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## COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN ESP TEACHING

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*This article aims to highlight the role of communicative methods and approaches in teaching ESP to engineering students. It discusses different communicative strategies which can be successfully applied in the process of English language teaching and assist engineering students to improve their learning skills.*

**Key words:** *English for Specific Purposes (ESP), communicative approach, strategies, methods, engineering students.*

A central concept of teaching English in ESP course is communicative competence: the learner's ability to understand and use language appropriately to communicate in authentic environments. Nowadays specialists shouldn't just read and translate professional or technical texts, but the communication in professional context is taken as a priority: communicating with colleagues, taking part in various discussions, preparing presentations and reports, handling all types of business correspondence. In this age of globalisation, the number of international projects is increasing, cross-cultural communication and collaboration is on the rise; this is particularly so for the international practice of technical field specialists [4, p. 97].

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a key term for a number of approaches that developed in the 1970s and soon spread around the world as older methods such as Audiolingualism and Situational Language Teaching failed to

prepare learners for a productive use of the target language in the many different communicative situations of everyday life. The centrality of grammar in language teaching and learning was questioned, since it was argued that language ability involved much more than grammatical competence. While grammatical competence was needed to produce grammatically correct sentences, attention shifted to the knowledge and skills needed to use grammar and other aspects of language appropriately for different communicative purposes such as making requests, giving advice, making suggestions, describing wishes and needs, and so on. What was needed in order to use language communicatively was communicative competence. This was a broader concept than that of grammatical competence, and included knowing what to say and how to say it appropriately based on the situation, the participants, and their roles and intentions. The analysis of native scientific and methodological literature of researches (Riemer M., Savignon S., Richards J., Rodgers T.) has shown that traditional grammatical and vocabulary syllabuses and teaching methods don't include information of this kind. Taking into consideration the deficiency of approaches which develop communicative competence in ESP course, the following article is focused on studying all sorts of possible solutions of the problem arising from the necessity to develop communicative competence in ESP course and suggest the most effective methods.

According to the purposes we have defined the following tasks to analyze:

- identifying problems associated with communicative competence for engineering students;
- clarifying the aim of the communicative approach, its main characteristics and principles, advantages and disadvantages;
- analyzing and suggesting useful communicative methods and activities that are important in technical classroom.

Such scholars as K. Brandl [1, p. 7], C. J. Doughty and M. H. Long [2, p. 58], J. C. Richards and T. Rodgers [3, p. 105], and others define the aim of the communicative approach and give the following characteristics of CLT:

- Teaching is student-centred; it takes into account their language needs, interests and goals concerning a future profession. At the same time, language

teaching is no longer a one-way transmission of knowledge from teachers to students, cooperation is the core of CLT.

– The teacher in the language classroom is a facilitator, who creates a climate stimulating studying with opportunities for students to practice English.

– Information exchange, choice-making and problems solving create interaction at the lesson which contributes to the target language (TL) acquisition. Moreover, the wider the variety of communicative activities, the greater the chance of involving all students and that is essential for the group activities' success.

– The four language skills – listening, reading, speaking, writing – are incorporated, creating a whole-language approach.

From the above mentioned features of CLT, its principles are the following:

1. Concentration on communication.
2. Learning by doing is promoted.
3. Reflecting a real communicating process.
4. Rich input. One of the biggest necessities in teaching is to utilize original multimedia resources. The English authentic materials expose students to the real language and produce a more creative approach to teaching [2, p. 13].
5. Input should be meaningful, comprehensible, and elaborated.
6. Co-operative and collaborative learning is promoted.
7. Focus on form. According to S. J. Savignon [5, p. 7], to develop communicative skills, an integration of form-focused exercises with meaning-focused experience should be present in the teaching process.
8. Provision of positive or negative mistakes.

Although, there are lots of benefits and advantages of the communicative approach, problems with its use still exist.

1. Less attention is paid to grammar and pronunciation mistakes. CLT does not focus on error correction. Attention is paid mostly on getting and comprehending information whether correct use of language.

2. The methods are not suitable for the learners-beginners or for short-term courses, because repetition of communicative models and development of constant language skills are necessary.

3. Control and feedback should be provided efficiently and in time.

4. Student may not see the value in learning English through group work, games, and activities [4, p. 67].

In order to achieve positive results in teaching English to engineering students, certain recommendations of the proper CLT implementation should be followed:

1. Use the target language at the maximum. The more students hear the TL, the better, since the larger the studied language input, the greater the students' advances.

2. Motivate students, give multiple arguments for using the TL.

3. Give clear instructions.

4. Develop four traditional skills – listening, reading, speaking, and writing – in correlation [1, p. 14-16].

5. Organize maximum interaction between people, who are studying English. Active academic work at the foreign language lessons affects positively on students [1, p. 257]. Cooperation “students–learning materials–other students–the teacher” is important for the ultimate result of the target language acquisition.

To sum up the information on the communicative approach in teaching English to engineering students, it should be noted that advantages of the communicative approach are: 1) faster and more efficient results due to the use of communicative tasks, 2) bigger involvement of students in the studying process, and therefore their higher responsibility for the achievement of the lesson's goal, 3) connection between the real-life language and situations studied at the lessons, concerning everyday life, as well as students' professional field.

In spite of the fact that communicative competence tends to be one of the biggest and the most challenging teaching problems, it can be successfully solved by applying recommendations described above. Teachers' awareness of benefits and peculiarities of communicative methods can help them improve their teaching approach and avoid disadvantages in teaching English to engineering students.

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### **Комунікативний підхід у викладанні англійської мови для спеціальних цілей**

Стаття має на меті підкреслити роль комунікативних методів у викладанні англійської мови для спеціальних цілей студентам технічних спеціальностей. Розглядаються різні комунікативні методи та прийоми, які можуть бути успішно застосовані в процесі викладання англійської мови та допомагати студентам удосконалювати навички володіння мовою.

**Ключові слова:** англійська мова для спеціальних цілей, комунікативні методи, студенти технічних спеціальностей.