

Zadorozhnyy V. V.,

*Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages,  
Lviv Polytechnic National University*

Hasko O. L.,

*Assistant professor of the Department of Foreign Languages,  
Lviv Polytechnic National University*

## DEVELOPING STUDENTS' RHETORICAL SKILLS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF PROFESSIONAL DISCOURSE

**Summary.** The article concerns the importance and the ways of developing students' rhetorical skills within foreign language professional discourse. It contains some recommendations of both theoretical and practical character for rhetorical skills outcomes and application issues. Adequate rhetorical skills and critical thinking enable students to effectively communicate in all spheres of their social and academic environment.

**Key words:** rhetorical skills development, Aristotle's rhetorical triangle, effective rhetorical strategies, critical thinking, coherent professional discourse.

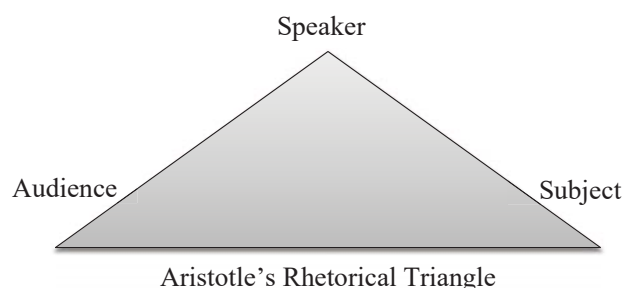
**The problem and its connection with important scientific and practical tasks.** Effective writing and speaking in academic and professional spheres are based on proper research abilities and critical thinking combined with rhetorical skills. The latter are the result of developing students' ability to communicate effectively in most academic settings, research and job-related situations within professional discourse environment.

**Analysis of the recent publications on the issue being under consideration.** "To think and to argue well, and to express oneself clearly and persuasively, are essential to every academic discipline and to public and professional life" [1]. Malmo University, for example, offers "Academic Writing and Rhetoric" course aimed at teaching students to write short academic essays for a variety of audiences and purposes "using current academic citation practices" [2]. According to the requirements university-level papers must be clear, concise and coherent corresponding to standard written English. Learning outcomes include knowledge and understanding of (1) basic elements of rhetoric taking into account purpose, content, audience, form and meaning; (2) writing in terms of prewriting, drafting writing and rewriting, peer review and editing. They distinguish fifteen genres of academic writing, namely: essays, reports, case studies, research proposals, book reviews, brief research reports, literature reviews, reflective writing, introductions, research methods/results/discussions, writing conclusions, research abstracts and, finally, research Dissertations and Theses [3]. Some of them will be dwelled upon later.

**The aim of the paper.** Since rhetorical skills are highly important in the art of research, writing and public speaking, their acquiring and mastering should be paid much attention to in the process of students' academic training. Thus, the article is aimed at some practical aspects of rhetorical skills development within professional discourse.

**The body of the paper.** Hepzibah Roskelly from University of North Carolina in the work "What Do Students Need to Know About Rhetoric?" states that according to Aristotle's traditional definition of rhetoric, it is "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" [4, p. 8]. Aristotle believed

that by observing and understanding the process of communication it was possible to develop sound and convincing arguments taking into account three elements of what we now call the rhetorical triangle (See Fig. 1). Thus, the rhetorical triangle includes three mutually correlated elements, namely, Subject, Audience and Speaker's Persona, or in other words, Content/Message/Logos, Audience/Decoder/Appeal and Pathos, Author/Encoder/Ethos.



Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle  
Fig. 1. Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle

Being balanced, they usually result in effective rhetoric outcomes, while their disbalance may diminish the ability to persuade. Nowadays, though, Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle is complemented with Context and Aim factors being graphically depicted as encircled triangle to illustrate the importance of all constituent parts of rhetorical understanding (See Fig. 2).

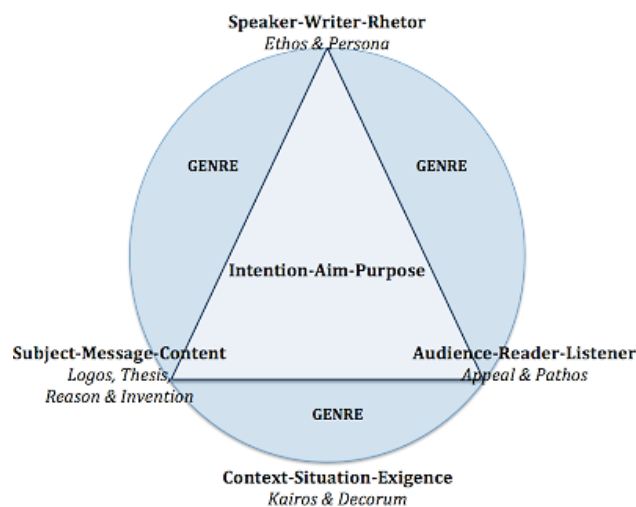


Fig. 2. Encircled complemented Rhetorical Triangle

Usually students are mostly aware of the subject since they are instructed how to carry out their research into a subject supplying

it with the corresponding evidence. Hence, considering the subject students should be taught to evaluate their knowledge, to study perspectives and to find appropriate proofs. Actually, students' rhetorical understanding is developed most effectively due to clear instructions given by the teacher e.g. Write a one page abstract, two page essay, three page report etc. using formal language and the corresponding style. Knowledge of expectations is a shortcut to readers.

