

## INTEGRATION OF COMMUNICATIVE METHODS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES COURSE

## ІНТЕГРАЦІЯ КОМУНІКАТИВНИХ МЕТОДІВ ТА ІНФОРМАЦІЙНИХ ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ В КУРСІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЗА ПРОФЕСІЙНИМ СПРЯМУВАННЯМ

The article is devoted to the use of modern information and communication technologies which is reflected in new pedagogical patterns. Student-centered approach to teaching English for specific purposes (ESP) and integration of communicative methods and information technologies in teaching ESP for higher education students in medical specialties are emphasized. The importance of the choice of innovative methods and technologies to be used in the English for specific purposes course in certain fields is highlighted. It is noted that the learners can study at own pace as such technologies guarantee flexible ways of learning and accessibility of the material. The tools and resources provided by information and communication technologies are listed thus creating a dynamic interactive learning environment. Not to fall into a form of pedagogical eclecticism, it is proposed that the professionals should pay great attention to the methodical improvement in ESP teaching precisely in the educational institution, where the university development strategy has been developed and approved. The advantages of the application of Google services in the educational field have been highlighted. Hence, some communicative modifications and new approaches are advised. Such techniques as Flipped classroom, The Dogme style, Task-based learning, CLIL, Blended learning, Embodied learning, Inquiry based learning have been discussed in the article. It is considered that gamification and many different apps and educational virtual environments also make learning easier having more fun. For example, Quizlet, ELSA, ELSA AI, Busuu proved to be useful in gamified ESP course. It is also noted that Web technologies, such as Office 365 Education and Google Workspace for Education platforms, take place within the integration of cloud technologies which makes it possible to implement the competence approach and monitor the success of students. The article states that when considering the design of an English language (ESP) course in the digital age, an integrated approach is preferable because it is more enriching and effective, taking into account previous experiences of both classroom and online learning.

**Key words:** information technologies, communicative teaching methods, student-centered approach, English for specific purposes, interactive learning environment, an integrated approach.

Стаття присвячена використанню сучасних інформаційно-комунікаційних техно-

логій, що знаходять відображення в нових педагогічних моделях. Акцентовано увагу на студентоцентрованому підході до викладання Англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням (ESP) та інтеграції комунікативних методів та інформаційних технологій у викладанні ESP для студентів вищих медичних навчальних закладів. Підкреслено важливість вибору інноваційних методів і технологій, які можуть бути використаними в курсі ESP у певних галузях. Зазначається, що здобувачі освіти можуть навчатися у власному темпі, оскільки такі технології гарантують гнучкість навчання та доступність матеріалу. Вказані інструменти та ресурси надані інформаційно-комунікаційними технологіями, що і створює динамічне інтерактивне навчальне середовище. З огляду на застереження щодо педагогічної еkleктики, пропонується звертати велику увагу на методичне вдосконалення викладання Англійської мови за професійним спрямуванням саме в даному навчальному закладі, відповідно до розробленої та затвердженої стратегії розвитку університету. Висвітлено переваги застосування сервісів Google в освітній сфері. Рекомендується низка комунікативних модифікацій та нові підходи. В статті обговорюються такі техніки, як Flipped classroom, The Dogme style, Task-based learning, CLIL, Blended learning, Embodied learning, Inquiry based learning. Передбачено, що гейміфікація та багато різних додатків і освітніх платформ також полегшують навчання та дають більше задоволення. Наприклад, Quizlet, ELSA, ELSA AI, Busuu виявилися корисними в гейміфікованому курсі ESP. Також зазначається, що веб-технології, зокрема Office 365 Education та Google Workspace for Education, відбуваються в рамках інтеграції хмарних технологій, що дає змогу реалізувати компетентнісний підхід та контролювати успішність здобувачів освіти. Можна стверджувати, що для дизайну курсу англійської мови (ESP) в епоху цифрових технологій інтегрований підхід є кращим, оскільки він є більш збагачувальним і ефективним, беручи до уваги попередній досвід навчання як у аудиторії, так і онлайн.

