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THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO TEACHING ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

Summary. The article has proposed a brief analysis of key notions about English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and examined major ideas and basic concepts that currently influence ESP. Our scientific research has provided the definitions and the distinction between General English (GE) and English for Specific Purposes, as well as the differences of ESP types. As a specific approach to language teaching, ESP requires that all decisions as to content and method be based on the learner's goals for learning. English for Specific Purposes is considered in this study as a learner-centered approach that emphasizes the importance of creating learning opportunities that improve students' learning. This work also reviews the theoretical background concerning the Communicative Approach to foreign language teaching. Such an approach focuses less on the formal structures, but more on the functional aspects of language, or the use of language in everyday situations.

Key words: communication, a learner-centered approach, English for Specific Purposes.

Statement of the research problem. With the development of market relations in Ukraine, establishing new international contacts and implementation of a broad exchange of experts, mastering foreign languages has become one of the most important requirements that directly affect the professional activity of future specialists. Increasing demands for the level of language competence of professionals have been caused by the deployment of innovative processes in society that are associated with the formation and training of specialists of a new type. In recent years, the efforts of scientists, educators have been aimed at finding such universal methods of foreign language teaching that allow reaching a higher level of training by integration of language and professional spheres.

The teaching of English as an international language (EIL) cannot remain insulated and isolated from globalization's impact on the formation of individual identities of English language learners, teachers, and teacher educators around the world [16, p. 9]. There is no longer a one-size-fits-all form of English. The different purposes of learning English must consist of different language programs, where learners can choose the one that is most favourable according to their academic or occupational needs [2, p. 8]. Today, the great economic and trade globalization and the continuing rise of international communication in several fields have given birth to the serious needs for teaching and learning English for Specific Purposes. Communication across global and multinational companies requires competence in particular skills, like for example, negotiations, team work, oral presentation, report writing, decision making and so forth. These aptitudes are of paramount importance in the real life situations [3, p. 400].

The aim of the article is to highlight some of the main issues involved in "English for Specific purposes" (ESP), to define its

types and typical features, and to present a theoretical overview of the important notions of ESP as a learner-centered approach.

Results. The field of English for Specific Purposes, which addresses the communicative needs and practices of particular professional or occupational groups, has developed rapidly in the past forty years to become a major force in English language teaching and research [13, p. 379]. By the term English for Specific (or Special, Specified, Specifiable) Purposes is meant that type of "language learning which has its focus on all aspects of language pertaining to a particular field of human activity" [21]. The phrase "specific" in ESP explains the precise objective of learning English [12, p. 67]. "The 'P' in ESP is often a professional purpose – a given skill set that learners presently require in their task or will require in their careers" [8, p. 6].

There is no universally accepted definition of this term, however most of researchers have common opinion that special language can't exist separately from common language but fully interacts with it as its component. Mackay and Mountford define ESP as "the teaching of English for a clearly utilitarian purpose" [17, p. 2]. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John [9], ESP has been considered distinct from English language teaching. McDonough came to the conclusion that "ESP should be taken as an instructional activity which has its own emphases and range of activities which are not totally different from other areas of language teaching" [19]. Belcher states that "ESP now encompasses an ever-diversifying and expanding range of purposes" [5, p. 134]. In the past, the teaching of ESP was primarily concerned with the linguistic aspects of the language. Now, it has shifted towards developing communication skills and learning is very much directed by specific learner's needs for mastering the language [12, p. 18].

It has been generally agreed by scholars that ESP is contrasted with EGP, or English for General Purposes. Unlike EGP, ESP is taught for specialized learners with some specific vocational and educational purpose in mind. ESP is learning and learner oriented, with a conception and preference for communicative competence. Defined to meet the specific needs of the learners, ESP makes use of methodology and the activities of the discipline it serves by focusing on the language appropriate to these activities [10].

The demand for ESP has led some higher education authorities and administrators in many countries to claim that ESP should replace EGP, the long-existing practice of English language teaching in many universities, and thus become the mainstream of college English education. ESP courses differ from General English because they broaden one's knowledge about specific subject matter, by offering intensively specialized vocabulary that in turn prepares learners to use the language in their future professions [6, p. 41]. The teachers teaching general English aim at giving the learners a course that may satisfy their urge to know and to understand certain

language but when it comes to ESP, teachers give more importance to needs analysis and material writers think very carefully about the goals of the learner [1, p.115].

Some researches debate that ESP should be considered as a part of EAP (English for Academic Purposes). According to Jordan, ESP covers two main categories: English for Academic Purposes and English for Occupational / Vocational / Professional purposes (EOP) [15]. Unlike general courses that tend to teach conversational and social English, EAP courses consider teaching more formal and academic English [1, p.117]. On the other hand, EOP equips learners with the English necessary in occupational contexts. English for Business Purposes (EBP) is a language related to the international trade. It is a specialist field within English language learning and teaching. A great deal of the English communication that occurs within business sectors throughout the world occurs among non-native English speakers. In situations such as these, the aim of the exercise is competent and effective communication [14].

There is no doubt that communication is considered to be the important language skill in the teaching and learning process. The process of foreign language communication is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. The participation in this process of communication requires definite communicative competence, or knowledge of communicative behaviour. In modern linguistics the "communicative competence" is understood as mastering linguistic competence that is a certain sum of data of language material, ability to correlate language means with the objectives and conditions of communication, and the ability to organize speech communication taking into account social norms of behaviour and communicative expediency of the statement.

