Specific Features of Professionally Oriented Written Communication in English of IT Specialists

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Abstract

The article reveals the peculiarities of professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists. In the framework of the main situations of professionally oriented written communication in English (business correspondence, correspondence with colleagues and chiefs) the functions of the communication realize: contact, information, inducing, cognitive, emotive, influencing and fence-mending ones. The genres of professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists include: private and business e-mail correspondence, texting in chats and forums, posting on electric announcement boards, memo, and reports. The main types of this communication are informal (communication with colleagues), semi-formal and formal (communication with suppliers, clients, chiefs), analytical and scientific communication (reports). Each type of communication has its peculiar stylistic feature concerning lexical and grammatical presentation.

Key words: professionally oriented written communication in English, IT specialists, functions and duties, correspondence, genres, types of communications.

Introduction

An efficient operation of IT company can be achieved by available highly qualified specialists which display both a high level of professional competence and ability to produce written and oral professionally oriented communication by means of language of global communication – English.

The purpose of the article is to reveal the peculiarities of professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists.

According to the purpose, the objectives of the article are as follows:

- 1) to outline the list of specialties which higher educational institutions in Ukraine follow to provide training of prospective IT specialists, and also the range of professional functions and duties of IT specialists;
- 2) to analyze the essence of key concepts: “communication”, “written communication”, “written English professionally oriented communication of IT specialists”;

- 3) to ascertain situations, functions, genres, types, features of professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists.

Nowadays F. Batsevyich, O. Selivanova are researching the issues of communicative linguistics and intercultural communication. The study of professionally oriented communication of non-philological specialties has received a wide attention in the research of S. Kozhushko, N. Mykytenko, M. Kozolup, V. Sulym, O. Tarnapolskyi and others. M. Castelss, O. Dedova, D. Moursund, Shunhui Zhao, V. Romashenko, F. Smirnov investigated the peculiarities of communication by the means of information and communication technologies.

Professional functions and duties of IT specialists

Job placement of specialists in IT technologies isn't confined only to IT companies, they can work at any enterprises or organizations that use modern ICT technologies and process huge amount of information. Nowadays there are computers and computer networks in any offices and employees use relevant software. Regardless of place of employment IT specialists provide related services that are connected with software, hardware, data base, web-resources, networks and corporate systems.

The term “specialist of Information Technologies” embraces the following posts: specialist in design and testing of software, software developer, designer of computing system, project manager, system administrator, engineer of system administration, data base administrator, specialist in electric equipment, specialist of technical expertise, developer of software technical specifications (“*Nacional'nij klasifikator Ukraïni*”, 2010). The survey of the sites of leading Ukrainian IT companies (<https://www.epam.com/>; <https://www.softserveinc.com/en-us/>; <https://www.luxoft.com/>; <https://www.globallogic.com/ua/>; <https://www.ciklum.com>) allowed us to supplement the list with the following posts: specialists in support, specialist in software sales, specialist in company development, customer service specialist, HR specialist.

The list of specialties which higher educational institutions in Ukraine follow to provide training of prospective IT specialists comprises: analyst of computer system, analyst of computer database, analyst of operational and applied software, analyst of software and multimedia, computer-aided manufacturing engineer, computer system engineer, software engineer, engineer -programmer, database programmer, applied programmer, system

programmer, specialists in information technologies, specialist in software design and testing, software developer, technician-programmer, system administration technician (*Profesijnij standart* 2014; *Profesijnij standart fahivec' z informacijnih resursiv* 2014).

IT specialists design, test, operate and maintain technical products (namely software); manage networks, administer database, analyze customers' demands, study the peculiarities of cooperation with suppliers and contractors, work out technical specifications of software, troubleshoot, provide support of software application, evaluate efficiency of the applied technological products (namely software products), implement new systems, launch new technological products (including software).

The professional duties of IT specialists envisage oral exchange of information, oral agreement and arrangement, and formal correspondence as well that coordinate business activity within the system "company-external supplier (contractor)" with the aim of information provision and high quality of technologies. Thus, a special attention is paid to written communication, since correspondence constitutes company's documents and, consequently, it should be lexically, grammatically and stylistically correctly produced. The specific character of IT specialist's work involves a great amount of correspondence in English, because external suppliers or contractors of Ukrainian IT companies are overseas companies and entrepreneurs.

The essence of key concepts of the research

In order to reveal the peculiarities of written English communication of IT specialists we will analyze the concept of communication.

