

Content-Based Instruction in ESP Enlightenment

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Abstract. *Due to the increased demand for technical specialists in digitalized infrastructure in all spheres, universities are facing the requirement to enlarge student abilities with English academic pieces of knowledge based on their programs. By gaining English academic terminology in their sphere, the graduates enlarge their opportunities to be attracted by prestigious employers. This paper aims to present the effective integrated teaching approaches that have been analyzed by ESP practitioners and suggested as the key solution to deal with content-based teaching.*

Key words: *ESP, specific terminology, Content Based Teaching, ESL teaching problems, English University level, CBT analysis.*

Introduction

Even though there is a small number of specialists in teaching ESP courses in Uzbekistan, the bear to increase the number of vocational English teachers seems proceeding slowly. The scholars B.X. Kutlimuratova and A. D. O'razboyev outline the dilemma above as the most important which is visible at Uzbek Universities, they claim that efforts to enhance English instruction in Uzbekistan have fallen short because of the shortage of the persistence of qualified teachers. The following reasons can be drafted after much research. First, non-native speakers dominate the field without native assistance, and many of them lack essential language skills. This proficiency gap undermines effective teaching. As a result, students struggle to achieve fluency. Second, there is a strong absence of initiative and willingness by general English teachers, to turn their teaching strategies into vocational ones. In most cases that purpose is neglected as being an ESP instructor demands special training and a lot of transformation to provide professionalism in the classroom. The most vital factor is seen in strong curricula and content in specialized spheres, which unenviably requires experience and practical expertise. The government's initiatives, while well-intentioned, there is still much to do to improve the situation.

Individual and scholarly knowledge

Having taught English as a foreign language at a technical university I have had to deal with a curriculum aligned with Content Based Teaching (CBT), all topics were related to IT and IT functioning which was a new area for me that resulted in anxiety and embarrassment. Even though I am an experienced teacher with more than 15 years of teaching ESL classes with high level students, the specialized vocabulary and terminology, the design of unfamiliar topic material, time management and assessment tools presented many difficulties in comparison to general English teaching. The knowledge of academic writing and academic texts has been a daily practice with enrollee students, by fair supporting the content teaching, however, there is still a lot to learn and implement. What I mean is the knowledge of technical terminology is not enough to process through the ESP course, there is a strong demand to be informed about their functioning in a technological context to be able to have students interpret the whole authentic material. The most disappointing is

the involvement of related topics in one lesson that had to be covered in only two academic hours is absolute trouble, just to name.

Personal experience and student surveys indicate that many EFL teachers have to change their way of teaching from general English to English for specific purposes. One should point out that it is not a quick process, there is much adaptation and reformation needed to be overviewed starting from teaching methodology, content, lexis, collaborative approach, and intensive learning which is one of the requirements to be capable of providing meaningful ESP lessons. Antony underlines the most significant problem, seeing it in the lack of specialist knowledge.

The communities of researchers on LinkedIn.com list the essential skills and competencies for an ESP teacher:

- Know your context
- Customize your content
- Integrate your skills
- Collaborate with others
- Evaluate your results
- Keep learning
- Suit the needs of learners

Livia. F Pataki lecturer and Curriculum developer states

“A successful ESP teacher will always attempt to make connections between content and real life. For example, when teaching ESP Computer Science classes, a bit of research into what subjects the students are studying can guide me through what texts I should be choosing for them to read. This way they can make connections between ESP and their other subjects. For example, for computer science ESP modules, I choose research articles about machine learning or artificial intelligence and ethical issues around AI”

