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PROJECT AS AN EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONALLY ORIENTED TECHNOLOGY IN ESP TEACHING

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This article deals with the problem of creating effective professionally oriented technologies in ESP teaching aimed at developing students' communicative competence enabling them to function successfully in their study and work-related communities. The author suggests taking into account the labour market demand for high-performing employees and apply educational technologies, which encourage students to gain prioritized qualities and skills to meet employers' expectations. Guided by these considerations the author advocates the project-based technology to help students develop underlying skills and strategies and make language learning more interactive and enjoyable. The presented project demonstrates the effective outcomes of specific content-based teaching using presentation techniques.

Keywords: ESP; professionally oriented technologies; project-based technology; content-based teaching; professional communicative foreign language competence.

Introduction. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become an important and substantial part of the English Lecturer's workload in the higher education system of Ukraine. The growth of ESP learning has been brought about by integration processes in the world and increasing demand for highly qualified specialists in different fields able to perform complex specific tasks in the global environment.

In the modern labour market employers prefer attracting and retaining high-quality, high-performing people who are full of ideas and focused on getting their job done quickly and effectively to satisfy their clients and customers. High performers are defined as highly competent, dynamic, adaptable and self-motivated employees. They always take ownership of whatever they do and have people-oriented and strong relationship-building skills. They are good team players and effective communicators [4, 15].

The available evidence seems to suggest that ESP designers take into account the growing demand for high-performing specialists and the qualities needed to perform successfully different jobs in the market. ESP is aimed at preparing learners to communicate effectively in English in academic, professional and workplace environments. It widens professional thesaurus and helps those who want to be real experts in their fields go beyond the limits, do a rewarding and satisfying job, and be socially successful.

With respect to broader understanding the language content for specific purposes, a number of foreign scientists who invested in ESP development regard it as an approach to language teaching to develop learners' competencies relevant to their specific needs and interests to function in a discipline, profession, or workplace [2, p. 6], [3, p. 3], [8, p.p. 164-167].

Moreover, ESP National Curriculum for Universities in Ukraine [1, p.p. 50-53] takes into account the needs of students' of a range of specialisms, presenting the options and forms of differentiation, variability and individualization of language teaching and learning, focusing on the methods that activate students' interest.

To follow the principles of the ESP National Curriculum, the Ukrainian researchers organize language learning to meet the demands and expectations of the target environment improving their students' proficiency in restricted areas of language for specific purposes (O. Tarnopolsky, Z. Korneva, S. Kozhushko – English for Economists, O. Petrashchuk – English for Aviation, O. Synekop – English for Engineering, V. Ivanyshyna – English for Lawyers, etc.). But still there is a problem of selecting and applying teaching technologies to bridge the gap between language study and language use overcoming the lack of the time allotted for ESP teaching.

The Purpose of the Paper. Taking into consideration students' specific needs in obtaining sufficient professional communicative competence to function successfully in their study or work-related communities, and the challenges that ESP teachers encounter, we suggest applying technologies to ESP teaching that help our learners, on the one hand, cope with the features of language in a situation where they need to use English in order to perform. On the other hand, gain prioritized qualities to develop high-performance skills. In this case, the best techniques are those that simulate real-world tasks focusing on competencies that facilitate communication in English as well as promote job-related skills (e.g. project work, case studies for engineering or business, presentations, role-plays). We consider that the project-based technology can help teachers meet their students' needs and interests in ESP learning.

Consequently, the purpose of this paper is: to observe the researches of the leading practitioners who use project methodology in English teaching; to define project characteristics valuable when applying into ESP teaching; to share the experience in adapting the project-based technology to teaching English to students majoring in telecommunications.

Project-based Technology. In our opinion, the project-based technology can serve as a valuable tool in ESP teaching to help students develop underlying skills and strategies and make language learning more interactive and enjoyable.

It is worth mentioning that project-based technology has been applied into teaching practice since the 1920s. Its primary aim was to meet the learners' interests and, thus improve their motivation to study. It is apparently why this approach has become especially popular as well as essential in ESP teaching which emphasizes the central importance of the learners' needs and interests.

