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## ESP AS AN APPROACH FOR IMPLEMENTING UNIVERSITY ENGINEERING STUDENTS' LANGUAGE SKILLS THROUGH THE PRISM OF THEIR NEEDS AND MOTIVATION

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**Abstract.** The article examines the specifics of ESP for engineering students from the standpoint of meeting their relevant language needs as for future professionals. The aspects of ESP are analyzed in the context of scholarly perspectives and formulations. The essence of ESP related terms such as «need» and «goal» is clarified. The role of motivation in ESP learning is substantiated. Based on the empirical study, specifically the survey conducted among the students – future engineers and the analysis of its results, the conclusions are drawn regarding the real communicative needs of the respondents to enhance the effectiveness and motivation in mastering ESP during university education stages.

**Key words:** ESP, need, purpose, motivation, engineer, foreign language, education, university.

**Introduction.** The modern paradigm of future specialists' education nearly in any professional field reflects changes occurring in the system of education under the influence of economic globalization, the development of innovative technologies, and consequently the arising demands of the job market. This entails students to acquire truly valuable and useful knowledge, and furthermore, to develop skills that will contribute to their successful adaptation and realization both in professional environment and in various spheres of multifaceted life.

Today, the foreign language proficiency represents a significant advantage practically in any professional's portfolio. First and foremost, this applies to proficiency in English, which is widely used in international cooperation and communication, business, politics, science, education, and other significant spheres of human activity.

Within the framework of European integration the institutions of the European Union utilize 24 official languages; in parallel, as L. Derbenyova points out, this raises a question of an «international auxiliary language» (IAL), primarily in the administrative domain, as such a «common» language helps regulate political, economic, and cultural relations more effectively between the EU countries, with English serving as the functional language in these areas (Derbenyova, 2010: 174).

Along with this, the modern globalized world is culturally diverse, which necessitates the prevalence of multilingualism in the context of diversified communities based on national and cultural characteristics. The socially important value of multilingual competence is declared in the «Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning», as such which «defines the ability to use different languages appropriately and effectively for communication», and namely «involves the appreciation of cultural diversity, an interest and curiosity about different languages and intercultural communication» (Recommendation, 2018). Therefore, multilingual trends extend to the professional environment, which social aspect lies in interaction and cooperation not only within the internal organization of work relations but also in establishing external professional communication with foreign partners, with intercultural aspect being an essential component.

The aforementioned indicates that the essentiality of effective foreign language learning in universities is a priority in modern higher education. Consequently, the multifaceted study of effective, motivational approaches to foreign language training of future professionals currently represents the relevant topic in vast pedagogical discourse.

**The purpose of the research** is to present and analyze the results of the survey of technical university bachelors regarding the motivational basis of their English language learning and examine their correlation with current language needs of future engineers.

**Research methods.** The issues of our research were studied through the prism of theoretical investigation of relevant scientific sources, the use of the empirical survey method, as well as the analysis of the obtained results.

**Theoretical basis.** Investing in higher education involves significant resources from both students, universities and governments, yet, along with that a skilled workforce supports economic development and brings about societal well-being. One can't deny that «employability of university graduates becomes a number one priority» (Marjanovikj-Apostolovski, 2019: 51).

Our scientific interest centers on the foreign language education of engineering students, who will be future contributors to the technological advancement in our society. Broadly, the engineering field involves development, design, production, implementation, and maintenance of varied technological solutions and products.

The diverse tasks and obligations of engineers underscore the multifaceted character of their profession and the profound impact they exert on society. Through their involvement in creating innovative systems, optimizing existing ones, analyzing data, conducting experiments, and ensuring product quality, engineers play a pivotal role in driving and implementation of technological approaches that have the potential to bring about significant progressive changes in lives of individuals and communities. Effective innovative engineering solutions improve the quality of life, strengthen the economy, and contribute to solving humanity's challenges.