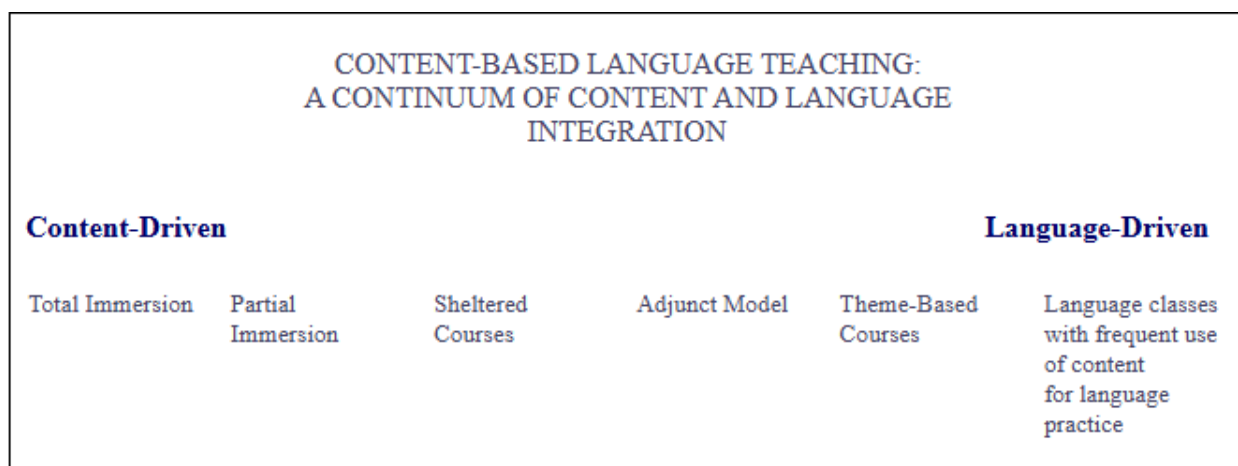
Challenges of teaching ESP at the University level

In the realm of educational strategies, the intersection of language acquisition and content delivery has gained significant scholarly attention. It is becoming one of the hot topics at higher educational institutions where students are expected to have two-semester English classes in the first year at no philological program in Uzbekistan. Thus, there is always a dilemma in designing a syllabus whether to choose ESP topics or general English which should be delivered between 120 -150 academic hours at the University level. As mentioned above much consideration should be taken before setting up goals starting from needs analyses and choice of material to acknowledging the level of freshmen which varies from beginner to higher intermediate. The survey which is done with both part-time and full-time students at the University of Management and Future Technologies (UMFT) reveals that most of the first-year students have been involved the technology-oriented and economy programs at an elementary level. The analysis was not very positive to start the ESP course, however, the English philology department decided to combine ESP design with topics that would involve tech and business terminology creating content focusing on all aspects of a language lesson. English lessons cover topics and themes that adjust partially to specific programs. A university student is expected to learn basic speciality terminology, collocations, and multimodality in ESP to be able to recognize specific language related to his future career. It is very demanding for the teachers, as they have to be good at organization and technical skills to comprehend and use language that is oriented to a particular field or discipline.

Is the solution found in Content-Based Instruction?

Before moving to an analysis of CBI implications there is a need to explore its wider meaning and types which is not omniscient to everyone

What is content-based instruction? Cambridge University Press defines it as follows “Content-Based Instruction (CBI) refers to an approach to second language teaching in which teaching is organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or other type of syllabus. M. Germain describes three recognized models that interconnect in ESL contexts: sheltered, adjunct, and theme-based. Myriam Met draws these approaches in her article in Figure 2 in the most comprehensible way which is shown in the table below



Sheltered Model – this is an approach that involves both content teachers and ESL teachers. Both teachers work in collaboration to achieve the same goal of acquiring knowledge on a studying specialty. Stephen Davies provides a clear definition of the word “sheltered”; He explains it as an assistant model to help a learner derive the regular academic classes. Myriam Met outlines that language learning is not an essential goal of sheltered instruction, but mastering content is evaluated substantially. Sheltered Instruction is a teaching approach designed to make academic content more accessible to English learners (ELs) while simultaneously developing their English language proficiency. Research on sheltered instruction methods revealed the existence of the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) module that provides a scaffolded approach that makes complex content more comprehensible. Key components of sheltered instruction involve:

- Content modification
- Language modification
- Scaffolding
- Strategic Use of Grouping
- Meaningful tasks
- Comprehensible input
- Collaborative Learning Assessment

Adjunct Model – is an approach that combines two courses, language and content program. Language is learned through the chosen content. ESL serves as a support program to acquire academic language skills which demands considerable design of materials involving content courses. Percival, Georgann Sue presents research by Brinton and Snow stating that the adjunct model is functional to obtain the necessary skills to enter a higher educational institution. When this query is generated in AI it answers, it also adds that this model is often used in higher education settings, including universities and colleges. It is commonly used in ESL (English as a Second Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language) programs. The adjunct model of content-based instruction is effective in improving language proficiency, content knowledge, and overall academic success.