A great number of researchers and practitioners have made significant breakthroughs in developing Project-based technology: F. L. Stoller, D. L. Fried-Booth, S. Haines, T. Hutchinson, R. Ribe, N. Vidal, J. W. Thomas, J. R. Mergendoller, A. Michaelson, B. F. Jones, C. M. Rasmussen, M. C. Moffitt, M. Legutke, S. Yu. Nikolayeva, O. B. Tarnopolsky, E. S. Polat, M. Y. Bukharkina, etc.

Project-based technology is an approach to learning around projects which are complex tasks, based on challenging questions or problems, that involve students in design, problem-solving, decision making, or investigative activities; give students the opportunity to work relatively autonomously over extended periods of time; and culminate in realistic products or presentations [9], [14], [16], [18] a way of achieving didactic goals through detailed elaboration of a problem (technology) that must culminate in quite real, tangible practical result [13 p. 65].

Project work as involving multi-skill activities is focused on a theme of interest rather than specific language tasks [6, p. 1]; a natural extension of fully integrated language and content learning [16].

Emphasizing the common characteristics of the Project-based learning, J. W. Thomas asserts that since the project is the central teaching strategy, students encounter and learn the central concepts of the discipline via the project. Projects involve students in a constructive investigation (design, decision-making, problem finding, problem solving, discovery, or model-building processes). They are student-driven, incorporating a good deal more student autonomy, choice, unsupervised work time, and responsibility than traditional instruction and traditional projects. Projects are realistic, they can include the topic, the tasks, the roles that students play, the context within which the work of the project is carried out, the collaborators who work with students on the project, the products that are produced, the audience for the project's products, or the criteria by which the products or performances are judged [19, p. 3-4].

According to [16] project work focuses on content-based learning rather than on language targets and it is student-centered that means the teacher supports and guides throughout the process. This technology is cooperative rather than competitive; students collaborate with each other. Furthermore, it leads to the authentic integration of skills and processing information from varied sources, mirroring real-life tasks and culminates in an end product that can be shared with others. Finally, it is potentially motivating, stimulating, empowering, and challenging; students develop confidence, self-esteem, and autonomy as well as improve their language skills, content learning and cognitive abilities.

S. Yu. Nikolayeva has suggested that projects are problem-based and involve researches related to the problem; support knowledge construction and naturally integrate subject and skills;

presuppose creativity in searching information in different sources; designed by learners in collaboration with their teacher who plays a major role in fostering interest and offering support; promote students' autonomy; integrate all four language skills; encourage both in-class and autonomous learning; lead to obtaining an end product [12, p. 22].

There are abundant concepts of project-based learning developed by language educators. It is worth drawing attention to those that allowed making a substantive and meaningful contribution to language teaching. F. Stroller presented three types of projects according to the nature and sequencing of project-related activities: structured projects (determined, specified, and organized by the teacher in terms of topic, materials, methodology and presentation), unstructured projects (defined by students themselves) and semi-structured projects (defined and organized in part by the teacher and in part by students) [16].

S. Haines, M. Legutke & H. Thomas suggested classifying projects into five types according to data collection techniques and sources of information: research projects, text projects, correspondence projects, survey projects and encounter projects and three types with respect to culminating activity: production projects, performance projects and organizational projects [6], [10].

The Russian educator E. S. Polat and then the Ukrainian researcher S. Yu. Nikolayeva presented classification of projects according to the typological characteristics: 1) predominating activity in the project (research, creative, role play, informative, practice-oriented projects); 2) content-based area: the subjects involved into the project (monoprojects: within one subject; multidisciplinary: based on two or more subjects); 3) the character of coordination: direct (rigid, flexible), vague, imitating the participants; 4) the character of the contacts (internal, regional or international); 5) the mode of interaction (individual, pair or group projects); 6) term of duration of the project (short-term, middle-term or long-term projects) [11, p. 278], [13, p. 71].

The defined characteristics of the project-based technology testify to the benefits that language practitioners can get from developing this way of ESP teaching.

ESP Projects for Telecoms Specialists. With the aforementioned in mind, we would like to share our experience of using project-based technology in ESP for the future telecoms specialists.

