

TEACHING ESP LEARNERS UNMIXED ABILITY CLASSES

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Abstract. *In this article, the author's day-to-day experiences with teaching mixed-ability classes at higher education of higher learning are reviewed. The practical experience is scrutinized in relation to recent teaching and learning methodologies. The strategies for task and material variation, collaborative learning, individualization, and changes to classroom arrangement are described. The mix of different activities with respect to individual heterogeneous groups are discussed.*

Key words: *Ability, questions, education, learning, teaching, student, English Education, Higher, academic, positive factors, equipped, context.*

ОБУЧЕНИЕ УЧАЩИХСЯ ESP ПРОГРАММАМ БЕЗ СМЕШАННЫХ СПОСОБНОСТЕЙ

Аннотация. *В данной статье рассматривается повседневный опыт автора по преподаванию смешанных классов в высших учебных заведениях. Практический опыт тщательно изучается в связи с последними методологиями преподавания и обучения. Описаны стратегии изменения заданий и материалов, совместного обучения, индивидуализации и изменений в организации занятий. Смешение различных видов деятельности по отношению к отдельным разнородным группам не обсуждается.*

Ключевые слова: *Способность, вопросы, образование, обучение, преподавание, студент, английское образование, высшее, академическое, положительные факторы, оснащение, контекст.*

INTRODUCTION

The question of how students learn and how teachers bring about learning cannot be answered as education deals with specific purposes and contexts that differ from each other with students who are diverse in all aspects (Fry et al, 2009). Language teaching and learning aim primarily to enabling learners communicate their ideas in that language with ease. Learning and teaching English for Specific Purpose (ESP) in higher education intends to help students be equipped with more advanced language tools or develop all language critical skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. When students master these four language skills, they can now be successful in their academic journey as English has become not only a medium of instruction but also a subject to be taught at tertiary level of Education in many parts of the globe. However, at university level, teaching and learning can be affected by various factors including students' personal challenges and institution's conditions. Students' engagement and their interests in the subject by linking what they learnt to the world issues (Burkšaitienė and Šliogerienė, 2018) hold an important part among the positive factors while low level of English probably resulting from inadequate training in the previous studies in tandem with learning environment, militate against effective teaching and learning as both slow down the teachers and impede them to carry it out effectively. This being, students' interest in ESP and related challenge pose a number of questions. Harmer (2015) lists four ways of arranging seats: orderly rows (traditional), and horseshoe, circle or modular arrangements. He claims that orderly rows enable teachers to

thoroughly monitor students' work and maintain eye contact with them. Furthermore, this kind of arrangement is regarded as suitable for activities such as grammar explanation, giving presentations, or watching a video[8].

Materilas:Language teaching theory (CLT) as framed on principles language teaching goals, how learners learn it, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate language learning, and the roles of both teachers and learners in the classroom.[1]Currently, teaching English for specific purposes in higher education is being dictated mostly by the influence of globalization and internationalization (Duyen, 2019). Higher institutions in Uzbekistan are not exception and are committed to helping their future graduates be equipped with English language skills to use in their various work fields namely education and other related occupational businesses. Richards (2006) postulates that Communicative language teaching sets as its goal the teaching of communicative competence; the knowledge we have of a language that accounts for our ability to produce sentences in it. It is this communicative competence that is affecting the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in Higher Education in one way or another. As an international language that serves for many purposes worldwide, English is not only taught in Rwandan Education as a subject but also a medium of instruction since the post genocide period. Across various parts of the globe, for enhanced learning in higher education environment to be ensured, new methodologies of teaching and learning including problem-solving, project-based, portfolio-based teaching and learning, collaborative learning and technology-enhanced learning, web-assisted learning have been increasingly adopted by higher education institutions across the globe(Burkšaitienė and Šliogerienė, 2018). These new methodologies need to be applied in congruent with students' level and competencies, learning environment and available facilities. [2]Elsewhere, students in University of Uzbekistan, like any other students whose first language is not English, have a range of communication needs in academic context (Rupert, 2016) but at the end of their studies they are still grappling with difficulties linked with inadequate communication be it in written and spoken languages. Having been trained in English and taught English as a subject, it is still hard for them to minimize language errors which means expectations while teaching them English for specific purpose are not met. Inherently, while Bazimaziki (2018) recommended that efforts be made to practice and improve English language for effective communication, it is not actually done at the expected level due to various factors. To a certain extent, this is rooted in learners' low communication competence coupled little interest while Kimbouala et al.(2018) believe that lack of motivation and difficulties to express themselves in the target language militate against the effective learning. Discussing similar issue, Sumipo (2019) asserts that the paradigm shift of modern education which stresses on economic demands and fields of specialization calls for teaching of English for the obvious reason of equipping the students with the kind of English which assures immediate employment in their chosen fields. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is taught in higher education for similar aims to help students be equipped with English communication skills that would enable them to carry out their works conversantly. Against this background, the researchers deemed necessary to explore students' perceptions of their interest in ESP, challenges affecting them and way to grapple with them for its effective learning.[3]

