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THE CRISIS OF TRADITIONAL ACADEMIC WRITING IN THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM: TRANSFORMING TEACHING METHODOLOGY AMID GENERATIVE AI EXPANSION

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Abstract

This article addresses the transformation of teaching and assessment methodologies for writing skills within ESP and Business English courses amidst the expansion of Large Language Models. The author substantiates a shift from evaluating the final textual product to monitoring the students' critical thinking process by integrating artificial intelligence as a digital co-agent. The study's main conclusion demonstrates that implementing innovative task formats (comparative analysis, template revitalization, and role inversion) completely neutralizes plagiarism risks while ensuring the development of genuine analytical and foreign language expertise in early-career professionals.

Keywords: Large Language Models, Business English, ESP, process-oriented approach, distributed agency, role inversion.

Problem statement

Within the higher education system, the study of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Business English traditionally involves mastering the culture of business correspondence. Students are expected to acquire skills in generating highly regulated texts such as letters of inquiry, gratitude, commercial proposals, and invitations, which adhere to strict structural constraints and genre-specific clichés. However, the rapid expansion of Large Language Models (LLMs) has provoked a profound crisis in the methodology of teaching and assessing written language (*Writing*). Due to the high degree of standardization inherent in business correspondence, generative AI instantly produces stylistically and grammatically flawless textual artifacts.

This creates a sharp didactic paradox. On the one hand, the educator receives a formally perfect piece of work that they are compelled to grade favorably. On the other hand, the actual development of foreign language communicative competence does not occur, leaving students trapped in an "illusion of competence." Since writing remains an indispensable component of a future specialist's language training, eliminating it from educational curricula is impossible. Consequently, a critical scientific and methodological contradiction emerges: how to transform the format of writing tasks and their evaluation criteria under conditions where the classical textual product has been entirely devalued by artificial intelligence technologies.

Literature review

The problem of educational space transformation under the influence of digital technologies and artificial intelligence has drawn significant scholarly attention. The issues of teacher effectiveness and the capacity to adapt to new challenges are highlighted by Duckworth, Quinn, and Seligman [1]. Concurrently, mass digitalization has actualized the use of big data in language learning, which, as Godwin-Jones states, offers both unique opportunities and complex challenges for higher education [2]. Later, the same author substantiated the concept of distributed agency in language learning and

teaching through the prism of interaction with generative AI [3].

Special emphasis is placed on the direct impact of automated tools on written language quality. Specifically, Hockly critically analyzes the integration of artificial intelligence in English language teaching, mapping out the positive, destructive, and ambiguous aspects of this process [4]. In turn, Hyland's classical research emphasized the importance of preserving identity and authorial voice in academic writing [5], which is currently threatened by impersonal text generation. Additionally, Lee demonstrates that even the use of machine translation substantially alters EFL students' approach to writing, necessitating new analytical skills [6].

However, despite a profound analysis of specific digitalization aspects, contemporary publications still lack comprehensive applied methodologies that propose concrete task formats for Business English aimed at transforming the student's role from a passive consumer of AI content into a critical expert editor.

Article objective

The objective of this article is to provide a theoretical substantiation and present practical experience regarding the transformation of writing tasks within ESP and Business English courses amid the mass utilization of generative AI. The study proposes shifting the educational focus from reproductive text generation to developing students' critical-editorial competence through a system of inverted tasks and analytical work with AI-generated artifacts.

Results and discussion

The expansion of Large Language Models into the sphere of higher education disrupts the traditional paradigm of writing instruction, which for decades has been based on the product-oriented approach. Within this framework, the final text (such as a business letter, essay, or report) was considered direct material evidence of the development of a student's foreign language communicative competence. However, at the current stage of digital technology evolution, when artificial intelligence is capable of generating stylistically

refined and grammatically flawless texts within seconds, evaluating the final product loses its didactic meaning. Attempts to totally ban artificial intelligence tools or blind reliance on automated plagiarism detection systems only drive the educational process into a deadlock of mutual distrust and didactic inefficiency [4].

The phenomenon of digital mimicry, wherein artificially generated discourse successfully simulates the formal attributes of high language culture while concealing destructive linguistic defects, requires distinct didactic conceptualization. The primary drivers of this phenomenon are the technological perfectionism of the neural network and the cognitive effect of the competence placebo among learners. On one hand, the algorithmic perfectionism of Large Language Models ensures the creation of grammatically flawless, structurally sound, and stylistically refined constructions that, at first glance, appear to be ideal specimens of business writing. On the other hand, this surface-level impeccability triggers the competence placebo effect: upon perceiving the smooth facade of the machine text, the student experiences an illusory satisfaction with the communicative pragmatics of the letter, which consequently blocks the mechanisms of critical analysis. Digital mimicry induces cognitive blindness, whereby the student, blinded by external linguistic correctness, fails to notice the absence of deep contextual meanings, an individual authorial voice, and empathy, ultimately leading to the degradation of their own productive speech skills.

Drawing upon practical experience in teaching English for Specific Purposes and Business English, a radical shift of focus is proposed from the reproductive creation of texts from scratch toward their critical analysis, deconstruction, and expert editing. Within this model, artificial intelligence is viewed not as an instrument of falsification, but as a digital co-agent. This allows for the full realization of the concept of distributed agency, wherein the responsibility for the final communicative outcome is shared between the human and the algorithm, while the ultimate expert decision always remains with the student [3]. Based on this approach, we have identified several promising task formats that minimize the problem of plagiarism and ensure the genuine acquisition of speech skills.