In the present-day interconnected and globally integrated society the need for engineers to master foreign language skills and, in particular, English for non-native speakers, has become more significant over time. English has emerged as the lingua franca of science, technology, and business, facilitating collaboration and communication among professionals. Fluency in English opens doors to international employment opportunities and professional growth, allowing engineers to work on international projects and tackle global challenges. In this context, we agree with the assertion that «a manifestation of competence, learning and using a foreign language should expand the possibilities of mastering a future profession» (Zelenin, 2021: 217). Thus, the demand for foreign language competence has turned integral to the modern engineering profession. As stated by Boivan & Kovtun, «the general vector in the process of teaching foreign languages at the university becomes focused on the main areas of a particular specialty and involves a continuous search for the ways and approaches to educational process more efficient» (Boivan & Kovtun, 2023: 71). Therefore, the issue of quality foreign language teaching for future engineers remains the topic of discussion and scientific inquiry among researchers, methodologists and teachers. To a large extent, the effectiveness of such training at the university is determined by the interconnected set of students' language needs and motivation, which reflect the conditions of professional realization in the modern world. The primary approach to applying such a format of teaching English is ESP (English for Specific Purposes). In this regard T. Fitria notes that ESP combines subject matter and English language teaching which is highly motivating because the learners can apply what they have learned in their English classes to their field of studies (Fitria, 2020).

Since in most cases students already have some knowledge of English language acquired at school, their foreign language training at the university, as a rule, involves improving the existing level of the foreign (English) language with the aim of applying the communication potential in the professional

environment related to their chosen specialization. Regarding the necessity of having prior knowledge of English within the context of acquiring ESP, there exists a perspective that most ESP courses assume basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998: 5). T. Fitria, in turn, emphasizes that ESP approach improves the relevance of what the students/learners are learning, then enables them to use English that they have known before (Fitria, 2020). It is worth noting, however, that the effectiveness of ESP courses in bridging the gap between language learning and practical language use in professional or academic contexts can also depend on the quality of instruction, the authenticity of materials used, and the level of learner engagement.

The dynamic nature of language itself and the ever-changing demands of global communication contribute to the continuous evolution of ESP, leading to a multitude of definitions that aim to remain relevant and practical in the real-world language use. The certain lack of a standardized formulation of the essence of ESP can be attributed to the fact that it is intensively advancing field, and as language teaching methodologies and educational needs progress, new perspectives and approaches emerge, contributing to the ongoing clarification of ESP's definition. As for the context of our analysis, the essential reference points in understanding the core of ESP, encompassing its defining components, are the formulations of ESP derived from the comprehensive scrutiny in scientific exploration within this domain. As noted by T. Dudley-Evans and M. John (1998), «ESP is part of a more general movement of teaching Language for Specific Purpose (LSP), which has focused on the teaching of languages such as French and German for specific purposes, as well as English». Additionally, M. Chalikandy (2013) makes it clear that «the present trend is spreading ESP into non-native English speaking countries where English is taught as either as a second language or as a foreign language».

The essence of ESP remains the subject of discussion and clarification, and the very concept, due to its to some extent comprehensive character, lacks complete certainty, as evidenced by the findings of numerous researchers in this domain.

Thus, based on its functional role, ESP has been proposed to be defined by absolute characteristics as being tailored to meet specific purposes of the learners and make use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves; additionally, one of the variable characteristics of ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998: 4–5).

Along with that, T. Hutchinson and A. Waters point out that ESP is not a particular kind of language or methodology, and it is not different in kind from any other form of language teaching; ESP should be seen as an approach to language teaching which is directed by specific and apparent reasons for learning (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). L. Anthony (2018) states that ESP is one of the most established approaches in ELT. M. Chalikandy (2013) stresses that «ESP is a branch of English Language Teaching (ELT) with its own approaches, materials, and methods which have been developed by adapting from other disciplines and integrating with other disciplines». Based on these formulations, it can be determined that ESP is an integrated system within the broader field of ELT, which focuses on providing language instruction to learners of English in light of various contexts, encompassing general language skills for communication and fluency. ESP, though, targets specific language needs of learners based on their particular professional or academic purposes, as observed by numerous researchers in this field of language instruction. That is, ESP courses are narrower in focus than general ELT courses because they centre on analysis of learners' needs (Basturkmen, 2010: 3). Concurrently, as N. Stojković (2019) notes, «ESP is the most responsive form of English language teaching (ELT) in the sense of adhering to the notion of job situation precise, effective, fast, linguistic preparation». This confirms the position of T. Fitria (2020) who indicates that «the most important learner's purpose for learning English is to communicate a set of professional skills and to perform specific job-related functions». A consonant perspective is found in B. Ho's research (2011), who suggests that ESP courses are offered to develop university students' English communication skills needed in the workplace and/or in an academic setting.

From the researchers' views on the specificity of ESP's objectives, it becomes clear that the terms «purpose» and «need» are commonly employed due to their integral role in defining the intended outcomes of ESP. In fact, this is what L. Anthony (2018) means when he posits that the starting point of ESP is an understanding of the current and/or future occupational needs of learners. Emphasizing purposes and needs in ESP research underlines the importance of aligning language teaching with the practical goals of learners, rendering ESP a crucial and effective strategy for academic professional language training.