Exercises aimed at students' observing and commenting on daily rhetorical situations "reinforce observation and experience as crucial skills for budding rhetoricians as well help students transfer skills to their writing and interpreting of literary and other texts" [4, p. 9].

While writing essays students may use their own observations or personal experience to appeal to their readers' emotions and interests and to produce persuasive effects exercising rhetorical control.

A rhetorical analysis especially that concerning the context or situation and the aim is a powerful tool of understanding and interpreting speakers'/writers' choices. Hence, it is much easier for students to practically trace the influence of context on rhetorical choices in form and content when they are given real contexts to work with e.g. proposals for educational reforms, writing abstracts of the professionally-oriented papers or preparing reports on R&D activities or even designing syllabus related to the subject students major in.

Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee in their book "Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students" [5] give full coverage of classical rhetorical strategies worked out by ancient Greek and Roman rhetoricians supplying modern interpretation of five canons of composing i.e. invention, arrangement, style, memory, and, finally, delivery, adjusting ancient rhetorical principles to contemporary needs and modern discourse.

According to the definition suggested by Merriam-Webster dictionary [6], "rhetoric" is:

1. the art of speaking or writing effectively: such as:
  - a. the study of principles and rules of composition formulated by critics of ancient times
  - b. the study of writing or speaking as a means of communication or persuasion
2. a. skill in the effective use of speech
  - b. type or mode of language or speech
3. verbal communication: discourse.

Rhetorical skills refer to the whole semantic structure of the lexical unit. Rhetoric, grammar and logic (or dialectic) are regarded as three ancient arts of discourse. Rhetoric focuses on informing, persuading or motivating particular audiences in specific situations. Wikipedia states that rhetoric "provides heuristics for understanding, discovering, and developing arguments for particular situations" and trains students "to speak/write effectively, as well as critically understand and analyse discourse". Students being involved into research work from the first year of studies take part in seminars, round-table discussions, conferences etc. They carry out laboratory exercises, perform a lot of individual tasks directly related to a certain field of science, work on their course projects and have the opportunity to defend their graduation papers in English, German or French. Some of the students are members of students' scientific societies and are incorporated in research groups. Regarding rhetoric as the art of persuasion it becomes clear that students can benefit from the book "Everything's an Argument" by An-

drea A. Lunsford, John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters since it enables them to analyse all kinds of arguments finding the most effective ones.

Classical rhetoric concepts reveal the strategies of argument within contemporary discourse. As stated by Sharon Millar in "Rhetoricians at Work", "combining the issues of cognition with structural, linguistic concerns, rhetoric permits a more holistic view of discourse production" [8, p. 127]. According to the author, rhetoric has "holistic and multi-faceted approach to discourse, not only as a process and product, but as action" [ibid, p. 115].

Rhetorical skills are not determined by the sphere of their application. They are of universal character and of wide academic and occupational usage ranging from mere understanding of ESP discourse to its producing by making prepared clear detailed individual presentations on the topic of the research in the course of the diploma projects defence using cohesive devices to link utterances into logical coherent discourse accompanied with appropriate body language. Special attention should be paid to gesturing as the article on gesture definition given in encyclopedia.com reads that gesture refers to "a significant movement of limb or body or the use of such movements as expression of feelings or rhetorical device" [9]. Thus, developed rhetoric skills enable students identify author's attitude or viewpoint expressed in authentic text as well as writer's purpose and impact achieved.

Professional rhetorical skills competence is acquired by students of different branches in real-life academic and job-related areas and situations meeting the requirements of ESP course and those of future professionals expectations. At the same time "topic areas and text types should be specified according to job-related academic and/or professional needs and contexts" [10, p. 36] with an accent on critical thinking. E.g. (1) Make an analytical review in the form of a round-table discussion; (2) Take part in the dispute on advantages and disadvantages in World Wide Web archiving etc. Professional competence including rhetoric component can be gained in the process of performing certain job-related tasks "which become highly specialised in terms of vocabulary and profession-bound behaviour" [10, p. 36]. E.g. practical rhetorical skills for students majoring in Museology, Libraries and Archives may be trained in the process of performing the following tasks: (1) Trace the history of archivists profession. Prepare your own presentation on the topic using additional sources of information; (2) Make up an interview concerning archival science, its standards and provenance; (3) Take part in a mini-conference dedicated to the artwork collection.

