

## ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES IN THE SYSTEM OF BRANCHES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

### АНГЛІЙСЬКА МОВА ЗА ПРОФЕСІЙНИМ СПРЯМУВАННЯМ У СИСТЕМІ ГАЛУЗЕЙ ВИКЛАДАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

*This article aims at presenting insights regarding the peculiar role of English for Specific Purposes in the system of English Language Teaching. Attempts to define area of English for Specific Purposes in language teaching, as well as its typical features, sub-branches have been highlighted. The paper focuses on the significance of general distinction between General English and English for Specific Purposes. Moreover, the basic types of English for Specific Purposes are examined. This paper is also intended to offer a review of the literature on English for Specific Purposes.*

**Key words:** English for Specific Purposes, General English, English for Academic Purposes, needs analysis, absolute and variable characteristics.

*Статтю присвячено представленню виключної ролі англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням у системі викладання англійської мови. Виділено спроби окреслити сферу англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням у вивченні мови, а також типових особливостей, підгалуздей. У роботі акцентується увага на загальному розмежуванні між загальною англійською та англійською мовою за професійним спрямуванням. Крім того, розглядаються основні типи англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням.*

*У роботі зроблено огляд літератури щодо англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням.*

**Ключові слова:** англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням, загальна англійська, англійська мова для академічних цілей, аналіз потреб, абсолютні та змінні характеристики.

*Статья посвящена представлению исключительной роли английского языка по профессиональному направлению в системе преподавания английского языка. Выделены попытки очертить сферу английского языка по профессиональному направлению в изучении языка, а также типичных особенностей, подотраслей. В работе акцентируется внимание на общем разграничении между общим английским и английским языком по профессиональному направлению. Кроме того, рассматриваются основные типы английского языка по профессиональному направлению. В работе также сделан обзор литературы относительно английского языка по профессиональному направлению.*

**Ключевые слова:** английский язык по профессиональному направлению, общий английский, английский язык для академических целей, анализ потребностей, абсолютные и переменные характеристики.

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**General statement of the problem and its connection with important scientific or practical aims.** The pervasive use of the English language as a universal method for communication is in steady development. This reality is reflected in various fields and in different areas where English is considered as a working device. Keeping in mind the end goal to achieve set objectives, English courses are presented at all the levels of the educational system and especially at the university through English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The last is the common and well established instructing procedure that the language teachers really use to accomplish the particular learners' needs, and meet the social necessity.

Since the 1960s ESP has turned out to be a stand-out amongst the most dynamic branches of Applied Linguistics in general and of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) specifically. Among the reasons that could clarify its essentialness and its extension is, as previously stated, the development of English as a world dialect, thus the need to adapt to the different teaching situations and needs that such a position realizes. Such need infers a comprehension of its advancement, types and the distinctive educating ideas of ESP.

**Analysis of recent studies and publications.** In the scientific and methodical literature, foreign language is disclosed as a subject in the system of higher professional education by authors from different positions. Thus, the problems of teaching a foreign language in a professional direction are covered in publications by N. Halskova, A. Waters, T. Hutchinson, P. Obratsov, O. Ivanova, O. Petrashchuk, O. Sereda, and others. Problems of teaching a foreign language in higher education as a means of communication were studied by I. Bim, M. Gez, I. Zimnya; problems of formation of communicative skills by means of a foreign language – V. Kuzovlev, V. Kostomarov, A. Leontiev; the formation of a professional orientation – L. Gegeczgory, N. Gez, M. Davydova, R. Millurd.

Today, according to leading Ukrainian scientists (V. Andrushchenko, P. Bekh, I. Zyazyun, V. Kremen, G. Onkovych, V. Redko, etc.), the quality of higher education depends to a large extent on what the level of foreign languages is among university graduates. Nowadays, more and more attention is paid to the aspects of learning a foreign language as a language of professional communication. So, the problems of teaching a foreign language for professional orientation are highlighted (ESP) in publications by

O. Polyakov, N. Galskova, A. Waters, T. Hutchinson, O. Bykonya, V. Borschovetska, A. Gordeeva, T. Korzh, G. Grynyuk, T. Kameneva, L. Lichko, Yu. Manko, I. Melnyk, N. Odegova, O. Petrashchuk, O. Sereda, V. Sokolov and others.

