ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES: FROM ORIGINS TO CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

АНГЛІЙСЬКА МОВА ПРОФЕСІЙНОГО СПРЯМУВАННЯ: ВІД ВИТОКІВ ДО СУЧАСНИХ ТЕНДЕНЦІЙ

The paper reviews the foundation and formation of ESP. The main attention is paid to a number of theories and approaches associated with the development of the discipline. Particularly, the learning-centered approach has gained its popularity because it takes into account cognitive activities underlying learning and focuses rather on the process than the result.

Methodological approaches underpinned by learners' active cognitive and emotional involvement have become central in ESP. For example, Social and Emotional Learning approach links emotional intelligence to social interactions so that students become successful academically and outside of school. Critical treatment is given to the competence-based approach which loses its relevance due to its futuristic aspirations to high professional standards and its ignorance of tools to be mastered by students.

The main concern of the paper is ESP specialists' activities and finding the ways to enhance their professional expertise. Needs analysis guides methodological choices and other kinds of work, such as course design, material selection, and evaluation. For this reason, the paper describes the terminological paradigm introduced by Hutchinson and Waters. Through the differentiation of target needs and learning needs, the authors explain the logic behind learners' assessment. It becomes evident that focusing on the final result is not the way to proceed with teaching and learning. Instead, more subtle approaches should be introduced. The problem is compounded by instructors' lack of knowledge of the subject area. As part of a solution, universities employ team-teaching with content area specialists and offer dual programs. However, the issue of limited expertise of ESP specialists has become less urgent because of unprecedented technological development. Technology-enhanced teaching is the latest strategy implemented to compensate for deep content unavailability at ESP classrooms.

The paper considers the possibility of employing various methods and approaches while teaching ESP, as well as applying an eclectic approach to teaching. The key to successful language learning and teaching lies in understanding the structure and processes of learning.

Key words: *learning-centred approach, needs analysis, teachers' expertise, teachers' activities, computer-based learning.*

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діяльності, які є основою навчання, і зосереджується на самому процесі, а не результаті. Центральними для курсу «Англійська мова професійного спрямування» стали методологічні підходи, які ґрунтуються на пізнавальній та емоційній активності здобувачів. Наприклад, модель соціально-емоційного навчання поєднує емоційний інтелект із соціальною взаємодією для покращення результатів навчання та успішної повсякденної діяльності. Компетентнісний підхід оцінюється критично, адже він втрачає свою актуальність через його потенційну спрямованість на високі професійні стандарти, однак нехтує механізмами їх досягнення.

Виклад зосереджується на основних видах діяльності викладачів курсу «Англійська мова професійного спрямування» та на пошуці шляхів покращення їхньої професійної компетентності. Аналіз потреб зумовлює вибір методів та навчального матеріалу, впливає на розроблення курсу та оцінювання результатів. З огляду на це у статті представлена термінологічна парадигма, описана Хатчінсоном та Уотерсом. Через розрізнення цільових потреб (програмних компетенцій) та навчальних потреб автори розкривають сутність оцінювання здобувачів. Стає очевидним, що зосереджуватися на досягненні кінцевого результату у викладанні та навчанні не варто. Натомість необхідно скористатися більш гнучкими підходами. Ситуація ускладнюється й тим, що викладачі не мають достатніх знань із професійної сфери здобувачів. Для вирішення проблеми університети залучають до навчання іноземної мови викладачів спеціальних дисциплін, а також пропонують дуальні програми. Проте питання недостатніх знань зі спеціальної дисципліни у викладачів «Англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням» втрачає свою актуальність через безпрецедентний розвиток технологій. Впровадження цифрових технологій у навчання – це новітня стратегія, поклинана компенсувати відсутність глибинної проблематики на заняттях.

У підсумку вважається за можливе застосувати будь-які методи та підходи у викладанні «Англійської за професійним спрямуванням», як і користуватися еклектичним підходом. Запорука успішного навчання і викладання полягає в розумінні структури та процесу навчання.