Famous Ukrainian linguist F. Batsevych defines communication as a set of links and interactions of people, societies and subjects, namely classes, groups, individuals within which exchange of information, experience, abilities, skills, results of activity, reciprocal influence, behaviour correction occurs. Communication exhibits in oral and written forms (Bacevich, 2007). Afterwards verbal communication is a form of social interaction by means of language that is implemented in communicative activity of the partners ([Bacevich, 2007).

The essence of English written communication consists in production of written texts in English that possesses appropriate grammatical structure, stylistic and lexical peculiarities, that include English lexical units: words, collocations, etc. (Tarnapolsky, 2008). Proceeding from the given definition we interpret a professionally oriented written communication in English of

prospective IT specialists as the process that implies creation and exchange of English written texts with professionally oriented content that is characterized by relevant grammatical structure, stylistic and lexical peculiarities that are concerned with usage of professionally oriented vocabulary, namely IT terms. English written communication of IT specialists takes place with the aim of performing professional duties, fulfilling professional functions and roles of the specialists which hold an aforementioned post in IT sphere.

Communicative situations, functions, genres, types and features of English written communication of IT specialists

In compliance with situations of communication that are special and time circumstances in which the participants of communication exist and which prompt them to interact, guide their communicative behavior, the ways of implementing communicative intention, communicative strategies and tactics of communication are determined (Bacevich, 2007). The functions of communication comprise contact, information, inducing, cognitive, emotive, influencing and fence-mending ones (Bacevich, 2004). In reference to professionally oriented communication, a function of problem solving and assignment completion can be added to the list (Moursund, 2005, p.5). Thereafter, in the framework of the main situations of professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists, which are represented by business correspondence, correspondence with colleagues and chiefs, performance reports, the abovementioned functions of professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists are realized, namely: contact, information, inducing, cognitive, emotive, influencing and fence-mending ones.

On the basis of the analysis of functions and professional duties of IT specialists and the communicative situations of their professionally oriented written communication as well we can deduce that the genres of professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists include: private and business e-mail correspondence, texting in chats and forums, posting on electric announcement boards, memo, and reports. Along with it the listed genres exhibit different degrees of interactivity. Thus, email correspondence is characterized by a low degree of interactivity while texting in chats and forums are notable for an average degree of interactivity. Hence, posting on electric announcement boards, memo and reports have a low level of interactivity or its absence (Smirnov, 2009, p. 159). The main devices of production of

professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists are computer and Internet.

Having analyzed the works of Manuel Castells (Castells, 1992), we can outline the general features that are pertinent to professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists: available electronic transmission channel, mediation (communication occurs between its participants by means of technical, electronic communication facilities), remoteness (distance between the participants of communication and absence of immediate visual contact), hypertextuality (written text in network space changes and acquire hypertextual shape), virtuality (signs and symbols of computer-aided interaction), creolity (written texts use both linguistic means and paralinguistic devices, e.g. picture, photo, symbols, colours, fonts), stylistic heterogeneity, genre diversity, relevant online etiquette (the participants of that communication have certain communicative status that is recognized, supported and implemented by an array of special tools and is regulated by special rules).

On the basis of the analysis we can deduce that the main types of professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists, defined by the nature of interaction and status-role relations between communicators, and also by relevant application in the field of IT business, are informal (communication with colleagues), semi-formal and formal communication (communication with suppliers, clients, chiefs), analytical and scientific communication (reports).

Informal and semi-formal professionally oriented written communication in English prevails while IT specialists perform their professional functions and duties. Professionally oriented informal written communication in English of IT specialists reflects the peculiarities of spoken informal style. Professionally oriented semi-formal written communication in English of IT specialists come closer to informal spoken style (Romashenko, 2015). Therefore informal and semi-formal professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists possesses the following stylistic features: large bulk of lexical units, which are found in spoken language, specific usage of first and small letters, ignorance of spelling, usage of specific abbreviations, substitute of words or their parts by homonymous letters or figures, “smiles” and emoticons. A grammatical aspect of informal and semi-formal written communication of IT specialists is represented by such phenomena as frequent omission of auxiliary verbs (*everyone having a nice day*), absence of subject and verb inversion or absence

of auxiliary verb in questions (*you wanna ..?*), special punctuation, namely absence of apostrophe and repeated usage of a question mark and exclamation mark to render additional expressivity. A lexical aspect of informal and semi-formal written communication of IT specialists is notable for a bulk of special words and collocations, phrases and expressions related to computer terminology, especially – computer slang words. It contributes to the creation of peculiar idiolect (computer jargon)) based on specific computer vocabulary that is used as a way of self-expression of participants of communication (Dedova, 2004, p. 39-61.).