**Singling out of previously unsolved parts of the general problem.** ESP is not a separate movement concerned only with the “special” and “restricted” language of particular fields. It is an attempt to draw together some of the many lines of growth and to put them in a wider language teaching perspective. ESP is ultimately only significant if it is seen as developing from and contributing to, the language teaching and learning profession as a whole. In fact, it was actually necessary in the early stages of development for those types of language teaching which could be termed “Specific Purpose” to forge their own terms reference, and to be identified as a new and promising movement. It is of incredible significance to begin with the fundamental definitions expressed by the linguists concerning ESP as a branch of English Language Teaching. But even nowadays, it is hard for language specialists to clearly define the area of ESP because it is such a vast field of teaching. That in turn causes problems in understanding the goals and objectives of study process. Notwithstanding, ESP is seen contrastingly by the researchers in terms of its qualities and usefulness.

Taking everything into consideration, the **aim of the article** is to attempt to define area of ESP within the frame of Branches of English Language teaching and to identify its main characteristic features, sub-branches form different points of view.

**Main body of research.** Clear varieties in the interpretation of ESP definitions can be observed: ‘Some people described ESP as simply being the teaching of English for any purpose that could be specified. Others, however, were more precise describing it as the teaching of English used in academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes [1, p. 9–10]. ESP is generally used to refer to the teaching of English for a clearly utilitarian purpose [5, p. 2]. In other words, English ought to be taught to obtain particular language skills using real situations, in a way that enables them to employ English in their future occupation, or to evaluate English discourse identified with their area of speciality.

On average, students study English ‘not because they are interested in the English Language or English culture as such, but because they need English for study or work purposes’ [7, p. 2]. In ESP, language is learnt not for its own sake or for the sake of gaining a general education, but to smooth the path to entry or greater linguistic efficiency in academic, professional or workplace environments’ [2, p. 18]. This indicates the part of ESP is to help students to develop the required capacities so as to use them in

a particular field of request, occupation, or working environment.

P. Strevens identified ESP as having absolute and variable characteristics. Absolute characteristics: regard ESP teaching as designed to meet specified needs of the learner; related in content (i. e. in its themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations and activities; centred on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of this discourse; in contrast with General English (GE) [8, p. 12]. Variable characteristics: ESP may be, but is not necessarily restricted as to the language skills to be learned (e. g. reading only); not taught according to any pre-ordained methodology [8, p. 13].

T. Dudley-Evans and St. John offered modified definition. Absolute characteristics: ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner; makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves; is centred on the language (grammar, lexis, and register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities. Variable Characteristics: ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines; may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English; is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level; is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students; most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners [4, p. 4].

The definition Dudley-Evans offers is plainly impacted by that of Strevens, despite the fact that he has enhanced it considerably by evacuating irrefutably the absolute characteristic that ESP is “in contrast with General English”, also changed and expanded the quantity of variable attributes. The division of ESP into absolute and variable characteristics, in particular, is extremely useful in settling contentions about what is and isn’t ESP. From the definition, we can see that ESP can but is not necessarily concerned with a specific discipline, nor does it have to be pointed at a particular age group or ability range.

Clearly, the absolute characteristics are particular to ESP in light of the fact that learners’ needs are of focal significance when planning language activities. Concerning the variable highlights, ESP courses can be intended for a particular group utilizing the definite teaching system; nevertheless, all learners’ categories and disciplines can be concerned with ESP. Thus ESP ought to be seen just as an “approach” to instructing, or what T. Dudley-Evans and St. John represent as an “attitude of mind”. Also, T. Hutchinson and A. Waters expressed that “ESP should properly be seen not as any particular language product but as an approach to language

teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning” [5, p. 19]. ESP guiding principle is “Tell me what you need English for, and I will tell you the English that you need” [5, p. 20].

If we look at the English language Teaching Tree (Figure 1) below, it could be seen that ESP is closely interrelated with other branches and sub-branches. It is one of the footings of English language Teaching in general, contrasting to GE.