Theme-based Model – is an approach based on a student-centred learning model, that aligns with the student’s background knowledge and experience. This strategy has the learners connect their previous knowledge with topics from various areas to work out practical applications. According to Bazera Fagunda and Shen Kai Yin implement various instructive strategies with the arrangement of

flexible hours and content language to meet students' needs and achieve their expected objectives. Based on Lynne Cameron "*It is very demanding for the teachers, as they have to be good at organization and in technical skills*". Teacher competency and knowledge and their role importance by Dermody and S. Sesorina highly outlined that it would bring a powerful arrangement of the lesson.

Content-Based teaching at the university level. Methods, analysis and results

ESP is one of the areas that is not fully implemented at the University level as far as I am concerned and the survey that I held in 2023 among English teachers of technical Universities was a piece of evidence to conclude which was published in the Republican conference held by the UMFT university. There is no unique system and syllabus that would be put forward as a priority to involve teachers in ESP teaching strategies and ways. Uzbekistan lacks expertise in this field to enhance teacher education in academic and professional areas.

Methods and materials

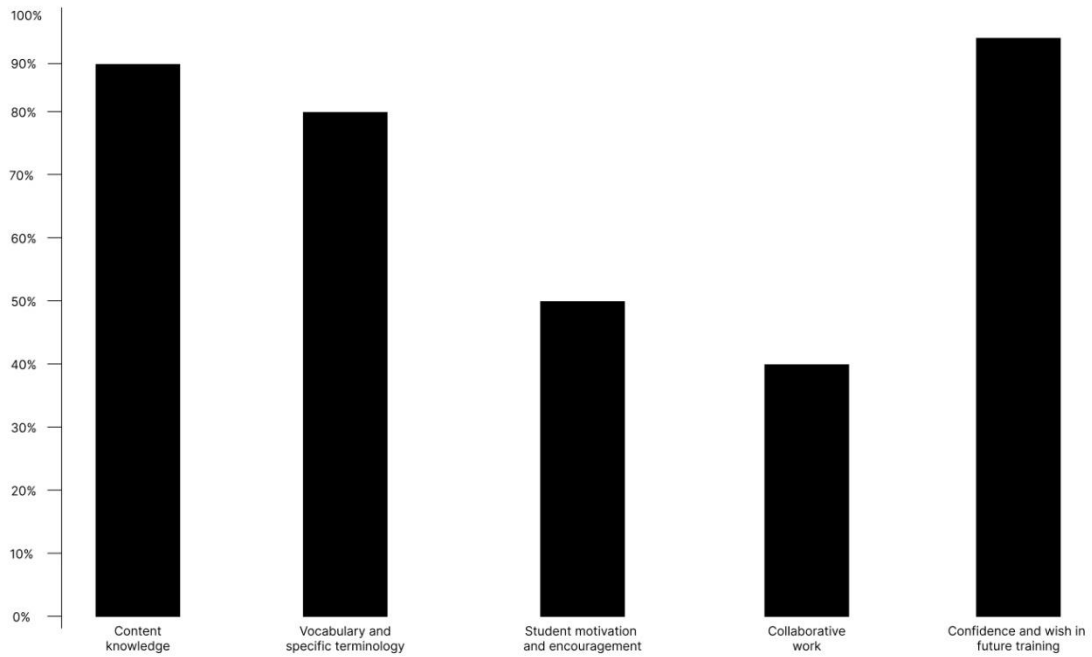
The study underwent using qualitative research which mostly included discussions and survey reports. The discussions between coworkers mainly were about students' performance, content teaching its difficulties including delivery and assessment processes both input and output. Teachers' general knowledge of English and academics was important. When asking about knowledge the question was aimed to find out about vocabulary. Also, their level of comprehension and lesson delivery strategies of ICT English of four domain skills. It is important to note that critical thinking abilities depend on the content of a lesson and connecting it to professional orientation using various tools and strategies (in our case, computer engineering, info-communication, Software engineering, Information security, Information technology, and Multimedia technology) have been the most important dispute among English instructors which will be detailly described in further articles.