Formal written communication of IT specialists in email correspondence generally reflects the rule of epistolary genre and is characterized by the dominance of pragmatic set that is embodied in the text by a conscious communicative addressee's intention to have an effect on the addresser (Bugajchuk). Formal letters, emails are required to be concise and formal. Abbreviations of technical terminology are used to save space and time. A concise letter, email should be written in a simple and natural way, directly to the point (Shunhui Zhao, 2010). The general vocabulary, phrasal verbs, simple prepositions and conjunctions should be avoided for formal expressions that are accurate in meaning and more preferred (*to advise and inform instead of to tell*). As far as grammar in formal writing concerned, it isn't appropriate to use active verb forms with the first person, to leave out word, to use contractions etc. The main ideas are better developed by longer and more complex sentences which provide more details and descriptions.

Analytic scientific professionally oriented writing in English of IT specialists in the form of the report requires a certain structure, follows scientific style and certain format. It presents facts and data about the work done. The key features of analytic scientific writing are as follows: precision, clarity and objectivity. Precise concrete language and quantitative rather than qualitative descriptions are preferred in analytic scientific writing. There exist several stylistic conventions that enhance objectivity: preferred usage of passive voice, avoiding emotive words and first person pronouns (Mykytenko, Sulym, Kozolup, p. 42-44). What concerns the choice of terms, IT specialists tend to use familiar terms rather than obscure ones.

Conclusion

On the basis of the research the following conclusions are to be made.

Higher educational institutions in Ukraine train prospective IT specialists after the following specialties: analyst of computer system, analyst of computer database, analyst of operational and applied software, analyst of software and multimedia, computer-aided manufacturing engineer, computer system engineer, software engineer, engineer-programmer, database programmer, applied programmer, system programmer, specialists in information technologies, specialist in software design and testing, software developer, technician-programmer, system administration technician.

Job placement of specialists of IT technologies isn't confined only to IT companies, they can work at any enterprises or organizations that use modern ICT technologies. IT specialists provide: designing, testing, operation and maintenance of technical products (namely software); networks handling, database administering, analysis of customers' demands, study of the peculiarities of cooperation with suppliers and contractors, elaboration of technical specifications of software, troubleshooting, support of software application, evaluation of efficiency of the applied technological products (namely software products), implementation of new systems, launch of new technological products (including software).

Effective execution of professional duties requires IT specialists to accomplish oral exchange of information, to conduct oral and written negotiations, to provide oral and written arrangements, and also to handle correspondence in order to coordinate business activity within the system "company-external supplier (contractor)" with the aim of information provision and high quality of technologies. We claim that special attention must be paid to written communication, since correspondence constitutes company's documents and, consequently, it should be lexically, grammatically and stylistically correctly produced. A substantial amount of correspondence is maintained in English, because external suppliers or contractors of Ukrainian IT companies are overseas companies and entrepreneurs.

Professionally oriented written communication in English of prospective IT specialist is considered as the process that implies creation and exchange of English written texts with professionally oriented content that is characterized by relevant grammatical structure, stylistic and lexical peculiarities that are concerned with usage of professionally oriented vocabulary, namely IT terms.

We refer to the main situations of professionally oriented written communication in English of prospective IT specialist: business correspondence, correspondence with colleagues

and chiefs, performance reports. The genres of professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists, which are notable for different degrees of interactivity, include: private and business e-mail correspondence, texting in chats and forums, posting on electric announcement boards, memo, and reports. The main types of professionally oriented written communication in English of IT specialists, defined by the nature of interaction and status-role relations between communicators, and also by relevant application in the field of IT business, are informal (communication with colleagues), semi-formal and formal communication (communication with suppliers, clients, chiefs), analytical and scientific communication (reports). Informal and semi-formal professionally oriented written communication in English prevails while IT specialists perform their professional functions and duties. These types of professionally oriented written communication in English of prospective IT specialists possesses the following stylistic features: large bulk of lexical units, which are found in spoken language, specific usage of first and small letters, ignorance of spelling, usage of specific abbreviations, substitute of words or their parts by homonymous letters or figures, “smiles” and emoticons. The listed features contribute to the creation of peculiar idiolect (computer jargon) based on specific computer vocabulary. Formal written communication of IT specialists in email correspondence generally reflects the rule of epistolary genre and is characterized by the dominance of a conscious communicative addressee’s intention to have an effect on the addresser. Analytic scientific written communication in English of IT specialists has a clear structure, follows a certain structure and form, and reflects key features of English scientific writing, namely: precision, clarity and objectivity.

The analysis of the peculiarities of professionally oriented written communication in English of prospective IT specialists will lend themselves in the foundation of content structuring within the framework of methods of building English lexical competence in professionally oriented writing.

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