

ANALYSIS OF PRACTICE OF TEACHING ESP AT VOCATIONAL COLLEGES

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Abstract: This article explores the current practice of teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) at vocational colleges. It emphasizes the use of authentic materials, teacher autonomy, and workplace simulation for effective instruction. The piece highlights challenges such as low student motivation and language proficiency, and stresses the importance of aligning ESP content with industry demands. Overall, the article underscores the need for modernized, purpose-driven ESP teaching in vocational education.

Key words: CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), vocational college, authentic materials, communicative competence, English for Specific Purposes, academic lyceum.

В статье рассматривается практика преподавания английского языка для специальных целей (ESP) в профессиональных колледжах. Подчеркивается важность использования аутентичных материалов, автономии преподавателя и имитации рабочей среды для эффективного обучения. Отмечаются проблемы, такие как низкая мотивация студентов и слабое владение языком, и необходимость адаптации содержания ESP к требованиям отрасли. В целом, статья подчеркивает необходимость модернизации и целенаправленного подхода в преподавании ESP.

Ключевые слова: CEFR (Общоевропейские компетенции владения иностранным языком), профессиональный колледж, аутентичные материалы, коммуникативная компетенция, английский для специальных целей, академический лицей.

Ushbu maqolada kasb-hunar kollejlari uchun aniq maqsadlarga yo'naltirilgan ingliz tilini (ESP) o'qitish amaliyoti tahlil qilinadi. Unda autentik materiallardan foydalanish, o'qituvchi mustaqilligi va ish muhitini simulyatsiya qilish samarali ta'lim uchun muhimligi ta'kidlanadi. Talabalarning ESP darslarida nisbatan sust ishtiyoqi va ayrim o'rinlarda til darajasi muammo sifatida ko'rsatiladi, shuningdek, ESP mazmunini sanoat ehtiyojlariga moslashtirish zarurligi aytiladi. Maqolada ESP o'qitishni zamonaviy va maqsadli tashkil etish ta'kidlanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: CEFR (Tillar bo'yicha Umumyevropa tillar tizimi), kasb-hunar kolleji, autentik materiallar, kommunikativ kompetensiya, aniq maqsadlarga yo'naltirilgan ingliz tili, akademik litsey.

One of the essential components in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is the use of authentic materials. As Zorica Antić, a lecturer at the University of Niš, emphasizes, "In ESP, the authentic world must be brought to the students, and they must learn to interact with the language as it is spoken and written in the target context." Despite the availability of many textbooks deemed suitable for ESP instruction, Johns (2011) argues that no single textbook can fully address the specific needs of every situation. Therefore, instructors must rely on their own expertise when selecting materials that will best support the development of students' language skills.

ESP materials typically consist of authentic texts, elements of General English, and teacher-created content including task-based activities. Several scholars advocate for delivering ESP instruction in environments that closely resemble the actual workplace. For instance, Crandall (2004) proposed transforming the classroom into a simulated work setting, thereby aligning language learning more directly with specific professional purposes. This approach helps maintain focus on occupational relevance rather than on language alone.

It is increasingly clear that ESP instructors at colleges must focus on more narrowly defined professional fields. Without this targeted approach, students may fail to gain sufficient command of English relevant to their specific disciplines. Addressing this concern, Lui Mei Yang, an ESP practitioner at the Department of English at Northwest Polytechnical University in Xi'an, China, stresses the need for vocational colleges to prioritize job-oriented training in their curricula. She argues that vocational education must shift from a supply-driven to a demand-driven model in order to align more effectively with industry needs, which are becoming increasingly focused on the ESP competencies of future specialists.

However, ESP instructors worldwide face persistent challenges, including students' limited English proficiency, low motivation, and passive classroom engagement. A particularly pressing issue is the students' lack of autonomy—they tend to rely heavily on teachers, who end up doing most of the talking and explaining. As a result, teachers often find it difficult to implement their lesson plans and express a desire for more effective teaching conditions. Ideally, ESP should be taught by subject matter experts who also possess strong English proficiency. Such dual expertise ensures that students receive both content-specific instruction and language support. Additionally, effective ESP educators must demonstrate a genuine interest in staying informed about the latest developments in science and technology to maintain relevance in their teaching.