Students were preminent objects of discussions. It should be noted that it was hard to come to particular decisions as students' levels of both General English and computer skills were concluded in various levels, some of them had a high level of academic English while others had only the beginner level, let alone talking about students with only basic English words like numbers and greeting. However, group discussions which were among different programs helped to elicit more ideas and suggestions as well as problems and challenges. Two types of questionnaires were worked out. One of them was oriented to the students who have a strong motivation to continue gaining knowledge on Specific English and for those who have less interest in connecting English to their academic program. Surveys were designed taking into consideration learner skills, desire, motivation, and content-oriented (ICT English).

Results

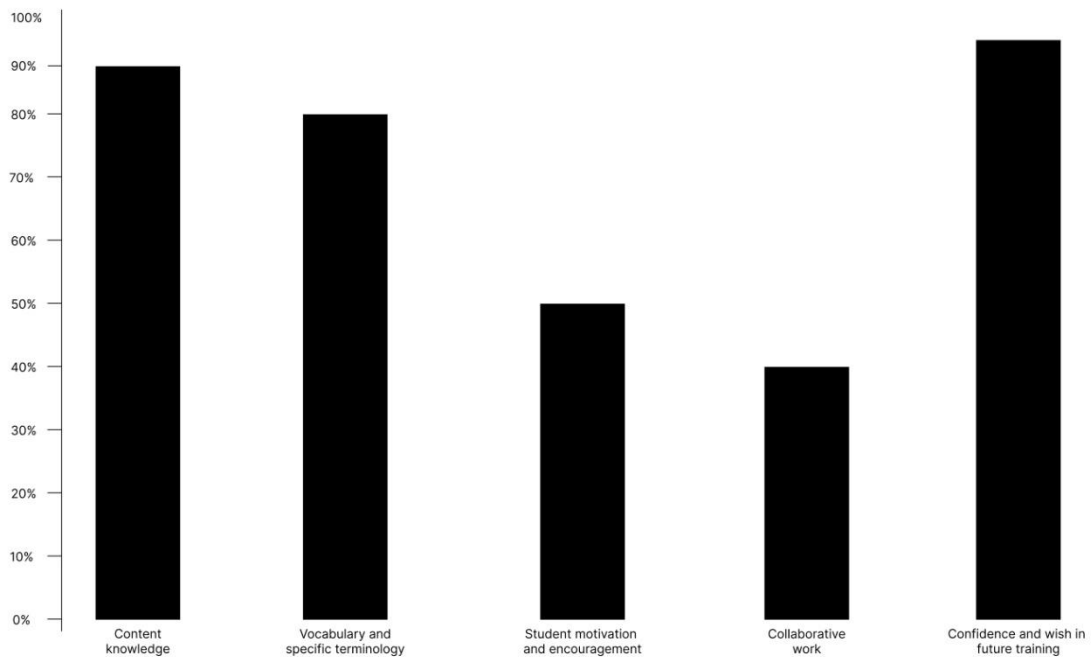
When it comes to instructors, the discussions and questionnaire results illustrated that they are also feeling a great challenge to get their students involved in ICT English as it was an innovative approach to teaching English in their practice. It should be told that interviewed ESL teachers were having their first-year experience in teaching ESP (English for IT). They support the same idea to get necessary special training and get collaborative training on new software and hardware language acronyms with IT specialists, as they claim it would be a great solution. In addition, developing special skills with experienced practitioners was noted too.

