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USING SCAFFOLDING TO TEACH ESP STUDENTS BASED ON A CORPUS-BASED APPROACH

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Abstract: The increasing demand for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction has encouraged educators to explore innovative teaching methodologies that facilitate learners' professional communicative competence. One of the most promising approaches is the integration of scaffolding techniques with corpus-based language instruction. Scaffolding provides learners with temporary support that enables them to accomplish tasks beyond their current level of competence, while corpus-based teaching offers authentic language input derived from real-life professional discourse. This study examines how scaffolding strategies can be effectively integrated into corpus-based ESP instruction to enhance vocabulary acquisition, academic writing, and professional communication skills. The article discusses theoretical foundations, practical classroom applications, and pedagogical implications for ESP learners. The findings suggest that combining scaffolding and corpus-based learning creates a learner-centered environment that promotes autonomy, critical thinking, and communicative competence.
Keywords: scaffolding, corpus linguistics, ESP, professional communicative competence, corpus-based learning, academic vocabulary, language teaching.

Annotatsiya: Ingliz tilini maxsus maqsadlarda o‘qitishga (ESP) bo‘lgan talabning ortib borishi pedagoglarni talabalarning kasbiy kommunikativ kompetensiyasini rivojlantiruvchi innovatsion o‘qitish metodlarini izlashga undamoqda. Shunday istiqbolli yondashuvlardan biri scaffolding (bosqichma-bosqich qo‘llab-quvvatlash) texnikalarini korpusga asoslangan til o‘qitishi bilan integratsiyalashdir. Scaffolding talabalarga o‘zlarining mavjud bilim va ko‘nikmalari darajasidan yuqoriroq vazifalarni bajarishlari uchun vaqtinchalik yordam ko‘rsatadi, korpusga asoslangan ta’lim esa real kasbiy diskurslardan olingan autentik til materiallarini taqdim etadi. Ushbu tadqiqot scaffolding strategiyalarini korpusga asoslangan ESP ta’limiga samarali integratsiya qilish orqali lug‘at boyligini oshirish, akademik yozuv ko‘nikmalarini rivojlantirish va kasbiy muloqot malakalarini takomillashtirish imkoniyatlarini o‘rganadi. Maqolada nazariy asoslar, amaliy dars jarayonlari va ESP talabalari uchun pedagogik ahamiyat masalalari yoritilgan. Tadqiqot natijalari scaffolding va korpusga asoslangan o‘qitishni birlashtirish talaba markazli ta’lim muhitini yaratishini hamda mustaqil o‘rganish, tanqidiy fikrlash va kommunikativ kompetensiyani rivojlantirishga xizmat qilishini ko‘rsatadi.
Kalit so‘zlar: scaffolding, korpus lingvistikasi, ESP, kasbiy kommunikativ kompetensiya, korpusga asoslangan ta’lim, akademik lug‘at, til o‘qitish.

Аннотация: Возрастающая потребность в обучении английскому языку для специальных целей (ESP) побуждает преподавателей искать инновационные методы, способствующие развитию профессиональной коммуникативной компетенции обучающихся. Одним из наиболее перспективных подходов является интеграция технологий педагогической поддержки (scaffolding) с корпусно-ориентированным обучением языку. Педагогическая поддержка предоставляет обучающимся временную помощь, позволяющую выполнять задания, выходящие за пределы их текущего уровня компетентности, тогда как корпусный подход обеспечивает доступ к аутентичному

языковому материалу, основанному на реальном профессиональном дискурсе. В данном исследовании рассматриваются возможности эффективной интеграции стратегий scaffolding в корпусно-ориентированное обучение ESP для развития словарного запаса, навыков академического письма и профессиональной коммуникации. В статье анализируются теоретические основы данного подхода, примеры его практического применения в учебном процессе и педагогические перспективы для студентов ESP. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что сочетание педагогической поддержки и корпусного обучения способствует созданию студентоориентированной образовательной среды, развивающей автономность обучающихся, критическое мышление и коммуникативную компетенцию.

Ключевые слова: педагогическая поддержка (scaffolding), корпусная лингвистика, ESP, профессиональная коммуникативная компетенция, корпусно-ориентированное обучение, академическая лексика, преподавание языка.

Introduction

In today's globalized educational environment, English has become the primary language of science, technology, business, and academic communication. Consequently, ESP courses have gained increasing importance in higher education institutions. ESP focuses on teaching language skills that are directly relevant to learners' academic and professional needs. However, many ESP students struggle with mastering specialized vocabulary, academic writing conventions, and discipline-specific discourse patterns.

To address these challenges, educators have increasingly adopted corpus-based approaches. Corpus linguistics provides access to authentic language data collected from real-life texts, enabling students to explore how language is naturally used within specific professional contexts. At the same time, learners often require instructional support to effectively interpret and apply corpus findings. This support can be provided through scaffolding, a pedagogical strategy rooted in sociocultural learning theory.