**Ключові слова:** інформаційні технології, комунікативні методи викладання, студентоцентрований підхід, англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням, інтерактивне навчальне середовище, інтегрований підхід.

UDC 378.811:004  
DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6085/2024/68.2.49>

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**Introduction. Problem statement.** The current educational system of our country, like the world in general, is directly and inextricably linked to the formation of a common informational and educational space. The emergence of new technologies which are offered for use in educational practice, in turn, also affects the way speakers interact and work, the education system in general, the dynamism of the

development of universities, and therefore the rate of methodological changes [1; 2]. The rapid development and spread of information technologies into all areas of life is reflected in the development of new pedagogical patterns, which, undoubtedly, open wide opportunities for both teachers and students, change the range of methods and techniques currently used. In this trend, the use of modern information and

communication technologies for teaching communication skills and practical application of these methods in teaching foreign languages, in particular English for specific purposes (ESP), that is “an approach to language learning which is based on learner need” [3, p.19] in higher education institutions, is being developed. It is a student-centered approach to teaching English language [1-4], mainly at post-secondary education levels, which provides teaching and achievement of foreign language competences in a specific field or narrow specialty, discipline (for example, in our University, ESP approach ensures relevant foreign language learning and teaching focusing on development of communicative competence in a specific field, e.g., Medicine, Dentistry, Pediatrics, Physical Therapy, etc.).

The methodologists emphasize significance of integrating communicative methods and information technologies in teaching English for Specific Purposes. Technologies offer wide perspectives in enriched learning environment, expand scope of practicing skills due to plenty of resources and tools. The learners can study at own pace as such technologies guarantee flexible ways of learning and accessibility of the material. Thus, choice of innovative methods and technologies to integrate in the ESP course in certain fields is of importance and deserves consideration.

#### **Analysis of recent research and publications.**

The widespread introduction of technologies in education, in particular, teaching foreign languages, could not fail to be reflected in reviews, popular science and scientific research works. Huge educational potential of technology-enhanced language learning and teaching [2; 4-7] has been discussed. A fewer share falls on reports touching namely problems of ESP teaching and learning. The researchers discuss how technology allows better usage of authentic materials in the ESP course, promotes interaction and collaboration in classroom, supports easier communication in English in professional reality, etc.; all these components “are signs highly effective and engaging language classes that focus on real-world communication and meaning-making” [2, p.137]. Communication mediated by a computer provides tools for learning and represents a way to a discourse community, providing as well options to collaborate, create virtual environments, online courses, supporting student's autonomy [5, p.89]. Thus, even the statement has been offered about “transforming the teachers' professional roles and practices”, switching from just “a language teacher to a designer of language learning with new technologies” [4, p.925].

Information and communication technologies are defined as “a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange information.” [8]. The tools and resources listed “include computers, the Internet (websites,

blogs and emails), live broadcasting technologies (radio, television and webcasting), recorded broadcasting technologies (podcasting, audio and video players, and storage devices) and telephony (fixed or mobile, satellite, visio/video-conferencing, etc.)” [8].

Recent studies confirm that modern education is increasingly intertwined with information technology, thus creating a dynamic interactive learning environment that goes beyond traditional classrooms. G. Stanley describes various ways to integrate technology in the educational process [1, p. 9], the review presented by Liu T., Zhang Z., Gao X. [6] reflects how language teachers incorporate technology into their teaching and learning experiences.

**Emphasizing previously unresolved parts of the common problem.** Methodologists have a great field for elaboration of the area of ESP methodology connected with application of information and communicative technologies in practice of teaching. The analysis of the literature on the methodology of choosing and using modern technologies in foreign language teaching shows that while being quite deeply elaborated on general fundamental issues, it still needs research in relation to individual branches, specialties and target situations. We believe that it is necessary to highlight exactly which methods, in our opinion, can be proposed for use in higher education, in particular, a medical university for teaching English for specific purposes while introducing information technologies, taking into account the developments of the modern stage of the development of world's communicative methods of teaching foreign languages.

**The purpose of the work** is to consider the communicative methods and information methodologies which can be applied and are actually used in the practice of teaching ESP for higher education students in medical specialties.