Obviously, it takes time for rhetorical skills to be developed. It occurs gradually by students being engaged in training of:

1. compiling ESP summaries e.g. (1) Write a half-page summary dealing with preservation, its history and techniques; (2) Read the following text and write a one-page summary of Unix history;

2. writing essays and short stories e.g. (1) Write an essay in 300 words concerning the problem of journalism ethics and standards; (2) Make up a professionally oriented short story using the list of terms and abbreviations;

3. making written professional reviews: e.g. Make a review concerning Unix standards and components etc. The following activities and corresponding tasks are significant for students in obtaining and mastering their rhetorical skills:

- analysing e.g. (1) Make an independent analysis and get ready for the participation in an interview on the issues indicated; (2) Analyse Internet resources in terms of text, moving image, audio collection etc; (3) Characterize the process of SEO;

- giving opinion e.g. (1) Express your opinion on the problems of modern computing; (2) Express your opinion on the information

contained in the text “Infotainment vs Journalism”; (3) Comment on different AI approaches;

- discussing some certain issues e.g. (1) Discuss: (a) the information of the following text/Unit in the form of a round-table talk; (b) online journalism and its characteristic features; (2) Organize mini-discussions based on the following Figures (1–4).

Thus, the more students are used to the tasks introduced by the verbs “consider”, “compare”, “clarify”, “define”, “summarize”, “comment/speak on”, “discuss”, the better their rhetorical skills.

Advantageous strategies of rhetorical skills should be in the focus of students’ attention. Proper comprehension of different registers for different purposes i.e. the way of communicating with colleagues, employers, people of different ages and social/professional status, serves as a sound basis for successful application of rhetorical skills. Telephoning techniques and strategies also belong here. The same concerns netiquette issues.

**Conclusions.** For mastering adequate rhetorical skills it is highly recommended for students to constantly keep in mind rhetorical triangle elements while performing all kinds of ESP discourse tasks as well as academic/professional needs and contexts activities. Improving rhetorical skills, which consequently results in students’ sound reasoning and profound argumentation, leads to successful participation in extended discussions, round-table talks, debates, seminars, meetings etc. It also causes a considerable improvement of the written discourse due to clear, logically-structured utterances forming coherent detailed texts for a variety of purposes in standard format within academic and professional environment.

#### References:

1. Rhetoric Across the Curriculum. URL: <https://www.calvin.edu/academic/rhetoric/?dotcmsredir=1>.
2. URL: <https://edu.mah.se/sv/course/EN208L>.
3. Academic writing: Genres in academic writing. URL: <https://www.uefap.com/writing/genre/gentrefram.htm>.
4. URL: [https://securemedia.collegeboard.org/apc/ap06\\_englang\\_roskelly\\_50098.pdf](https://securemedia.collegeboard.org/apc/ap06_englang_roskelly_50098.pdf).
5. Crowley Sharon, Hawhee Debra. Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2004. 462 p.
6. URL: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rhetoric>.
7. Lunsford, Andrea A., Ruszkiewicz, John J., Walters K. Everything’s an Argument. New York: Bedford, St. Martin’s, 2004.
8. The Discourse of Europe: Talk and text in everyday life / Edited by Sharon Millar, John Wilson. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007. 200 p.
9. URL: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O128-gestures.html>.
10. English for Specific Purposes [ESP] National Curriculum for Universities / British Council. Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Kyiv, 2005. 107 p.

#### **Задорожний В. В., Гасько О. Л. Розвиток риторичних навичок студентів у рамках фахового дискурсу**

**Анотація.** Стаття присвячена розвитку риторичних навичок студентів у рамках іншомовного академічного та професійного дискурсу. Вона містить деякі рекомендації як теоретичного, так і практичного характеру стосовно застосування риторичних навичок. Адекватні риторичні навички та критичне мислення дають змогу студентам ефективно спілкуватися в усіх сферах їх соціального та навчального середовища.

**Ключові слова:** розвиток риторичних навичок, риторичний трикутник Аристотеля, ефективні риторичні стратегії, критичне мислення, когерентний професійний дискурс.

#### **Задорожний В. В., Гасько А. Л. Развитие риторических навыков студентов в рамках профессионального дискурса**

**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена развитию риторических навыков студентов в рамках иноязычного академического и профессионального дискурса. Она содержит некоторые рекомендации как теоретического, так и практического свойства по применению риторических навыков. Соответствующие риторические навыки и критическое мышление способствуют эффективному общению студентов во всех сферах их социальной и учебной среды.

**Ключевые слова:** развитие риторических навыков, риторический треугольник Аристотеля, эффективные риторические стратегии, критическое мышление, когерентный профессиональный дискурс.