Ключові слова: *орієнтація на процес навчання, аналіз потреб, професійна компетентність викладачів, види діяльності викладачів, комп'ютерне навчання.*

У статті розглядаються поява і розвиток дисципліни «Англійська мова професійного спрямування». Головна увага приділяється теоріям та підходам, які сприяли становленню дисципліни. Зокрема, орієнтація на процес пізнання здобула популярність завдяки врахуванню законів когнітивної

Problem statement. As far back as 1987, Hutchinson & Waters [14] described a number of issues that educators had encountered while teaching ESP. Currently, many educators still feel alienated by the course content that they teach due to their limited knowledge of the subject area. Often ESP specialists find themselves amidst heated discussions about desirable but hardly achievable goals, which prompts them to try different approaches to attain desirable results. According

to Hutchinson & Waters [14, p. 19] all university courses, regardless of their content, have become, in practical terms, "products". Materials are written on undefined criteria; cosmetic syllabi are created to satisfy sponsors, teachers, students et al. Learning factors are undervalued. "We have, in effect, been more concerned with arriving than with the journey" [14, p. 39]. To prove them right or wrong, we need to consider how ESP has changed since then. How different is it from other varieties of language teaching? What drives both teaching and learning ESP nowadays?

Literature review. A notion "English for Specific Purposes" emerges in the 1960s. The works of Ewer and Latorre [12], Swales [22], Bates & Dudley-Evans [2], Selinker and Trimble [21], Donovan [10], Inman [16] and some others, researching scientific and technical language, opened the way to determining the features of specific situations and developing the learner's course on their basis. In the 1970s, the range of studies, serving particular professional groups, greatly extends [6; 9; 17].

At the initial stage of development, ESP was concerned with analyzing the linguistic characteristics of specific areas of work or study [12; 13; 22]. Consequently, a register of particular grammatical and lexical forms, such as the present simple tense, the passive voice, conditionals, nominal compounds etc were under the study while a variety of features of General English were neglected.

The next development in ESP was marked by focusing on the sentence level. Then attention shifted to discourse mechanisms producing meaning. As a result, research was aimed at identifying the organizational patterns in text and specifying the linguistic means by which these patterns are signalled. These patterns would then form the syllabus of the ESP course [14, p. 11].

In the 1980s, the ESP course design targeted situations with which students were to deal and then carried out an analysis of the linguistic features of those situations. This process was labeled as "needs analysis" or "target situation analysis" [14, p. 11]. This model placed the learner's needs at the centre of course design. Investigating into processes underlying language use extended to the area of defining skills and strategies. Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking were taught with using reasoning and interpreting strategies.

New discoveries in the field of linguistics and educational psychology, as well as growing demand for English to suit particular needs, shifted attention from language learning to the question of **how people learn**. At this stage, theorists focused on learning activities (tasks, exercises, teaching techniques). The learning-centred approach encourages learners' investment and participation. Methodological approaches, such as interest, enjoyment, creativity,

problem-solving etc, were interwoven, in the educational process [3; 14].

Learning as an emotional experience has been employed since the 1990s. The idea behind the concept is to develop the positive emotions and provide tools for dealing with the negative ones. Emotional intelligence is linked to social interactions to enhance academic performance. This approach is known as SEL (Social and Emotional Learning). The model puts less emphasis on the product (the right answer) and more on the process of getting an answer [14, p. 129].

In the 1990s, the **competency-based approach** was reinvigorated by rapid global developments which require competitive and efficient professionals. Many countries acknowledge the importance of acquiring varies skills by students in their public documents, and many list a number of specific skills or competencies that the education system has to provide. Most frequently identified skills are communication, creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving [7, p. 4]. Competencies or skills are perceived as markers of a sustainable future to which current education aspires. However, knowledge acquisition requires numerous tools to be mastered by students.