According to the chart, English language Teaching (ELT) is the general name for everything that teachers of English as a Foreign language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) teach.

General English (GE) – this is by far the most popular branch of ELT. The central assumption is that all learners of English can benefit from learning the same core language, including a standard grammar syllabus, everyday vocabulary and the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Business English (BE) – this term describes courses that are of interest to a large range of working professionals, and university students preparing for work. It includes generic skills such as English for meetings, presentations and business writing. Common topics include the basics of finance, marketing and management, which should be useful (or at least not totally irrelevant) to all business people.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) – this involves training learners in the particular skills and language they need in order to function in a particular set of professional situations in English, learners are grouped according to their needs (not just their language level), and the trainer tries to tailor each course to the learners’ particular needs.

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) – this involves training learners to function effectively in English at college or university. It may include general study skills

(e. g. how to make notes, how to write an academic paper) as well as subject-specific language (e. g. English for Media Studies, English for Chemistry).

Vocational Education (VocEd) – this is a branch of education (not branch of ELT) where learners learn the skills needed for a particular job or vocation. It may include training in practical language skills, where there are relevant to the learners’ vocational needs.

English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) – this is a crossover between ESP and EAP. It focuses on subject-specific language and skills for university students (e. g. English for Media Studies, English for Chemistry.). This includes specialist terminology and the conventions for writing particular documents. It is usually contrasted with EGAP.

English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) – this focuses on the generic skills (e. g. how to make notes, how to write an academic paper) and language (e. g. sophisticated academic vocabulary and grammar) needed by all university and college students.

English for Workplace (EWP) – these courses are for professional who are already working in their chosen fields, and who need English to perform more effectively at work, e. g. writing business letters, making business phone calls, reading professional reports, giving a business presentation, etc. Another name for this type of course is EOP (English for Occupational Purposes).

Content and language Integrated Learning (CLIL) – this is an approach, mainly for younger learners in schools, where school subjects are taught (partly or wholly) in English. The principle is that learners learn English almost as a by-product of learning another school subject.

Content-Based Instruction (CBI) – this is an approach to teaching English through relevant, interesting and motivating subject-specific content. It is

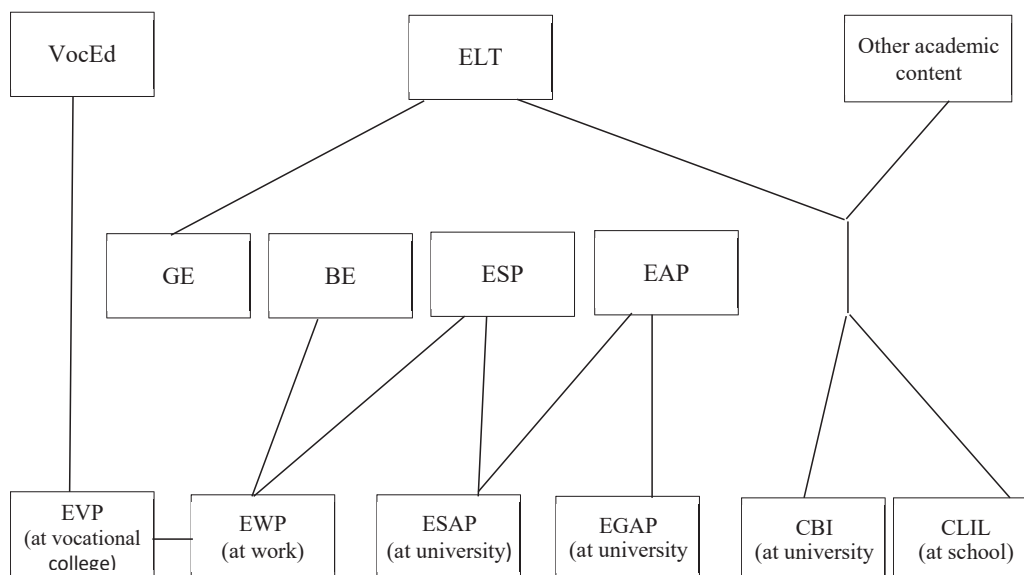


Fig. 1. Branches of English Language Teaching (Tree of ELT)

manly used to help non- native speakers studying at English-speaking universities to keep up with their native-speaker classmates. The focus is on the content, not the language.