According to the definition, purpose is «something set up as an object or end to be attained» (Merriam-Webster dictionary). Additionally to that purpose is defined as «determination or a feeling of having a reason for what you do»; «an intention or aim»; «a reason for doing something or for allowing something to happen; «an intended result or use» (The Cambridge Dictionary). The explicit meaning of «need» is found as «a situation in which someone or something must do or have something»; «something that a person must have; something that is needed in order to live or succeed or be happy»; «a strong feeling that you must have or do something» (The Britannica Dictionary). So, the concepts of «purpose» and «need» are correlated through the idea of intention and necessity. *Purpose* refers to the reason or goal for which ESP is taught/learnt, while *need* highlights the particular requirements or necessities that ESP aims to fulfill. In this manner they are synchronized, with the purpose driving the actions and the need determining the necessary steps to achieve the intended outcome. Therefore, it is right to assert that purpose pertains to the underlying reason or goal for an action, providing an answer to the question of why something is undertaken or performed. Given above analytical reasoning we concur that ESP is «an approach to language learning, which is based on learner need» within such an essential context that «the foundation of all ESP is the simple question: why does this learner need to learn a foreign language?» and «the whole analysis derives from an initial identified need on the part of the learner to learn a language» (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: 19). In alignment with this attitude, H. Basturkmen (2010) extends the discussion about ESP's reference points, stating that «ESP focuses on when, where and why learners need the language either in study or workplace contexts». It is worth noting that understanding the nuances of the contexts is essential for designing language instruction that is relevant with learners' real-world communication needs. In the realm of ESP teaching/learning context refers to the specific situation, environment, or domain in which language is used or taught. In this regard context is thought of as having two main sets of components: pragmatic and mental, externally observable pragmatic features of a given situation (e. g. availability of reaching-learning resources, multimedia facilities, teachers' level of training) and the attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral expectations participants bring with them to the classroom (Tudor, 2001: 18–19). It implies that tailoring language instruction to the contextual factors contributes to its effectiveness by ensuring more targeted and relevant language learning experience.

The link between needs and purposes becomes apparent within the context of need analysis as integral part of ESP and an ongoing process because students are culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse, their objectives and the levels of academic literacy are different (Chalikandy, 2013: 319). Furthermore, their objectives for learning English may vary widely, from improving their communication skills for professional purposes to professional and academic pursuits.

Hence, it is crucial to recognize that by carefully evaluating and addressing learners' needs, ESP practitioners can offer a tailored and effective language learning experience, equipping students with the linguistic skills needed to reach their specific objectives in a more interconnected professional environment.

As stated by M. Marjanovikj-Apostolovski, «it is more than obvious that simply mastering field-specific vocabulary is no longer the primary objective of ESP courses» and «ESP courses in higher education should give students a solid foundation and basis for future learning and development» (Marjanovikj-Apostolovski, 2019: 51). We believe it is vital for English teachers to respond in

this manner, especially when working with future engineers, as professionals in this field are currently the catalysts and enablers of rapid scientific and technological advancement globally.

**Research results and their discussion.** In a broad sense, engineers are professionals who are involved in design, development, manufacturing, and improvement of products, systems, infrastructure, and technologies in various fields such as mechanical engineering, civil engineering, computer engineering, software engineering, cybersecurity, telecommunications engineering, chemical engineering, industrial engineering, aerospace engineering and many others.

In the context of global economy, the boundaries of business and professional communication expand in each of these realms due to the necessity of exchanging innovative experiences, participating in international projects, engaging in internship and professional development programs, deepening partnership relations, and more. Therefore, knowledge and use of English language in all of these aspects are undeniable imperatives of communication. On a side note, it is also worth mentioning that «teaching technical English involves developing intercultural competence for students to be engaged in international learning and job opportunities» (Chugai, 2015: 170).

From a wide standpoint, the mentioned factors serve as a significant motivational basis for future engineers to study English language comprehensively in all aspects of its application in the professional field. In teaching English as a foreign language to engineering students, the notions of «need» and «purpose» are closely related and both play an essential role in shaping motivation.

We support the opinion that motivation in ESP has a profound effect on the question of how specific the course is and, particularly, high motivation on the part of learners generally enables more subject specific work to be undertaken; low motivation, however, is likely to lead to a concentration on less specific work (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998: 10). As per S. Selimovic, motivation is the mix of endeavor and want which gives the purposes behind individuals' activities, wants, and needs to get the goal of learning towards a target (Selimovic, 2022: 26). Thus, when students recognize and perceive their needs, it can significantly enhance their motivation to learn. If future professionals understand that mastering English is essential for their academic and professional success, they are more likely to be motivated to engage with the language learning process.