The first format engages students in analytical activity through a binary comparison of two text types, namely an authentic business letter crafted by an experienced specialist and a letter generated by a Large Language Model based on an identical technical task. A profound analysis is conducted across several interconnected criteria, among which the key components are lexical architecture, stylistic pragmatics of the genre, and the level of individual personalization. Research into the density of professional vocabulary usage reveals that artificial intelligence tends to employ statistically most probable, and therefore maximally averaged, linguistic units [2]. In contrast, human-written text contains idiomatic expressions, specific contextual jargon, and flexible lexical transitions that reflect real-world business practice. Machine-generated text is typically hyper-correct and oversaturated with archaic or

overly formal clichés, which transforms it into an artificial mock-up. The most critical deficiency of such texts is the absence of an authorial voice, conceptualized in the works of Ken Hyland [5]. The robotic letter is devoid of emotional intelligence, neutralizing the unique identity of the author and their specific attitude toward the addressee. During the execution of this task, students' cognitive activity shifts toward advanced analytical operations and critical evaluation. Students learn to detect linguistic manipulation, which develops their language intuition and demonstrates that paraphrasing skills constitute the sole method to make business communication dynamic and alive [6].

The next approach we propose is based on the intentional utilization of such algorithmic properties as the creation of linguistically refined, yet contextually depersonalized, sterile texts. The educator acts as the initiator of the process, providing students with an identical, artificial intelligence-generated business letter template, such as a response to a customer complaint or a commercial proposal. The students' task consists in the revitalization and contextualization of this text, which requires undergoing several stages of cognitive processing, ranging from communicative risk analysis to lexical transformation. For the successful execution of such work, the student must possess deep background knowledge, understand the specifics of a particular business case, the psychological state of the addressee, and the marketing objectives of the company. The student is compelled to modify established clichés, substitute generic phrases with concrete figures, and alter the overall tone of the text from neutrally robotic to empathetic. Providing the exact same machine-generated template to the entire academic cohort, followed by cross-comparative discussion, proves to be particularly effective. The comparison of diverse lexical transformations and paraphrasing strategies deployed by different students to resolve a single communicative problem illustrates linguistic variability. This demonstrates to learners that the flawless grammar of artificial intelligence constitutes mere raw material, which, without human intelligence, is incapable of achieving strategic pragmatic objectives within professional discourse.

The most vulnerable link in contemporary language pedagogy remains summative assessment, within which we propose implementing a format of role inversion, where the student shifts from the position of an executor to that of an expert or educator. This format is ideal for final credit examinations and is operationalized through the audit of defective textual material. Each student is individually assigned a letter generated via a subversive prompt containing latent anomalies, such as breaches of business etiquette, logical contradictions, excessive tautology, or artificial algorithmic hallucinations. The student is required to conduct a linguistic expertise of the text, flag all deficiencies, and prepare comprehensive analytical commentary in English, explicating the communicative ineffectiveness of specific phrases.

The final stage involves a brief oral defense (*viva voce*) of their editorial decisions before the audience. The student must justify why they substituted a machine cliché with their own lexical construction and

how this modification influences the pragmatics of the letter. Such a format completely neutralizes potential breaches of academic integrity, given that the student cannot delegate the oral explanation of their cognitive trajectory to artificial intelligence. To identify and articulate an error made by a neural network, the learner must demonstrate a higher level of analytical competence than the algorithm itself. This restores an instrument of objective evaluation to the educator and reclaims agency for the student, transforming assessment into an active mode of learning.

Consequently, the proposed task formats, ranging from comparative analysis to role inversion, fundamentally alter the vector of interaction within the "educator–student–artificial intelligence" system. They shift the focus of didactic attention from the mechanical evaluation of a static textual product (product-oriented) to the monitoring and assessment of the learner's critical thinking process (process-oriented). Within this paradigm, Large Language Models cease to pose a threat to academic integrity, transforming instead into a powerful catalyst for linguistic analysis. The student, compelled to revitalize and defend texts, acquires genuine rather than illusory communicative competence, given that the criterion for success becomes not the perfection of the machine algorithm, but the depth of the individual's human linguistic expertise.

Conclusions and directions for further research

The conducted study demonstrates that the rapid expansion of generative artificial intelligence into higher education necessitates an immediate revision of outdated didactic approaches to teaching and assessing written language within ESP and Business English courses. The traditional product-oriented approach, focused on evaluating the final textual outcome, has entirely lost its relevance due to the capacity of Large Language Models to instantly generate grammatically flawless, yet depersonalized and sterile texts. The conceptual task formats proposed in this article namely, the

"human versus machine" comparative analysis, the revitalization of AI templates, and role inversion with oral verification, prove the effectiveness of shifting the focus of attention directly onto the process of the student's linguistic and cognitive activity.

The described practical experience demonstrates that integrating AI as a digital co-agent not only neutralizes the risks of academic plagiarism but also stimulates the development of critical thinking, paraphrasing skills, and the analytical expertise of learners. Directions for further research in this area lie in a more detailed investigation of the psycholinguistic features of students' perception of robotic discourse, as well as in the development of differentiated grading scales specifically tailored to evaluate the editorial and analytical components of the foreign language professional competence of early-career professionals.

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