Scaffolding refers to the temporary assistance offered by teachers, peers, or instructional materials to help learners achieve higher levels of understanding and performance. As students become more competent, the support is gradually withdrawn, fostering independent learning. Integrating scaffolding with corpus-based instruction can help ESP students analyze authentic language data while developing professional communicative competence.

Literature Review

The concept of scaffolding originates from the work of Lev Vygotsky, particularly his theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). According to Vygotsky, learners can perform more complex tasks when provided with appropriate support from a knowledgeable individual. Later, Bruner expanded this concept by introducing scaffolding as a practical instructional technique.

In language education, scaffolding has been recognized as an effective means of supporting learners in acquiring new linguistic structures and communicative skills. Through guided practice, modeling, questioning, and feedback, teachers assist students in developing independent language use.

Corpus-based language teaching emerged from the field of corpus linguistics. Sinclair (1991) emphasized the importance of authentic language data in understanding linguistic patterns. Johns (1991) introduced Data-Driven Learning (DDL), advocating for learners' direct interaction with corpus data to discover language patterns independently.

Recent studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of corpus-based approaches in ESP instruction. Pulatova and Egamberdieva (2022) reported that corpus-based learning significantly

improves students' professional communicative competence by exposing them to authentic language examples. Similarly, Pulatova (2023) highlighted the role of corpus-based approaches in developing discipline-specific communication skills and professional vocabulary.

Research conducted by Pulatova (2024) further demonstrated that corpus linguistics enhances EFL instruction by providing learners with opportunities to analyze authentic language use. Moreover, Pulatova and Bennett (2020) argued that data-driven learning encourages learner autonomy and critical thinking through active language exploration.

Despite these advantages, corpus-based learning may initially present challenges for students unfamiliar with corpus tools. Therefore, scaffolding plays a crucial role in helping learners navigate corpus resources effectively and gradually develop analytical skills.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach based on classroom observations and practical implementation of scaffolded corpus-based ESP instruction.

Participants

The participants consisted of 40 undergraduate ESP students studying psychology at a university in Uzbekistan. Their English proficiency levels ranged from B1 to B2.

Instructional Procedure

The teaching process consisted of four scaffolded stages:

Stage 1: Teacher Modeling

The instructor demonstrated how to use corpus tools such as AntConc to search for professional vocabulary. For example, students examined the term anxiety and identified common collocations such as:

anxiety disorder
social anxiety
anxiety symptoms
anxiety treatment

Stage 2: Guided Practice

Students worked in pairs to analyze concordance lines provided by the teacher. The instructor guided learners through questions designed to identify grammatical patterns and contextual meanings.

Stage 3: Collaborative Discovery

Students independently explored corpus data and generated lists of frequent collocations related to psychology, education, and research methodology.

Stage 4: Independent Application

Students used corpus findings to write academic paragraphs and research summaries incorporating authentic terminology and phraseology.

Results

The implementation of scaffolded corpus-based instruction produced several positive outcomes.

First, students demonstrated significant improvement in professional vocabulary acquisition. Corpus exploration enabled learners to identify authentic word combinations rather than relying on isolated vocabulary items.

Second, academic writing quality improved considerably. Students produced more sophisticated and discipline-specific language. For example, instead of writing:

"Stress affects people negatively."

students began writing:

"Chronic stress significantly influences psychological well-being and cognitive performance."

Third, learners developed stronger analytical skills. By examining concordance lines and collocations, students learned to identify linguistic patterns independently.

Finally, students reported increased confidence in using English for academic and professional purposes. The gradual removal of instructional support encouraged autonomous learning and critical thinking.

Discussion

The findings indicate that scaffolding enhances the effectiveness of corpus-based ESP instruction. While corpus tools provide valuable authentic language input, many learners initially require support in interpreting corpus data. Scaffolding bridges this gap by offering structured guidance that gradually leads students toward independent corpus analysis.

The results support the principles of sociocultural theory, which emphasize the importance of guided learning in cognitive development. Through scaffolded activities, students move from teacher-supported analysis to independent language discovery.

Furthermore, corpus-based scaffolding promotes learner autonomy. Rather than memorizing vocabulary lists, students actively investigate language patterns and construct their own understanding. This process aligns with contemporary learner-centered approaches to language education.

For ESP learners, the combination of scaffolding and corpus-based instruction is particularly beneficial because it facilitates the acquisition of authentic professional discourse. Students gain exposure to real language used in their future professions, thereby enhancing communicative competence and academic literacy.

Conclusion

The integration of scaffolding strategies into corpus-based ESP instruction provides an effective framework for developing professional communicative competence. By combining guided support with authentic language exploration, educators can help learners acquire specialized vocabulary, improve academic writing, and become independent language users. Future research should investigate the long-term effects of scaffolded corpus-based learning across different ESP disciplines and educational contexts.

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