**The statement of the main material.** The communicative methods and information technologies both prefer authentic, real-world situations that is crucial for ESP as it aims at using English in specific professional contexts and situations. Combined, they allow to widen engaging properties of studies, making students enjoy the way of acquiring knowledge and skills, offering for their disposal interactive activities, multimedia content, and collaborative projects – helping to motivate them additionally in gaining learning experience.

Some methodology advisers consider the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be a “post-methods era” and reconceptualize the current stage “in what has been called the postmethod condition” (Kumaravadivelu B.) [9, p. 9] as most techniques in English language teaching has already been approved, and it is difficult to create anything new, but teachers are constantly searching for effective methods of teaching.

Trying not to fall into a form of pedagogical

eclecticism, which can happen due to the unjustified application of various approaches to language teaching practiced in the past and modern ones, the professionals should pay great attention to the methodical improvement of the qualifications of ESP teachers precisely on the educational institution site, where the university development strategy has been developed and approved. It is desirable that the teachers are trained to decide and formalize approaches, materials, methods, design, etc. for teaching in a specific setting, for a specific cohort, a specific subject area of teaching and aimed at achieving a specific goal in this case. An important role in the choice of teaching methods, forms and methods is played by the conditions, as evidenced by recent practice connected with the transition from face-to-face synchronous classrooms to distance, electronic courses, asynchronous courses, etc. It seems that there cannot be one "recipe" for a specific "audience" or "level", it is necessary to raise the awareness of teachers in methodological and didactic aspects in order to make independent relevant decisions for their environment.

We admit the opinion that communicative method and all its varieties has proved to be the most relevant for communication in the practical sphere, work and easily combined with modern information technologies. Global teaching practice offers a number of them that are actively used. Communicative approach, being popular and relevant, is being provided with its modifications and new approaches. We can advise to use some of the following ones described below.

**Flipped classroom.** This style (Bergmann J., Sams A. [10]) is affordable for the ESP students that are highly motivated and have no less than Intermediate level of English proficiency. The idea is that students study the material before the class individually and, when in class, do not waste time on discussing theory, but devote it to active practice and training. This enables the teacher to cover more material, moreover, the students have a chance to develop individual working skills to master some material independently and come to class prepared. Some limitations which are usually recalled to apply this method are smoothed out for ESP course: it involves a university stage, that is, teaching undergraduates and postgraduates, who in the vast majority have a relatively high level of general English. The problem of mastering material mostly passively, in the lecture style, is compensated with the following analysis of the topic in other techniques included in the course.

**The Dogme style** as a variation of the communicative approach to a foreign language teaching (S. Thornbury). It allows you to stay away from textbooks and lesson plans as much as possible and focus on communication between the student and the teacher. A topic is provided and live communication prompts students to use certain vocabulary and grammar. The teacher's role is to guide and

promote the language learning process, "free" from textbooks and plans. The educational process can be completely unpredictable for the teacher as the content can be created by students (dialogues, audio and video recordings). This technique supposes student-centered and conversation-driven activity, a kind of resource-free class. It allows "the students to become autonomous in their learning and gives them complete control over what they learn and how they learn it" [11]. So, under the relevant conditions it is possible to use it as an element of the ESP course. The method requires the teacher to be flexible, able to switch quickly and have a lot of experience. As well as this approach is not suitable to be applied during the examinations, and for entry-level use or for specialized disciplines.

**Task-based learning.** Task-based learning helps students solve different specific communicative tasks: e.g., to buy drugs at a pharmacy or interviewing a patient, etc. Here, authentic materials are used and exercises are done to discuss the situations that students may be faced with in real life. For example, a teacher presents a lexical unit for a student in a familiar context (e.g., a text or a dialogue) that the student can cope with and, hence, get the meaning of this lexical unit. Then the student is proposed to perform practical exercises to consolidate the material. At the end, a communicative task (e.g., a role-play game) is presented, the purpose of which is to teach students to generate fluent speech in a foreign language.