Teacher difficulties while instructing ICT English



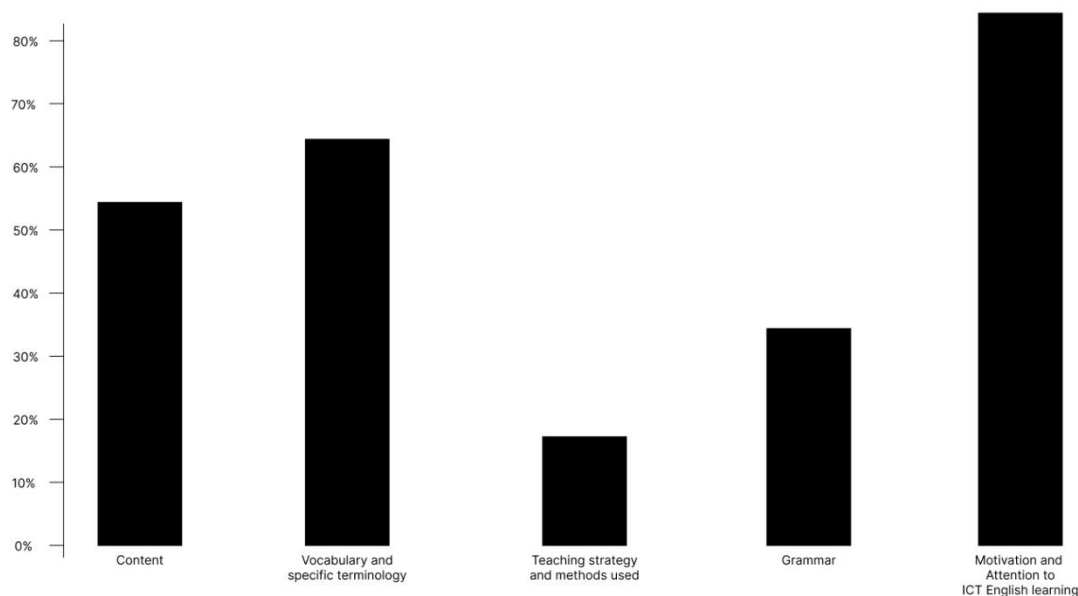
It should be said that balancing General English and ICT English with relevant lexis, grammar, and methods is also an unavoidable hardship and time-consuming preparation for the lesson. Lack of Access to practical materials and worksheets or resources is the main issue as it is either costly or the availability in small percentages makes the teaching and preparation of lesson contents complicated and puzzles them reasonably.

Teacher difficulties while instructing ICT English



According to students, learning ICT English should be suggested after gaining basic knowledge of English, as the unfamiliar lexis and context raise embarrassment and confusion. Technical vocabulary and content-related tasks and projects make student learning not only difficult but also sometimes boring and destructive as they are actively engaged in the prof-oriented subjects. Approximately 60% of students find the course content challenging. This suggests that the material's complexity or structure may need adjustments. However, this opinion varies depending on the level and interest of learners. The supporters state that English with specific purposes helps them to show more meaningful performance while developing web or software programs as the language of instruction is reported to be given in English. Another confrontation is the grammar introduction and review. It is undeniable that grammar construction and revision leave students without enough practice even though it offers advanced grammar practice in some ICT contexts, for example, negative suffixes and conditional sentences with complex sentences with inversions. The outcome skills like speaking and writing can be not as expected as in General English, they demand much effort practice, and knowledge of professional linguistics. Thus, without specific knowledge of ICT, it is not easy to make a student participate verbally in various technical speaking activities and writing technical reports. One positive side is that student understanding and application of IT vocabulary and acronyms is far easier during specialized IT lessons

The difficulty of understanding ICT English by students



Final thoughts

The methodologies of teaching English involving an integrated approach emerge as pivotal frameworks within this discourse. By differentiating their characteristics and objectives ESP educators can recognize effective pedagogical practices. Studies prove that content-based Based Teaching methodologies can significantly increase student academic performance in a foreign language, however, its effectiveness depends both on an instructor and a learner's collaborative learning. Successful implementation of CBT in ESP classes requires much training, adequate authentic resources based on specific areas and both pedagogical methodological consultancy offices with ongoing professional development.

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