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Aims and Scope. The study is concerned with English for Specific Purposes, one of the cross cutting subjects taught students of University of Rwanda, College of Education. The

researchers involved year two students from Science and social Science combinations for the Academic Year 2018/2019. Due to time and space, the researchers involved a small group at a particular occasion during the teaching and learning session. The researchers wanted to explore students' perceptions and reflection on their interest in learning ESP, identify challenges affecting their learning and explore possible remedies.

RESULTS

The study seeks to answer the following questions: (1) How far are students interested in learning English for Specific Purposes? (2) What are students' reflections about the challenges impeding them to learn ESP effectively? (3) How can these challenges be mitigated? The researchers concur with Richards (2006) who posits that ESP courses are designed to address the language needs of university students, nurses, engineers, restaurant staff, doctors, hotel staff, airline pilots, and so on.

DISCUSSION

English for Specific Purposes has won a wide ground in the area of research on language education in various parts of the globe. Learning and teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) go along with globalization and internationalization where English holds an important part as a global language used in many if not all life domains. Duyen (2019) explored teacher's perceptions as regard ESP assessment and come up with the conclusion that ESP should help students develop not only their language competence but also critical thinking and problem solving skills information searching,[4]

CONCLUSION

English language is taught in Rwandan higher education to serve for various communicative purposes viz academic, social, personal and interpersonal. Challenges affecting the teaching and learning of this international language are basically linked with individual learners and partly with learning environment. Mahendran (2019) confirmed to effectively teach English and workplace literacy skills, there is a need of a resourceful, reflective and proactive teacher demonstrating an ability to align the lesson with learners' levels or competency with their learning aspirations and keenness to learn. The author recommends active participation learning which he says "rekindles even the passive learners to get involved in a fun way to learn and practice language skills". A similar point is echoed in Lenard and Lenard (2018) that overcoming challenges impeding effective teaching and learning entails teaching in smaller student groups, more academic skill-based classes, better course books and a closer cooperation with subject specialists. The authors suggested a big part of school management in order to help improve ESP courses development and enhance the acquired skills quality of the future graduates. Researchers in this study are not far from these views for effective teaching and learning of ESP. For the most, the three parts concerned with the teaching and learning of English for Specific purposes (ESP) are required to play their part each. Students should feel responsible and avoid that fear of practice. Because "Practice makes perfect" they will improve gradually simply that "by mistakes we learn". They should also read enough and attend public talks delivered in English. For the teachers of ESP, a big duty lie in knowing their students' gaps and help them accordingly, giving them more opportunities to practise, from what they already know to what they (teachers) want them (students) to know; creating rooms for debates from smaller to larger groups. Teachers should also vary the teaching and learning methodologies and give enough rooms to practical oral and written exercises. This is in line with Gálová (2007)

who proposes seven solutions to grapple with a series of difficulties for effective teaching and learning ESP in mixed classes in higher education suchs (1) to vary topics and content so that students are more likely to feel interested; (2) Set open-ended tasks so that learners may complete them according to their levels; (3) provide activities with varying degrees of difficulties so that sometimes even more advanced students may find them a challenge which will help them to increase their motivation; (4) Use pair and group works so that they may help one another; (5) Group them according to their levels so that no one will feel ashamed of his her performance; (6) Attend to particular individual difficulties and (7) provide additional materials to those who may need it.

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