

ESP PROJECTS THAT CHANGED TRADITIONAL TEACHING HABITS IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

From 2016 many educational projects organized for Higher Educational Institutions of Uzbekistan and one of them is EnSPIRE-U (English for Specific Purposes Integrated Reform in Uzbekistan) organized by British Council. Moving from centralized, course book-based system to sudden freedom has brought its fair share of challenges. The purpose of this article is to look new trends teaching ESP in Uzbekistan with the project EnSPIRE-U and piloting new syllabus for the 1st year students of pharmaceutical directions in three institutions of Uzbekistan: Tashkent pharmaceutical Institute, Nukus Medical Institute (pharmaceutical direction) and Andijan Medical Institute (pharmaceutical direction). Research had started in 2016 with base-line study identifying learning needs of pharmaceutical students in Uzbekistan. Further, from 2018 designing and piloting materials in ESP lessons. Results of this study show that using authentic materials developed professional communicative competence in English of future pharmacists.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, English for General Purposes, experimental groups, controlling groups, needs analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching English for Specific Purposes is huge responsibility for ESP teachers and it differs from teaching EFT or ELT. They are not only language teachers but also teachers aware of their learners' field and content. In Uzbekistan ESP teachers and learners really needed methodological support and change in teaching English to different specialists. Now engineers, doctors, pharmacists, managers, economists have great opportunity to negotiate with foreigners, to develop their field, but lack of communicative competence in English does not allow them to the further development. Therefore, much attention has been given to postgraduate specialist training, especially in foreign language learning.

Research conducted in three stages:

identifying needs of ESP learners;

designing syllabus based on needs analysis;

piloting materials in experimental groups.

MEASURING THE NEEDS

Results of need analysis, we can identify objectives, outcomes, topics and notions of teaching and learning languages. It also includes following criterion:

age of the learner (student or worker);

aim of learning foreign language (for study abroad or for professional purposes);

skills and abilities of learning languages (auditory, visual or kinaesthetic learner).

A. Remzi indicates that respondents of needs analysis can be employees, employers, students, colleagues, post graduate students, researchers of the field with the help of questionnaire, surveys, interview, test and so on. However, language needs may be different of learners, specialists in the field of pharmacy need English for workplace or post graduate students` language needs are for learning so academic purposes.

Identifying target language needs helps to design course what skills and level of language they may achieve by the end of the course. Language and present situation analysis identify weak and strong points of learners.

Mahdi Redha Aben Ahmed states curriculum and syllabus should be designed according to needs but most ESP institutions` syllabus are not meet learners` needs.

Therefore, this research on needs identification of pharmaceutical students of Uzbekistan expected to help pharmaceutical students to enhance English language skills and develop professional competence through English.

The study used the ADDIE model (analysis, design, develop, implement and evaluate. Need analysis was conducted by distributing questionnaire and interviewing Bachelor and Master`s students, content teachers and practitioners in Uzbekistan pharmaceutical directions. Syllabus and materials were developed and piloted in three higher education institutions of pharmaceutical directions in Uzbekistan.

Within pharmaceutical students` needs date collected through questionnaire and interviewing 1st-5th year Bachelor students, content teachers, English teachers and pharmacists over 450 respondents participated. The questionnaire for students and pharmacists included following questions:

Table 1. Pharmaceutical students` needs analysis

Questions		Answers in percentages	
1.	Do you need English in your future profession?	90%	Yes
		10%	No
2.	Does English help you to learn pharmaceutical terminology?	80%	Yes
		20%	No
3.	What do you need to learn in English for pharmaceutical purposes: reading, writing, listening and or speaking?	30%	Reading
		15%	Listening
		5%	Writing
		50%	Speaking
4.	What materials do you think efficient for learning English for Pharmaceutical Purposes?	70%	Authentic materials
		30%	Textbooks
5.	Are you satisfied with syllabus you are using for English lesson?	35%	Yes
		65%	No

According to questionnaire pharmaceutical students need English for speaking, interacting with foreign partners at the conferences, webinars, business meetings. Moreover, they need reading pharmaceutical scientific articles, books, news and drug instructions, pharmacopeias. Results of needs analysis` pharmaceutical students of Uzbekistan show that they have internal and external needs for English.