The latest theoretical advances focus on the learner as a member of larger socioeconomic and political systems, holding multiple race, class, and gender subject positions. The emphasis is put on the conflicting perspectives that the learner faces beyond work and study – as a parent, a consumer, a citizen, a member of vernacular communities [5], and the communities they dream of joining [7, p. 5].

The purpose of this article is to review the major developments of "English for Specific Purposes" as a discipline, to address issues related to ESP specialists' expertise, and to identify, in research literature, modern approaches to teaching the English language.

Discussion. **What is ESP**? The term mainly refers to "specific spoken and written English, usually unfamiliar to the average speaker, which required to carry out specific academic or workplace tasks, such as dissertation writing for academic purposes, doctor-patient dialog for medical purposes, technical documentation for engineering purposes, or hazardous substance labeling for safety purposes" [20, p. 207].

Orr considers General English as a prerequisite to ESP. The goal of General English is to help learners acquire English for general contexts (e.g., ordering food at a restaurant), but ESP is needed to train them for mastering special contexts (e.g., courtroom debate) "which can be far more complex and difficult to pick up on one's own". Consequently, ESP is tailored for people "who requires special skills to carry out highly specialized tasks for which general English may not prove sufficient" [20, pp. 207–208].

On the contrary, Hutchinson & Waters claim that ESP is not different in kind from any other form of language teaching, in that it should be based in the

first instance on principles of effective and efficient learning. Though the content of learning may vary there is no reason to suppose that the process of learning should be any different for the ESP learner than for the General English learner. On this premise, they base the following conclusion, "There is, in other words, no such thing as an ESP methodology, merely methodologies that have been applied in ESP classrooms, but could just as well have been used in the learning of any kind of English" [14, p. 18]. This mean that ESP is seen as a content-driven rather than methods-driven variety.

Focusing on a certain approach leads to neglecting the complexity of the learning process. It often happens that not much time is allotted for mastering the content of the course. Skills, or competencies targeted as desirable, in practice, are achieved by not many students. Little experience with the special literature puts constrains on their achievements.

However, process-oriented learning does not treat ESP as a self-efficient course from which learners emerge as proficient target situation performers. Instead, the ESP course and the target situation are seen as a continuum of constantly developing degrees of proficiency, enabling the learners to achieve what they can under the existing constrains. Thus, students are aware of their abilities and limitations, and rely on motivation so that they can continue to improve (Holmes)

Where does training take place? It can be provided anywhere: at a graduate school, at a factory, in corporate settings etc.

Who is the provider? According to Orr, "providers may be tenured faculty, trainers / consultants from a private agency, or in-house language specialists within a major international corporation" [20, p. 207]. Our interest is confined to university learning. This is why we consider information solely related to faculty members.

It has been admitted that ESP instructors possess limited field-specific knowledge. They are not always good judges of what will interest and motivate their own students. For this reason, universities implement team teaching with a content-area specialist, linking language and subject-area classes. Another solution to the problem is training in both the target subject area, for example, law or medicine, and applied linguistics. Dual professionalism would seem to provide "the best of both worlds but requires a breadth and depth of commitment to two fields that few are willing to make" [3, p. 140].

Some researchers claim that it is enough to know about an area, its values, epistemological bases, and preferred genres. The lack of special knowledge may be compensated by cultivation respect for learner knowledge and perspectives, intellectual curiosity and flexibility, and enjoyment of improvisational problem-solving [3; 14].

What are the provider's key activities in ESP? Dudley-Evans and John [11] identified the main stages leading to the gradual implementation of ESP as

1. needs analysis,
2. course design,
3. material selection,
4. teaching and learning, and
5. evaluation

These activities are interdependent, may frequently overlap and not necessarily occur in a linear sequence. However, the foremost importance is attached to **needs analysis**. Basically, needs have been considered in terms of **target situation** requiring certain knowledge and abilities which the learner will learn in order to be able to perform to the necessary degree of competence in the target situation.