The Communicative Approach to foreign or second language teaching, also known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) [20] is aimed to develop the students' ability to use virtually real language. It was designed not for teaching language means' manipulation, but to correlate consciously linguistic structures with their communicative functions. "One of the central pillars of the communicative approach is learnercentredness, which (coupled with learner needs) is identified by Underhill as one of ten key trends in English Language Teaching (ELT)" [11].

Researchers concentrate their attention generally on separate aspects of the problem of educational communication. The Communicative Approach as a subject of study is analyzed mostly in the context of language learning as a learning process approach to the real communication process. The wide acceptance of the Communicative Approach and the relatively varied way in which it is interpreted and applied can be attributed to the fact that practitioners from different educational traditions can identify with it, and consequently interpret it in different ways [20, p. 157].

ESP is a learner-centered approach that emphasizes the importance of creating learning opportunities that improve students' learning. Its starting point is that language is for communication and its goal is to develop learners' communicative competence. This approach does not neglect the structural pattern but teaches grammar implicitly so that students can focus on the content rather than the meaning of single words [7, p. 130].

A learner-centered approach promotes the importance of what students are learning and assists them in making use of the English they are aware of, in order to learn even more English – because their interest in their field will motivate them to interact with speakers and texts [2, p. 45]. Hutchinson and Waters refer to ESP as "an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to

content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning" [12, p. 19]. ESP students are often mature people who already have some association with the language and are now learning it in more depth to use it in professional communication and to achieve certain job-related functions.

It is its interdisciplinarity, an openness to the approaches and insights of other fields, which helps distinguish ESP and underlies its understandings and practices. [13, p. 380]. Hylan draws attention to five aspects of ESP characterization: (a) the study of communication rather than language, (b) the role of teacher as researcher, (c) the importance of collaborative pedagogies, (d) the centrality of language variation, and (e) the view that language represents broader social practices [13, p. 386]. The researcher emphasizes that "ESP practitioners now address wider communicative skills in their teaching. To understand language and the functions it performs for people, we have to appreciate how it is used within particular contexts, identifying the purposes and participants that are integral to the construction of particular communicative processes and products" [13, p. 386].

In learner-centered teaching, attention is given not only to what the student is learning, but how the student is learning and whether the student is able to retain and apply this knowledge [4]. In learner-centered approaches, the emphasis shifts from what the instructor does to what the students do to learn, and the role of the instructor is shifted from a giver of information to a facilitator of student learning [18]. The trend of communicative approach in education provided a further pressure for educators to change their methods. The communicative approach holds the notion that active learning is more effective than passive learning [7, p. 128]. With the widespread of the learner-centered approach as a communicative learning method, much attention has been paid to design ESP course materials that can prepare students for professional communication [7, p. 126]. ESP instructors have to take into account the students' goals and objectives when conceptualizing the content of the course. Including students in making decisions about course content inspired students to take more responsibility for their choice, which inspired them to be creative.

Conclusions. To sum up, the goal of ESP is to provide English language training to individuals while entering specific academic or professional contexts. English for Specific Purposes is an approach to teaching English language which is concerned to give learners every opportunity to engage in real or simulated activities that require them to use the language. The Communicative Approach, as a learner-centered approach, capitalizes on the interests and needs of the learner. This approach emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. The results of this work indicate that the ESP approach derived from the need to use language as a tool in facilitating success in professional life has had the influence on English teaching in general.

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Потенко Л. О. Комунікативний підхід до викладання англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням

Анотація. У статті запропоновано короткий аналіз ключових понять англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням (АМПС) та розглянуто основні ідеї і базові концепції, які впливають на АМПС. Надано визначення і відмінність між загальною англійською мовою і англійською мовою за професійним спрямуванням, а також розрізнення типів АМПС. Як конкретний підхід до навчання мови англійська за професійним спрямуванням вимагає, щоб усі рішення щодо змісту і способу ґрунтувалися на розумінні того, хто навчається, мети навчання. Англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням розглядається у цьому дослідженні як особистісно орієнтований підхід, який підкреслює важливість створення освітніх можливостей, що покращують навчання студентів. Ця робота також розглядає теоретичні основи щодо комунікативного підходу до навчання іноземних мов. Такий підхід орієнтований не стільки на формальні структури, скільки на функціональні аспекти мови або використання мови у повсякденних ситуаціях.

Ключові слова: спілкування, особистісно орієнтований підхід, англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням.

Потенко Л. А. Коммуникативный подход к преподаванию английского языка для профессиональных целей

Аннотация. В статье предложен краткий анализ ключевых понятий английского для профессиональных целей и рассмотрены основные идеи и базовые концепции, которые на него влияют. В нашем научном исследовании представлены определения и различие между общим английским и английским для профессиональных целей, а также различие типов английского для профессиональных целей. В качестве конкретного подхода к обучению языка английский для профессиональных целей требует, чтобы все решения относительно содержания и способа основывались на понимании учащегося цели обучения. Английский язык для профессиональных целей рассматривается в исследовании как лично ориентированный подход, который подчеркивает важность создания образовательных возможностей, которые способствуют улучшению обучения студентов. Эта работа также рассматривает теоретические основы коммуникативного подхода к обучению иностранным языкам. Такой подход ориентирован не столько на формальные структуры, сколько на функциональные аспекты языка или использования языка в повседневных ситуациях.

Ключевые слова: общение, лично ориентированный подход, английский язык для профессиональных целей.