English for Vocational Purposes (EVP) – this involves teaching English to young adults in vocational colleges and similar establishments. The focus is on the practical language they will need in their future careers. It is very similar in content to EWP.

As oppose to the present classification, David Carter identifies three types of ESP [3, p. 132]:

1. *English as a restricted language*. The language used by waiters or air traffic controllers are cases of English as a restricted language. R. Mackay and A. Mountford unmistakably represent the contrast between restricted language and language with this statement: “<...> the language of international air-traffic control could be regarded as “special”, in the sense that the repertoire required by the controller is strictly limited and can be accurately determined situationally, as might be the linguistic needs of a dining-room waiter or air-hostess. However, such restricted repertoires are not languages, just as a tourist phrase book is not grammar. Knowing a “restricted language” would not allow the speaker to communicate effectively in novel situation or in contexts outside the vocational environment” [6, p. 4–5].

2. *English for Academic and Occupational Purposes*. The second type of ESP identified by D. Carter is English for Academic and Occupational Purposes. In the Hutchinson & Waters’ “Tree of ELT”, ESP is broken down into three branches:

- a) English for Science and Technology (EST);
- b) English for Business and Economics (EBE);
- c) English for Social Studies (ESS).

Each type is connected with a particular field of scientific knowledge as business, technology, and economy or the social fields all in all; with its various and large amount of human sciences studies. Additionally, each of these is divided into further sub-branches: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). An example of EOP for the ESS branch is “English for Psychology” whereas an example of EAP for the ESS branch is “English for Teaching”. Yet Hutchinson and Waters’ classification of EAP and EOP is somewhat misty; that is why further clarification is needed in order to distinguish between them.

T. Hutchinson and A. Waters note that there is not a clear-cut distinction between EAP and EOP: “<...> people can work and study simultaneously; it is also likely that in many cases the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later when the student takes up, or returns to, a job” [5, p. 16]. However, the distinction can be made in the sphere of convenience. English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) prepares individuals to perform on the job, using English for communication. This kind by no

means would be valuable for the preparation of legal counsellors for instance and administrative managers aiming at reaching a proficiency level. From another point of view, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is applied to common centre elements also known as “study skills”. They fundamentally comprise writing academic texts, taking notes and observations, tuning in to formal academic discourses and making presentations.

Apparently, this explains Carter’s justification for categorizing EAP and EOP under the same type of ESP. It gives the idea that D. Carter is implying the final aim for both EAP and EOP are one in the same: employment. However, in spite of the final aim being identical, the methods taken to accomplish the end is altogether different indeed. It is contended that EAP and EOP are diverse as far as focus on notions of cognitive academic proficiency versus basic interpersonal skills.

3. *English with specific topics*. The third type of ESP identified by D. Carter is English with specific topics [3, p. 135]. He notes that it is only here where stress shifts from reason to topic. This type of ESP is uniquely concerned with anticipated future English needs of, for example, researchers requiring English for postgraduate reading studies, attending conferences or working abroad. But this is not a separate type of ESP. Rather it is an integral component of ESP courses or programs which centre on situational language. This situational language has been resolved in view of the understanding needs analysis’ findings of authentic language used in target workplace settings.

#### **Conclusions and prospects for further research.**

Thus, as we can see, the introduction of English for Specific Purposes is considered as the immediate aftereffect of the world development. In spite of the fact that the theory of ESP differentiates away from the regardless in ELT, it has generally come along with needs analysis and preparing students to set up successful communicative ground in the tasks related to their branch of study or work. Nevertheless, the teaching of ESP has been a separate activity within ELT. Clearly, teaching English for General Purposes and teaching English for Specific Purposes have some common features since both of them convey important contemplations in linguistic improvements, teaching strategies and methods. Nonetheless, what truly separates ESP educators from their colleagues teaching General English is the need to think about the necessities of different fields of specialty and the inspiration to adjust these prerequisites into the language classroom. The main distinguishing feature of its own methodological base as well as its own research from various disciplines including applied linguistics. Finally, the learners’ needs-related knowledge and the need for teaching that specific knowledge are what frame the nature of ESP.

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