Having a clear purpose gives students a tangible goal to strive towards. When students have a clear understanding of why they learn English and how it will benefit them, their motivation tends to be stronger and more sustained. The need creates a foundation for learning, highlighting what students must achieve, while the purpose provides direction and meaning, showing why they learn. Combined, these factors create a strong source of motivation – students learn English not just out of obligation, but because it aligns with their professional aspirations and goals. Along with this, it should be taken into account that, as N. Hromova notes, «the effectiveness of foreign languages learning has always been considered dependent on students' motivation and aptitude, on the one hand, and teachers' professional and personal qualities, on the other» (Hromova, 2019: 76). This perspective emphasizes the dual responsibility in the educational process, highlighting that both student engagement and teacher competence are crucial for successful language acquisition.

With regard to the above views and analyzed theoretical discourse and within the scope of our research interest, we conducted the survey in which 49 bachelor students of Institute of Physics and Technology of National Technical University of Ukraine «Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute» participated. The main idea of the questionnaire can be outlined by stating that since learners' motivation to learn English may affect their learning outcomes, it is worthwhile to explore how learners become successful or discouraged in English learning, as this may affect their motivation and familiarity with the language (Selimovic, 2022: 25). The survey is expected to provide insights into the priorities and influencing factors that contribute to the effectiveness of learning a foreign language, specifically English, among engineering students. The results will help in understanding future specialists' perspectives and needs related to language learning, informing language education strategies and curriculum development.

The tables below provide the study's results. In this research a 4-point Likert scale is the method used which permits capturing students' attitudes towards motivational context of learning English as for future engineers.

The data are displayed in numbers and percentages which allows for a quick understanding and analysis of responses' variation according to the questions in the Google forms sent to students.

Table 1

<b>Do you feel motivated to learn English as foreign language when studying at the technical university?</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
I am undoubtedly motivated	26	53,1%
I am rather motivated	18	36,7%
I am somewhat lacking in being motivated	5	10,2%
I am not motivated	0	0%

The results obtained display that the majority of the respondents definitely feel highly motivated to master English. The positive attitude towards language learning is shown by more than half (53.1%) of the surveyed bachelors. The notable percentage of the respondents (36.7%) have relatively moderate motivation to learn English, although this still reflects a positive tendency towards language learning. The small segment of those surveyed (10.2%) have a lesser motivation which might suggest some challenges or barriers affecting their willingness or interest in acquiring language. Importantly, all survey participants demonstrated a degree of motivation to become proficient in English.

Table 2

<b>The main motivating factor for you in learning English is:</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Academic performance	2	4,1%
Advancing own level of English language expertise	17	34,7%
Realizing the necessity of further career development through English for professional communication	19	38,8%
Exploring opportunities to use English in any communication situation, particularly in the intercultural context	11	22,4%

Drawing from the noted results in regard to motivating factors, academic performance isn't that crucial (4,1%). Along with that 34.7% of the respondents are driven by aspiration to enhance their proficiency in English. This demonstrates a personal commitment to acquiring and mastering language skills. The significant segment of the survey participants (38.8%) recognize the need of further professional advancement through English, viewing it as a valuable resource for professional communication. This suggests a practical and career-oriented motivation for language learning. It is noteworthy that 22.4% of the students are motivated by the exploration of opportunities to use English language in the intercultural communication settings, which reflects their recognition of potential benefits of multifaceted language interaction. In general, the results demonstrate the relevant students' language learning needs, encompassing personal growth, career advancement, and intercultural communication exploration.

Regarding English language skills the majority of the students (53.1%) prioritize the development of speaking skills along with fulfillment of communicative potential during classes. This underscores the need in communication practice for further effective interaction in real-life and professional situations. 22.4% of the respondents emphasize expanding vocabulary and improving grammar which implies a recognition of vocabulary and grammar accuracy to communicate fluently and confidently

Table 3

<b>When studying English for engineering students, your priority emphasis is on:</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Enlarging lexical repertoire and improving grammar	11	22,4%
Developing speaking skills and fulfillment of communicative potential during classes	26	53,1%
Acquiring correct pronunciation and overcoming phonetic barriers	2	4,1%
I have no clearly defined priorities	10	20,4%

with diverse audiences. The lower priority (4.1%) compared to other aspects acquires correct phonetics and pronunciation which might be explained that engineering communication often focuses more on technical terminology and clear, concise information exchange rather than perfect pronunciation. Quite a few respondents (20.4%) for such an aspect as having no clearly defined priorities might signal about the need for further self-reflection on learning goals though it can also prove that all the aspects are nearly of equal importance.