**The CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning).** The CLIL (term coined by D. Marsh method [12] is based on teaching the professional subjects in English (that is topical for ESP), helps to solve several tasks at a time: e.g., to study the Infectious Diseases and at the same time practice the past tense. In this approach, language is not a goal, but a means of obtaining information.

The basic principles are: not only the language is studied, but other material as well; the content of the ESP class should be accessible for understanding and accompanied by visual supports (illustrations, graphs, diagrams); all language activities are integrated, but the language is adapted according to language acquisition level. The problems may occur in case of the lack of the adequate material and qualified teachers but such issues should not arise in ESP teaching, since any ESP course assumes that the ESP language teacher selects and works with special texts, medical terminology and must be familiar with the professional field within these limits.

**Blended learning,** also referred to as "hybrid learning", is a mixed form of teaching that combines both face-to-face teaching (Teacher – Student/group) and eLearning methods. For example, taking the course online and face-to-face meetings, a group curator answers all kinds of questions related to the course. This method helps to carry out training from

anywhere in the world. C. R. Graham defines blended learning setting as follows: “Blended learning systems combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction” [13, p. 5]. In relation to teaching ESP in a Blended Learning Setting, the same problems of learning materials, lecturers’ readiness, etc. are usually noted, which we consider cannot be referred just to the method but to the human resources, management and organization, and are resolved in the university teaching with the involvement of personnel who are trained, skilled, qualified and the like.

**Embodied learning** presents learning as a physical process, not just a mental one. It is based on the fact that our bodies and our environment are related to cognitive processes, and this idea may be used in learning activity making it engaging [14]. For example, to learn event verbs, you can ask students to act out these events. This involves kinesthetic opportunities offered by improv, games, and drama, and may be relevant as an activity in ESP whereas it creates stronger associative connections and helps to remember the material (setting dental tray, making physical examination of the patient, etc.), promoting language learning skills while adding emotional and motivational benefits.

**Inquiry based learning** presents another student-centered approach where teaching is focused on the student and his requests [15]. If it is important for ESP students to learn English for medical issues, offer to learn vocabulary on this topic, simulate situations that may most often occur. A lot of time is devoted to practice, which allows you to memorize the material better, thus, the teaching process becomes more and more oriented to the real needs of students and allows to achieve results with satisfaction and maximum comfort for all the participants.

**Gamification.** It is worth mentioning the game in education which has been used for a long time, but with the development of the technology, it has become even more popular, with acquiring positive emotions that helps to memorize a lot of lexical material. There are many different apps and educational platforms that make learning easier having more fun. Such programs like Quizlet are used by teachers to create relevant for their ESP course Quizlet activity and link students to this site of gamified activity (practising self-study activity options to use flashcards, to learn, match, test, etc.). ELSA, ELSA AI (helps with correct pronunciation in various role-play activities like My Job Interview, My Own Scenario, Ask for Directions and others), Busuu (allows you to remember words in the context of various dialogues) also can be useful in gamified ESP course.

**Web technologies.** A significant role in the development of communication competencies and skills is performed by web technologies, which are quickly embedding in all the spheres of society, including the educational process as easy-to-use tools. Using Office

365 Education and Google Workspace for Education platforms in the academic process takes place within the integration of cloud technologies into the information and educational space of universities that are considering the pedagogical possibilities of using cloud applications for planning joint activities, collective work and communication, publishing materials, hosting video materials and many other tools available in the.edu dom to implement the competence approach and monitor the success of students. We consider the implementation of information and communication technologies to be an important task in the provision of the effective educational process. This allows the University to take an evolutionary step towards providing the educational process with flexibility and mobility as these services are based on information interaction between participants in the educational process and are aimed at achieving educational goals.

**Conclusions and prospects for further research.** Along with modern communicative methods in teaching ESP, we have introduced distance technologies either for synchronous, or asynchronous, classwork and independent work of the students. We can point out that when considering the design of an English language (ESP) course in the digital age, an integrated approach is preferable because it is more enriching and effective, taking into account previous experiences of both classroom and online learning. New challenges for teaching staff became the impetus for expanding online teaching using the latest computer technologies integrating them with the communicative methods proven by our previous experience.

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