee break	
16.00 – 17.30	Workshop 3, Part 2: “Testing Ideas Bank: How to Benefit Your ESP Classroom” <i>This part allowed the teams of participants to present the developed assessments and collect feedback from colleagues and the expert.</i> Dr. Olha Pavlenko, Kyiv National Technical University of Ukraine <i>‘Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Politechnic Institute’</i>	
DAY THREE: October 12, 2018		
Time	Event	Venue: Congress Centre, Room 118
9.30 – 11.00	Workshop 4, Part 1: “Ideas Forum – Help Yourself!” <i>The participants started with analyzing a set of real-life ‘problems’ that often arise when putting theories of ESP testing into practice. They reflected on those, drawing on what they had learnt in the workshop so far, and shared ideas to develop practical solutions. Further issues arose, and, guided by the expert, participants considered strategies to help deal with them.</i> Dr. John Pill, Lancaster University	

11.00 – 11.30	Coffee break
11.30 – 13.00	<p>Workshop 4, Part 2: “Developing a Local Framework for ESP Test Development” <i>To start, some existing frameworks to guide test development were presented. Participants then designed a framework suited to local needs, pulling together and adding to elements they had already developed during the Workshop sessions. Outcomes included sets of Do’s and Don’ts for ESP testing and checklists for test developers.</i></p> <p><i>Dr. John Pill, Lancaster University</i></p>
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch break
14.00 – 15.00	<p>Panel discussion “Assessment in ESP: Challenges & Prospects of Ukrainian Perspective” All participants were involved in informal discussion of how to bridge the ideas gained from the Workshop to particular ESP assessment practices and experiences.</p>
15.00 – 15.30	<p>Feedback session Certificate award ceremony</p>
15.30 – ...	Farewell tea & coffee

Opening the Workshop, *Dr. Lyudmyla Hnapovska*, Head of Foreign Languages Department of the hosting institution, expressed sincere gratitude to EALTA executive committee for their decision to finance the event and read out the welcome message from Claudia Harsh, EALTA president, with wishes of insightful and engaging experiences during the three days of the convention and hopes that the Workshop participants will spread the knowledge gained from it amongst their communities.

Workshop content and activities

As was previously planned, the workshop consisted of three days, each one organized in the way that would ensure a balanced combination of theoretical input presented to the whole workshop team and practical activities carried out in small groups. This helped participants consolidate the obtained information and stimulated their critical analysis of the issues under consideration.

The content of the workshop covered the issues of immediate interest and value for all participants. Prompted by the results of the above-mentioned pre-workshop survey which spotted the gaps and problem areas needed to be addressed, the content of the training sessions was aimed to meet the demands of both groups of ESP teachers – those who have already gained certain assessment background and those who have just started to build their LTA skills. Accordingly, one part of the training covered the issues which introduced the key concepts of assessment in ESP (plenary talk ‘Defining ESP Testing: Where are the boundaries?’ delivered by Dr. John Pill) and the cornerstones of LTA (workshops conducted by Dr. Lyudmyla Hnapovska on Day 1). The other part focused on issues related to more advanced themes, such as ‘Assessing productive skills (speaking and

writing) in ESP' and 'Developing Usable Test Specifications' (Day 2). These sessions held by the invited expert were followed up by the workshops facilitated by the local presenter Dr. Olha Pavlenko who focused on training the participants in developing assessments tailored to particular institutions' needs: four teams developed summative test specifications in accordance with the syllabi that participants had been asked to bring with them. Presentations of the specifications worked out by the teams of participants provoked further discussions and received valuable feedback from the foreign expert.

Day 3 sessions logically bridged ideas from the talks delivered at the Symposium by representatives of local ESP communities (Day 1) and practical insights which participants gained from the workshop training. Participants were engaged in variety of activities, which inspired them to reflect critically on their own assessment 'portfolios', integrate what they had learned into developing practical solutions to a set of real-life assessment challenges, and work out a transparent test developers' checklist of the major Do's and Don't of assessment in ESP.

Participants were provided with a pack of materials used as hand-outs by workshop facilitators. A complete workshop resource pack including presentations, materials developed by participants throughout the three days of the workshop and photos was made available online for every participant's use.

Evaluation of the Workshop

Following the event, 31 workshop participants (84%) completed online feedback form. They were asked to rate different aspects of the workshop assigning from 1 to 5 points (6 questions) and make comments on them by responding to 5 open-ended questions.

The overall evaluation of the Workshop is highly positive, the proof of which is the data below.

Q1: *How relevant was the programme of the workshop to your particular ESP setting? (Rank from 5 – 'absolutely relevant' to 1 – 'not relevant at all') – average score 4.83.* 96.6% of participants consider it very relevant with 93.3% opting for point 5 – 'absolutely relevant'.

Q2: *To what extent did the Workshop meet your expectations? (Rank from 5 – 'met completely' to 1 – 'did not meet at all') – average point 4.77.* The Workshop fully met expectations of 96.7% of respondents with 86.7% assigning it the highest point '5'.

Q3: *How useful did you find the sessions of the workshop? (Rank from 5 – 'very useful' to 1 – 'not useful') – average point 4.73.* The figure for those participants who find the Workshop very useful (points 4-5) stands at 93%.

'The opportunity to participate, discuss and voice ideas' (Q4) got the average rating point of **4.80**, with 80% of participants feeling that they had plentiful opportunity (point '5') to participate and be heard.

97% of respondents claimed that *the trainers addressed the issues and problems they raised during the workshop (Q5)* ‘very effectively’ and scored this aspect the highest point of ‘5’ (the average score for this Q-n is **4.91**).