Table 4

<b>What factors mostly influence your effectiveness in learning English for engineering students?</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Selection of appropriate instructional and thematic content	29	59,2%
Duration and number of classes	3	6,1%
Level of teacher's expertise	14	28,6%
Scope and complexity of task fulfillment	3	6,1%

The most significant factor, as indicated by 59.2% of the students, is the selection of appropriate instructional and thematic content. This suggests that the relevance and applicability of the materials used in teaching are crucial for the students. Engineering students likely benefit more from the content that is directly related to their field, making it easier for them to connect their language learning with their professional interests and needs.

The second influential factor according to 28.6% of surveyed is the level of the teacher's expertise. This highlights the importance of having knowledgeable and skilled instructors who can effectively convey the material and provide valuable insights and guidance. The teachers with deep understanding of both English language instruction and the specific requirements of engineering communication can significantly enhance learning outcomes.

The duration and number of classes influence their effectiveness in learning English for a smaller part of respondents (6.1%). This suggests that while the quantity of instruction is important, it is not as critical as the quality and relevance of the content and the expertise of the teacher.

Another 6.1% of the students pointed to the scope and complexity of task fulfillment as a factor. This assumes that appropriately challenging tasks that match the students' proficiency levels and learning objectives can play a role in their language acquisition, though it is less significant compared to other factors.

Thus, the results indicate that the primary focus for enhancing English language learning effectiveness for engineering students should be on selecting the relevant instructional content and ensuring high teacher expertise. Although the duration of classes and the complexity of tasks are also factors, they are comparatively less critical.

As to the participants' beliefs about the definite need to use English in a professional communication environment it is seen that 77.6% are firmly convinced that they will need to use English during professional interactions. A smaller percentage of the respondents (18.4%) express a moderate stance

Table 5

Are you convinced that you will need to use English in a professional communication environment?	Amount	Percent (%)
I am firmly convinced	38	77,6%
I am rather convinced	9	18,4%
I am not convinced	2	4,1%
I won't need to use English	0	0

regarding the need to use a foreign language in a professional context although this still reflects a degree of certainty about the relevance of language skills in professional settings. A very small portion of the students (4.1%) indicate uncertainty about whether they will need to use English in a professional communication environment. This suggests a need for further consideration or clarification regarding the role of language proficiency in their future careers. Notably, none of the respondents outright deny the need to use English in a professional communication environment. This underlines the widespread acknowledgment of the importance of language skills in the professional contexts. Therefore, the mentioned part reveals general awareness among the participants due to the necessity of using English language in professional communication, with varying degrees of conviction and confidence among the respondents.

**Conclusion.** The results obtained from the questionnaire and shown in the tables lead to several key conclusions. Firstly, a sizeable segment of the students exhibit the firm motivation to master English, underscoring a positive attitude towards language acquisition even among those moderately motivated. Then, all participants demonstrate varying degrees of awareness regarding the necessity of English proficiency in a globalized society. According to the responses received, it is also obvious that the students are driven not only by personal growth but by professional advancement, recognizing English as a tool for effective communication in their future careers. The priority is consistently placed on developing speaking skills, emphasizing the practical application of language in real-life and professional contexts. Vocabulary and grammar remain important, however, pronunciation receives comparatively less consideration, possibly due to the technical nature of engineering communication. Some respondents indicate the need for clearer learning goals, suggesting opportunities for self-reflection and goal-setting. Effective language learning, as identified by students, hinges substantially on the relevance of instructional content and the expertise of teachers, particularly in tailoring materials to engineering contexts. Although class duration and task complexity contribute to learning effectiveness, they are outweighed by the importance of content quality and instructor competence. There is widespread agreement among students on the professional necessity of English, though a small part seeks further clarification on its specific role in their future careers.

Ultimately, the connection between motivation and needs analysis in ESP highlights the importance of understanding learners' motivations and priorities in regard to our research. By discerning students' motivations to learn a foreign language at the university and their prioritized aspects of language acquisition, we can effectively tailor educational strategies to meet their distinct requirements, optimizing their learning experiences within the context of ESP's guiding principles.

Looking ahead, the continued research and adaptation of teaching methodologies can further enhance the integration of English language skills into engineering education, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for the demands of global workplaces.

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