Thus, after observing the market demands for telecoms specialists, analyzing the requirements of the educational and qualification characteristics (EQS and EPP) of graduates, specific job descriptions developed by telecoms companies, special attention was paid to the possibility of creating conditions that enable our students to develop specific subject-based knowledge, job-related skills, and integrate them into the language learning. Since we found that effective communication, presentation and public speaking skills were in great demand, we decided to use the presentation technique as a means as well as an approach to ESP teaching and called our project "The Art of Presentation".

The scope of presentations related to real-world experience to apply into teaching telecommunications students is favourably distinguished. Class-related activities might involve reporting on academic topics, the results of studies or researches, projects, course papers and theses. Job-related situations can be regarded as presenting business projects, certain accomplishments of teamwork; reporting on individual assignment; coaching; launching new products and services; advertising production; organizing inductions and specific instructions.

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper high performing employees are effective communicators, and thus, their professional needs in developing presentation skills are obvious. A good communicator should be able to select relevant to his targets material to create reports, adapting it to the needs and interests of the audience, set the theme and goals, organize the sequence of the report, take care of high standard of speech and communication in general.

Therefore, modeling communication situations had a decisive influence on the whole process of developing the project: selecting topics of presentations, defining objectives, creating an outline, doing basic research on the selected topic, collecting information, developing tasks, presenting an end product. Teaching material was formed on the basis of professional needs to provide the connection between the teaching of the English language and the real context of its usage in professional activities and personal interests of the students. All of this contributed to high motivation in ESP training.

The strategic aim of the Project was to help the 4th-year-students develop general and professionally-oriented communicative competencies in English by mean of presentation techniques that would allow them to communicate effectively in their academic, job-related and social environments.

In regard to the typological classification [11, p. 278], [13, p. 71], "The Art of Presentation" project was defined as a content-based technology engaging knowledge construction of different subjects, various types of contacts and modes of interaction (see Table 1) encouraging students to experience: autonomous learning including self-directed learning and independent study in special topics; collaboration with peers as well as different subjects and language teachers; interaction with telecoms experts while participating in conferences.

Table1.

Typological characteristics of the project "The Art of Presentation"

Project "The Art of Presentation"					
1	2	3	4	5	6
Content-based practice & professionally-oriented	**Multidisciplinary** (engages: English, Telecommunications and Information Technologies, Rhetoric, Business Language	**Direct** Flexible (consultancy, facilitating, supporting, trouble-shooting, evaluation)	**In-class, regional and international** (delivering presentations on academic and specialism-related topics, participating in conferences)	**Autonomous** (the stage of preparing presentations) **Pair work Group work** (the stage of consultancy: seminars and training)	**Middle-term** (within a semester)

Such a complex and at the same time flexible organization of ESP learning enabled integration and development of all four language skills. Each stage of the project implementation involved certain skills. While gathering and selecting information for the presentation, students improved intensive and extensive reading (skimming, scanning, for detail). When they were sorting out the selected material trying to adapt it to their audience's needs, they were practising writing (note-taking, recording, describing, classifying). At the stage of presentation delivery, they were mastering their speaking skills: monolog (reporting, describing, explaining, commenting, drawing conclusions, evaluating), dialogue (during the Question-&-Answer Session: discussing, debating, negotiating, arguing, suggesting) and listening skills (for gist, for detail, etc).

It also encouraged students to increase their capacity for self-evaluation, self-esteem and autonomous learning, that will enable students to continue learning in academic and professional situations both before and beyond graduation.

Being involved in the Project, students were able to develop their mental abilities and ways of thinking (observation, discovery, decision-making, communication, memory, attention, concentration, imagination, creativity, problem -solving, critical thinking) and personal motivation. All these factors let students broaden their professional thesaurus as well as master their communicative skills, and thus strengthened their confidence as users of the language, and their positive attitude to language learning.

Regarding the objectives of the Project, they were defined as practical tools for mastering effective communication and performance. During the project work students, first, explored the types and structure of presentations widely used in the telecoms fields. They learnt effective ways of selecting the material and tailoring it to the audience's needs and interests. Then, they practised the skills needed to design and deliver a presentation. Finally, they showed their results in classes and participating in different academic events. All this time students worked in collaboration with their peers, language teachers and subjects specialists.