All 30 Workshop participants unanimously agreed that *the organization of the event (Q10)* was excellent and graded it as ‘5’ (‘very effective’).

When asked *which aspects of the workshop they found particularly useful (Q6)*, participants most commonly mentioned that everything was useful, but the comments below specify certain points:

- ‘developing test specifications’
- ‘working out specifications for assessing students’ skills in a particular ESP course (syllabus)
- ‘practicing designing the assessment framework for a real ESP course.’
- ‘the design of tests that assess speaking and writing skills appear to be particularly useful for me’
- ‘analyzing various scenarios that ESP teachers can face’
- ‘the resources shared, ‘the relevant resources suggested by Dr. John Pill’
- ‘collaboration with other participants, exchanging ideas, working in teams’

Most typical answers to the question about ‘*less useful aspects of the workshop (Q7)*’ can be best illustrated by the following comment: ‘*It’s difficult to range the components of the whole event as they turned out to be harmoniously interrelated and each of them was consistent with the others. All of them made the series of workshops very successful.*’

Still, 1 participant found plenary section ‘*not as practical as other parts of the workshop*’. In line with this quote, there was the thought that the ideas presented at the “Insights from ESP Teaching, Learning and Assessment: the Voices from the Regions” symposium could have been more practically elaborated later during the workshop sessions. 1 participant claimed that ‘*Revisiting the Fundamentals of LTA*’ was a less useful issue to discuss, while 1 more participant ‘*would appreciate more specific information on how to develop test specifications*’.

Participants’ reaction to **Q8** ‘*Which areas of your ESP assessment background did the workshop benefit most?*’ testifies that everybody got exactly what they were looking for: comments covered every aspect addressed during the Workshop sessions.

Commenting on **Q9** ‘*Which areas of ESP assessment would you like to get further training in?*’ the participants mentioned:

- techniques for assessing integrated skills
- developing criteria (scales) for assessing productive skills (writing and speaking)
- assessing academic writing
- ‘balancing syllabus requirements as for assessment methods and materials with real-life professional context, quality control and grading’
- designing test specifications
- making the most of peer assessment
- aptitude testing

Below are some of the *comments* participants provided in the last section (Q11) of the feedback form where they were invited to voice their overall impressions of the event.

'I have learnt and practiced some new assessment techniques and now feel more competent and confident in dealing with ESP test design. I would love to participate in the further events in this field in the future.'

'The event turned out really very productive, trainings were closely related to practical everyday performance of ESP teachers. It outlined main guidelines in an overwhelming sphere of assessment, gave opportunity to practically implement plenty of ideas created on the go into joint tests.'

'It gave me lots of things to think about and consider in my test assessment experience.'

'Events like this give us inspiration, confidence, sense of belonging to the great Family of ESP teachers, which encourages us to ever keep on moving forward!'

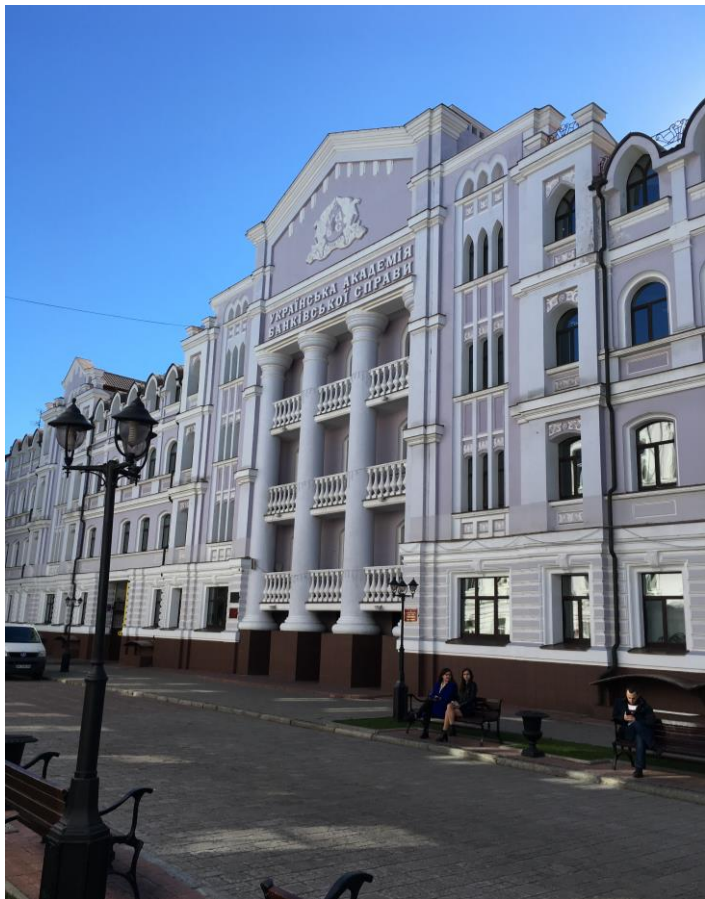
'We had a chance to collectively devise some new ideas and share our own experience.'

'The workshops have taken essentially practical approach to I-ge testing and ass-t, balancing aspects of theory with discussion and suggestions for pedagogy. They stimulated those interested in methodological issues as well as provided practical ideas for teachers.'

'This was a very useful, eye-opening event the takeaways of which I will definitely use in my everyday teaching.'

'The session was useful for both our professional development and networking.'





PHD STUDENTS' PROFICIENCY LEVEL

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rsities of the world according
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the best Ukrainian higher
"Compass" and "TOP-200