Internal needs such as:

reading instructions of laboratory equipment, for using in work place in Uzbekistan;

reading and interpreting drug instructions in English to patients;

interacting with foreign patients in a pharmacy or hospitals in Uzbekistan.

External needs are:

negotiating with foreign partners;

presenting at the international conference, webinars, business meetings;

advertising medicinal form at international forums, exhibitions.

Results of needs demanded to modify syllabus for pharmacists as previous syllabus focused on teaching grammar and most topics were for teaching general English. Subject specialty topics were not renewed though news in pharmaceutical field change so quick. The most important needs analysis changed approach in teaching English for Pharmaceutical Purposes from Grammar Translation, Audio-lingual to Communicative Language Teaching.

From the interview with ESP and content teachers it was found out that beside challenges with syllabus, materials, design and textbooks there were problems with time allocation for ESP classes, it is 2 hours per week and it is not enough to improve communicative competence of future pharmacists. Furthermore, it is difficult to teach ESP to learners with A1 and A2 level and groups consisted of multilevel ESP learners. It can be observed from Aptist test results taken by British Council.

Table 2. Uzbekistan ESP learners level according CEFR at HEI

According to CEFR	A0	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1
Percentages	4,4%	25%	15,4%	21%	18,7%	6,6%

Table shows that 25% students with A1 and it is challenging to use authentic materials as most authentic texts are at B1 and higher level.

During base-line study I checked 1st year pharmaceutical students` speaking skills in English at the end of the academic year. There were 8 questions related general topics and specific such as:

What do you do in your free time?

Can you speak about your hometown?

Why do you choose the profession of pharmacist?

Will English help you in your future profession? Why? /Why not?

What subjects do you study now?

Who is chemist?

Can you describe your chemical lab?

Can you talk about your first chemical experiment in your chemical lab?

150 students were divided into two groups: 75 students in experimental groups (EG) and 75 students controlling groups (CG).

Table 3. Before piloting new syllabus

Groups	Number of students	Number of questions	Number of correct answers	Percentages
EG	75	8	4	50%
CG	75	8	5	62%

Students of both groups could not answer 7-8-questions as there were different reasons: 1) it was difficult to answer questions with A1-A2 level of English, 2) students who were B1 level they had lack of competence using subject specific terminology, 3) during English classes teacher focused on reading texts and translating and students understood the question but could not answer it. Project coordinators, consultants and ESP teachers considered that the best way to begin with General English (GE) during the first year of Bachelor Degree and then move to specific one.

Module based teaching was easy to use because every module planned according to needs of learners. There is sample of module-based learning for English for Pharmaceutical Purposes:

Table 4. Module based Syllabus plan for pharmaceutical students

Module no.	Module title	Percentages
1	Social and professional interaction	20%
2	Being a student	20%
3	Academic skills (English for pharmacists)	20%
4	Pharmaceutical job environment	20%
5	Professional Ethics and Attitudes	10%
6	Integrating into the international community	10%
Total	256	100%

Percentages of each module can be changed due to needs of learners as during piloting syllabus students of Tashkent pharmaceutical institute taught the first module with about 15% while Andijan Medical institute's percentage at this module was 25%. It was depended on learners' level of English as first module "Social and professional interaction" aimed to teach English for General Purposes (EGP) and included topics such as "Introducing yourself and others", "Body language", "Hobbies and personal interest", "How to network at work", "Relations and conversation", "Taboos", "Socializing through technology", "Writing formal and informal letter" and so on some of them are given in appendix1. These topics helped pharmaceutical students to acquire and how to use general vocabulary, grammar in real life situations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main purpose of the project and made investigations in the field of pharmacy to improve ESP learners' communicative competence in English as Uzbekistan needs specialists of different areas with best knowledge of specialty, languages especially English and information technology. These skills help specialists to achieve success and contributes to the development of the country. The findings suggest that:

needs analysis should be root for before designing syllabus, selecting materials, what ESP learners want and need;

for ESP learners with low level GE courses should be provided because it is ineffective teaching ESP without background of GE;

it is important to conduct interactive activities to develop communicative competence.

Piloted syllabus for pharmaceutical students is much more effective than old one and activities such as role play, improvisation, dialogues became interesting activity for pharmaceutical students and even students with low level were active during the lesson.

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