The expected outcomes became manifest when students presenting their reports could demonstrate the ability to analyze and adapt information to an audience, define and set objectives, create a strong introduction and strong conclusion, outline the body of a presentation, use notes, estimate the time and even overcome anxiety. They were able to make a start, structure their presentations, use voice and language (articulation; pace of speech; timbre of voice; intonation, pause (syntax and psychological) effectively. Managing their body language students took care of their appearance, posture, space orientation, gestures and mimes.

It was also essential to be able to spice a presentation up with visual aids designing slides, using colours, fonts, charts and graphs in the proper way, and make it dynamic by means of animation. At this stage, students were forced to use different software technologies, and thus improved computing skills.

While handling a Question-&-Answer Session students were expected to respond effectively, credit the audience and be patient and polite. The ability to create a rhetoric image of the presenter indicated a high level of the language culture and communication skills.

Conclusion. With regard to the aforementioned, the positive results claimed by leading researchers [17] as well as the outcomes of our project activity are related to: increasing students' ability to demonstrate specific content area skills and communication skills; development of collaboration, critical thinking, and problem solving; increasing motivation and engagement; managing time to complete tasks, and integrating technology into projects in meaningful ways.

The most valuable contribution of this technology into ESP is that learning gains content-based and multidisciplinary features, and makes it possible to foster autonomous study as well as pair and group work.

Besides, our own experience in teaching telecoms students has confirmed that project tasks based on developing presentation and communication skills help students understand specific content more easily and quickly and retain it longer compared to the traditional mode of learning. Students deal with computing technologies, which provide them with a quick search of information and help create products, effectively improving their technical and communicative skills. Projects provide students with opportunities to interact with foreign specialists to present their job-related projects. As active participants students gain valuable skills and qualities to become high performers, that will make it possible to be successful in the study and get a prestigious job.

No doubt, language teachers also benefit from using the project-based technology as it allows them to organize high quality, meaningful work, and thus makes their job more enjoyable and rewarding.

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О. І. Назаренко. Проект як ефективна професійно-орієнтована технологія у навчанні англійської мови професійного спілкування.

У даній статті розглядається проблема створення ефективних професійно-орієнтованих технологій у навчанні англійської мови професійного спілкування, спрямованих на формування у студентів комунікативної компетентності, яка дозволить їм успішно функціонувати в навчальному та робочому середовищах. Автор пропонує ураховувати попит на ефективних працівників ринку праці для того, щоб застосовувати освітні технології, які стимулюють студентів до отримання пріоритетних якостей і вмінь, очікуваних роботодавцями. Керуючись цими міркуваннями, автор підтримує ідею застосування проектних технологій, щоб допомогти студентам розвивати необхідні уміння й зробити вивчення мови більш інтерактивним і приємним. Представлений проект демонструє ефективні результати застосування проектної технології у навчанні майбутніх фахівців з телекомунікацій.

Ключові слова: АМПС; професійно-орієнтовані технології; проектна технологія; навчання через зміст дисциплін; професійна іншомовна комунікативна компетентність.

О. И. Назаренко. Проект как эффективная профессионально-ориентированная технология в обучении английскому языку профессионального общения.

В данной статье рассматривается проблема создания эффективных профессионально-ориентированных технологий в обучении английскому языку профессионального общения, направленных на формирование у студентов коммуникативной компетентности, которая позволит им успешно функционировать в учебной и рабочей среде. Автор предлагает учитывать спрос на эффективных работников на рынке труда для того, чтобы применять образовательные технологии, которые стимулируют студентов к получению приоритетных качеств и умений, ожидаемых работодателями. Руководствуясь этими соображениями, автор поддерживает применение проектных технологий, чтобы помочь студентам развивать необходимые умения и сделать изучение языка более интерактивным и приятным. Представленный проект демонстрирует эффективные результаты применения проектной технологии в обучении будущих специалистов в области телекоммуникаций.

Ключевые слова: профессионально-ориентированные технологии; проектная технология; обучение языку; основанное на содержании профильных дисциплин; профессиональная иноязычная коммуникативная компетентность.