Thus, a key challenge lies in how to increase student motivation and autonomy in ESP learning, and how to ensure teachers gain exposure to authentic, profession-specific content. In response to this, Uzbekistan has undertaken several initiatives aimed at improving ESP instruction at vocational colleges. Following the decree titled "*On Further Enhancement of Measures for the Foreign Language Learning System*" issued on December 10, 2012, the Center for Special Secondary and Vocational Education in Uzbekistan assembled a team of experts. This team, in collaboration with international specialists in language education and coursebook development, established modern standards for foreign language instruction and produced a new set of coursebooks tailored to vocational education. These updated coursebooks differ significantly from those used in previous years. According to Surayyo Tursunboeva, a teacher at Academic Lyceum No. 2 under Uzbekistan State World Languages University, the design of the new materials was guided by international best practices. She emphasizes that these books are crucial for developing students' communicative competence in English. In contrast to earlier textbooks, which focused primarily on grammar and translation exercises, the new materials prioritize communicative language teaching, encouraging students to use the language in diverse real-life situations. They are specifically designed to develop all four language skills—reading, speaking, listening, and writing—in an integrated manner.

The coursebook used in vocational colleges is composed of three distinct parts: the *Student's Book*, the *Workbook*, and the *Teacher's Book*. Each component serves a unique purpose and is designed to benefit both learners and instructors in mastering English. Reflecting international best practices in coursebook design, these materials each contribute significantly to the teaching-learning process.

The *Student's Book* is intended for use during lessons and includes a variety of reading texts accompanied by visual and audio materials. Illustrative images aid comprehension and facilitate

a more engaging learning experience. The accompanying activities are designed to encourage student participation in speaking exercises, such as debates and discussions, fostering the development of all four language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In turn, the *Workbook* serves as a valuable supplement that reinforces classroom learning through independent practice. It promotes student autonomy by providing a range of homework tasks to be completed outside class. Each unit of the *Workbook* typically includes at least two listening exercises to further enhance comprehension. The tasks are designed to assess students' grasp of key concepts introduced in the classroom.

Both the *Student's Book* and *Workbook* contain twelve chapters, with each chapter divided into four segments intended to be covered over eight academic hours. At the end of each chapter, a *Review* section consolidates learning and checks student understanding through targeted revision activities. This section also includes questions that stimulate critical thinking. Additionally, a *Progress Test* is provided at the end of each semester, allowing students to evaluate their cumulative knowledge.

The *Teacher's Book* plays a vital role by offering methodological guidance. It outlines detailed instructional strategies, from setting clear lesson objectives to selecting effective homework tasks and providing clear, concise instructions. Moreover, it offers advice on maintaining student engagement with course materials. The teaching process is structured around three key phases—pre-teaching, while-teaching, and post-teaching—ensuring a comprehensive pedagogical approach.

Among various set texts that have been used at vocational colleges across Uzbekistan, we wanted to pick up the following two:

1. *English B1* (for first-year students of academic lyceums and vocational colleges) by Bakieva G., Irisqulov A., Rashidova F., Tillayeva N., Karimova Z., Tursunboyeva S., Norova D., Djaloliddinova M., and Mamanabiyeva D. (Tashkent: "O'zbekiston", 2014 – 176 pages);
2. *English B1* (for second-year students) by Rashidova F., Tillayeva N., Karimova Z., and Tursunboyeva S. (Tashkent: "O'zbekiston", 2015 – 104 pages).

These coursebooks are aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) at the B1 level and include the full suite: *Student's Book*, *Workbook*, and *Teacher's Book*, along with a DVD of audio materials. Their overarching goal is to develop students' language proficiency across all four skills in an integrated manner.

The first-year book focuses on general English, addressing topics such as "What's your speciality?", "Time management," and "Independent learning." These units reflect the broader themes found in General English instruction, which is suitable since ESP is typically introduced later. The structure of the book, with its sequenced activities, visually rich layout, and clearly explained grammar rules, contributes to its effectiveness. However, a key limitation is its reliance on adapted rather than authentic materials. The absence of unmodified texts and genuine listening resources limits students' exposure to real-world language use.

In contrast, the second-year *English B1* coursebook moves closer to fulfilling ESP objectives. Recognizing that students must write diploma projects related to their fields of study, the book includes units such as "Choosing a Title and Selecting Information," "What is a Project?," "Data," and "Criteria of Reports." These topics provide valuable guidance on academic and professional writing. Although the book is designed to build general and specialized vocabulary and grammar knowledge, it still lacks sufficient authentic content. Adapted texts dominate, and subject-specific terminology—especially in areas like computer technology or industrial

processes such as oil refining or grain processing—is largely absent, limiting its utility for technical students.

In summary, teachers are exposed to a number of textbooks or online sources that provide structured language learning and support grammar development, or develop students' communicative competence by providing numerous listening, reading, writing and speaking activities. However, it is prudent for ESP practitioners to be discerning when selecting resources and to supplement existing materials with authentic content whenever possible. Recently developed ESP resources aim to address these issues by integrating all language skills and engaging students through real-world tasks and texts, ultimately making instruction more relevant and effective.

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