To analyse **the learner's needs**, researchers have developed a number of frameworks. Hutchinson & Waters [14, pp. 53–64] based their model on differentiating **learning needs** (describing participants, ways of developing their knowledge in certain educational settings) and **target needs** (what the learner needs to do in the target situation). This model deserves a closer look because it provides a number of important distinctions, especially in its "target needs" part.

Target needs is a general term which is described through **necessities**, **lacks**, and **wants**. *Necessitie*s are the type of need determined by the demands of the target situation, that is, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation. For example, a businessman or woman might need to write business letters, to communicate effectively at sales conferences, to get necessary information from sales catalogues and so on. He or she will presumably also need to know the linguistic features – discoursal, functional, structural, lexical – which are commonly used in the situations identified [14, p. 55].

Lacks are the necessities which the learners have not acquired. Accordingly, assessment of the "learning gap" between target language use and current learner proficiencies is deficiencies analysis [23, p. 71].

Wants signify what| the learners want or feel they need. In objective sense, actual learners play no active role in assessing target needs. But it is quite possible that the learners' views will conflict with the perceptions of other interested parties: course designers, sponsors, teachers. It is also quite likely that the views of sponsor and teacher will be different [14, p. 57].

The learner's assessment is done prior to instruction in order to determine where skill and information gaps exist so that ESP specialists could use an appropriate approach. Usually they conduct needs assessment, design and implement specialized curricula in response to identified needs.

Nowadays needs assessment is no longer viewed as a discovery-based on presessional data collection. It is rather seen as negotiation and agreement between all engaged parties. Moreover, learners are recognized as equally important contributors to the course and they should be empowered to participate in needs assessment alongside ESP professionals [4].

Technology and contemporary strategies. Currently, the issue of limited expertise of ESP specialists is not acute because of unprecedented development of technology. Technology-enhanced teaching is the latest strategy implemented to compensate for specialism unavailability at ESP classrooms.

There is an urgent need for newly designed ESP materials and curricula integrating computer-assisted learning approaches (such as linguistic gaming, textual charts and videoconferencing collaborations with professional and online learning communities) [18, p. 838].

Technology-driven education not only enhances learning, but also differentiates it according to individual abilities. It fosters the self-awareness of individual learning style, the ability to manage the variety of digital resources. It helps develop critical and higher-level thinking skills needed in the modern competitive world. As a means of international communication, it prepares students for future encounters with foreigners, spreads the message about globalization, cultural differences, the importance of learning foreign languages.

However, human interaction still is a powerful source of learning. Research literature provides in abundance the examples of novel strategies, such as community-based projects which allow students to participate in local life, improve the quality of their lives, and contribute to their communities Investigation of real-world problems helps students feel empowered, especially when their suggestions are taken into account by decision-makers [1, p. 146].

Conclusion. The literature review indicates that the concept of language variation gave rise to the type of ESP which was based on register analysis. The teaching of professional language varieties is content-based with close attention to an area of use (technical manuals, academic texts, business meetings, advertisements, doctor-patient communication etc.).

Supporting Hutchinson & Waters's view about the possibility of employing any methods and approaches while teaching ESP, we also agree that it is wise to apply an eclectic approach by "taking what is useful from each theory and trusting also in the evidence of your own experience as a teacher" (Hutchinson & Waters, 51).

After the decades of teaching and experimenting, practitioners have come to the conclusion that the key to successful language learning and teaching lies not in analysis of the nature of language but in understanding the structure and processes of learning. If we aim at certain results, we need to improve the techniques, methods and content of language teaching. In other words, we must shift our attention from desirable skills or competencies to sound principles of learning.

Although a "predetermined syllabus" is a fact of life, it is also true that it needs to be regularly updated due to economic and technology developments. On the one hand, a digital reality makes an educational process more complex, on the other hand, it is a necessary extension of curricular activities compensating for the depth of content underrepresented in ESP teaching. According to Morgan (2009, 94), teachers will not be replaced by computers, but teachers who use computers for instructional purposes may replace those who do not.

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